

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To:	Economic Development Committee	Subject:	UFRA 1996
From:	Director of Planning & Development		
Date:	December 1996	Ref:	GS/EM/ REPORT 101

UFRA 1996

EVENT DATES : 12 - 20 October 1996

EVENT LOCATION : Schweinfurt, Germany

Background

The town of Schweinfurt has been twinned with Motherwell for many years, and the twinning link has been inherited by North Lanarkshire Council.

Every two years, the UFRA Exhibition takes place in Schweinfurt, and traditionally, Schweinfurt's twin towns from throughout Europe would have a stand at the show, from which they would present products from their area.

UFRA 1996

This year's UFRA was slightly different from previous years, in that all food and drink products from all of Schweinfurt's twin towns were presented from an 'International Bistro' stand. North Lanarkshire Council offered food and drink manufactured by companies either based in North Lanarkshire, or with an operating base in the area. These included Glenfiddich whisky from William Grant & Sons; smoked salmon from Lyons Speciality Foods; shortbread and biscuits from Simmers, and beer from Allied Breweries.

In addition, North Lanarkshire Council had a separate information stand, from which literature on the area was distributed and graphic panels showing aspects of North Lanarkshire were displayed.. A German language video about the Lanarkshire area was also on show throughout.

The exhibition, as expected, was very well attended, with approximately 90,000 visitors attending over the ten days of the exhibition, and the North Lanarkshire food and drink area was particularly popular. A large number of consumers were attracted by those products which were offered for sale, and there was also a great deal of interest in the products which were available for sampling only.

The companies whose products were on offer from the Lanarkshire stand see UFRA as an effective, low-cost way of highlighting their products, particularly as the timing of UFRA coincides with the start of the Christmas consumer purchase period. For example, Glenfiddich whisky is already distributed throughout Germany, and owners Grants continue to use UFRA year after year as a profile-enhancing exercise.

Parallel Events

Alongside the UFRA, an itinerary was arranged to enable representatives of North Lanarkshire Council to meet with members of the local business community in Schweinfurt and to discuss economic development issues with representatives from the Schweinfurt twin towns in France, Finland, Scotland and Sweden.

The Council representatives met the Manager of the Wurzburg-Schweinfurt Chamber of Industry and Commerce and visited a new facility being developed by the Chamber to provide training and high technology workspace to businesses in the Schweinfurt area. There was also demonstrated a new initiative known as 'Swin', which gives firms in the Schweinfurt area the possibility of linking to the Internet at a very reasonable annual cost. Bearing in mind the necessity of modern companies to take advantage of all communication possibilities that exist, this initiative is being investigated to see whether it can be applied to North Lanarkshire.

The group also met representatives and visited a facility provided by the AFZ (Work Development Centre) group in Schweinfurt, which provided training for young people and people with learning difficulties up to the German equivalent of SCOTVEC modules. This group is developing a transnational project in which North Lanarkshire Council may be able to participate and this will be the subject of further discussions with representatives from the Schweinfurt group who are visiting North Lanarkshire in the near future.

Contact was also made with the Economic Development officials of both the Swedish Area Representative Exhibitions - Erebro County and Seinnajoki in Finland. Both these areas are now within the European Union, and are actively seeking transnational links for economic development projects. It may be that there is the possibility of pursuing these and the relevance and effectiveness of the links are being looked into.

Recommendation

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report



Stanley C Cook, Director of Planning & Development

For further information contact G Smith, Head of Economic Development and Property

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