

NEWS RELEASE from

**devon renaissance**  
working for rural prosperity



**1 October 2008**

**Major survey of Devon's rural businesses**

More than 17,000 businesses across rural Devon are being asked how they operate and about their business plans and barriers to success.

Devon Renaissance, the regeneration partnership organisation for rural Devon, is launching its third survey of Devon businesses.

Previous surveys have revealed that a typical rural Devon business has fewer than 10 employees, has difficulty in recruiting skilled staff, and would like more financial advice and help with developing new products and services.

Liz Abell, programme co-ordinator for Devon Renaissance, says the first two surveys have been extremely useful for them and for their partners. "The previous surveys have been accessed on our website more than 9,000 times, and have been critical in directing funding towards the types of activity that businesses need.

"All of the recent Community Led Development bids in Devon used information from the business survey to back up and focus their activity, and they were successful in bringing almost £10 million of new funding to the county."

The information has also been used to develop projects around the county, providing more than 6,000 free or subsidised training places; free or subsidised business advice to more than 3,000 businesses; and creating job opportunities for more than 300 people.

Liz Abell added: "All Devon's rural local authorities are working together on the survey, so we save time and money by carrying out one consistent survey that can be shared."

Businesses are urged to complete the questionnaires and return them as soon as possible, as the more that do so means more accurate results. A full report on the survey will be available next year and all businesses which participate **can** be sent detailed survey results.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

Devon Renaissance is the regeneration partnership organisation for the rural areas of the county. It is a not-for-profit partnership of the private sector, local authorities and community-based organisations. The organisation is funded by the South West Regional

Development Agency, Devon County Council, and North Devon, Torrington, West Devon, South Hams, East Devon and Teignbridge district and borough councils. Devon Renaissance provides grant funding and works with projects to help create prosperity and jobs and improve access to services in rural areas. It has funding of £7 million over three years which is estimated to be worth £25 million to the Devon economy with match funding.