

## **Chamber Chat – November 2009 HOVIP advertorial**

### **Driving Success in the Valleys and Beyond**

“The Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme (HOVIP) is certainly playing a part in driving success in the Valleys and helping businesses in the region become more competitive.” explains Phil Burkhard, HOVIP Manager. “It’s also encouraging to see some of the 2009 Innovation Award winners, Merthyr’s Shabby Chic Antiques, SteriTouch Ltd in Blaenau Gwent and DecTek Ltd in Rhondda Cynon Taff competing on the world stage.”

“HOVIP provides a range of practical support services and the programme is continually evolving as the challenges faced by businesses in the region change. Most importantly, HOVIP is delivering real benefits during a global recession.”

### **Delivering real benefits**

So far, HOVIP2 has helped 145 businesses directly, from sole traders and social enterprises to larger businesses employing more than 200 people, and over 550 individuals have attended the three Marketplace Exhibition and Innovation Awards events. During 2009, in depth support has been provided to 66 businesses contributing to safeguarding 372 jobs and generating £371,000 new business to-date, with only one-third of the projects completed. HOVIP has also obtained £365,000 funding distinct from the Single Investment Fund and Local Investment Fund.

### **Securing the Future**

One of HOVIP’s recent success stories is the creation of Secure Wales, a cluster of five like-minded businesses involved in the security sector. Secure Wales has just won their first contract worth £15,000 and is focused on further opportunities to improve their competitive edge.

The cluster developed from an innovative idea originated by HOVIP. Vince Price, lead member of Secure Wales, explains, “As a group of diverse businesses we all wanted to access new markets and new opportunities but were struggling to find the best way to do it. HOVIP and Mike Warren, in particular, have provided tremendous support to help us develop a viable commercial cluster. The result is Secure Wales.”

The cluster is also the first successful application to the new National Enterprise Networks Fund from the Welsh Assembly Government. Funding of £10,000 has enabled Secure Wales to formulate joint bids, develop a corporate identity and website, undertake market research and marketing activity, as well as improve operational efficiency.

“The development of this cluster of security businesses is very exciting.” said Ian Maberley, Programme Manager for the National Enterprise Networks Fund. “Clustering represents a new way of thinking about business and Secure Wales demonstrates how firms in Wales are positioning themselves to be competitive in the future.”

Phil Burkhard, HOVIP Programme Manager, said, “HOVIP is delighted to have initiated and supported, along with the Welsh Assembly Government, the creation of Secure Wales which is an unusual mix of diverse businesses. This is an excellent example which proves that doing things differently can help secure the future.”

For more information about the HOVIP and to find out how you can benefit, visit [www.hovip.org.uk](http://www.hovip.org.uk)

**Caption for photograph:** TO FOLLOW