



Encouraging the growth and survival of existing enterprise is as imperative for Ireland's future economic growth as is the stimulation of entrepreneurship," said Shannon Chamber president, Damian Gleeson, speaking at a chamber luncheon in Clare on Friday, 20 January 2012. The event, sponsored by regional development company Shannon Development, was attended by key business players and influencers from the business community in the Shannon region. The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD was keynote speaker.

Speaking at Dromoland Castle Hotel, Minister Bruton said:

"If we are to create the jobs and growth we so badly need, we are going to have to undertake radical reform across the entire economy to make it easier for businesses to create employment. This means above all reducing costs, improving access to finance, providing better and more supports to job-creating businesses, and putting innovation at the centre of everything we do.

"This will not happen overnight. We will have to grind out the reforms one by one if we are going to achieve the Government's ambition of making Ireland the best small country in which to do business. They will be painful for some people, particularly in sheltered parts of the public and private sector, and we will need support if we are to drive them through. However if we are to build a strong economy with solid foundations this is where the hard work must start. In next month's Action Plan for Jobs we will begin a rigorous, monitored process of driving changes across government and the economy to improve the business environment and enable the creation of the jobs we need."

Welcoming the efforts being expended by the Government and its development agencies on starting new businesses, Shannon Chamber president, Damian Gleeson, called for a sustained and concerted effort by all involved in enterprise support, including the business community, to identify ways and means of growing the existing base of strong indigenous companies.

Citing Shannon-based CREGG Group as an example of a company who, through lateral thinking, has simultaneously enhanced its existing operations and brought a major international brand to Shannon - ZAGG International - Mr Gleeson said: "A potential 130 extra jobs, announced last year by Minister Bruton and supported by Shannon Development, are being

created by CREGG at Shannon, as a result of the company's initiative to identify a company in the U.S. with a similar process to itself and a desire to site an operation within Europe.

"This has had a positive outcome for Shannon/Ireland - 70 of the jobs have been filled in the past nine months. It has sustained the company's existing base at Shannon and brought in new skills and new products. This level of initiative, where companies undertake direct intervention in the marketplace on behalf of themselves and Ireland, needs to be encouraged and acknowledged.

"More than ever before, Ireland needs businesses that have a sustainable future, both indigenous and multinationals. We should not be exporting an intellectual generation that has cost so much to educate. The onus is on everyone to stimulate entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial endeavour and to remove any impediments that hinder us retaining our reputation as a location and nation of innovative renown.

"The business sector, both indigenous and multinationals, are struggling to survive and costs such as local authority charges and redundancy-associated costs are eating into their cash flows. Any alleviation of charges in these areas would ease some of the financial burden businesses are now faced with.

"We are operating in a period of unprecedented economic turmoil but it must be a case of all avenues explored to weather the storm," Mr Gleeson concluded.

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