Individuals, organisations, voluntary groups and companies are being invited to enter this year's Spirit of Enterprise Michael Dee Award. Named after the late Michael Dee, a former Enterprise Ireland executive who tirelessly supported the development of enterprise across the South East, the award organisers are calling for nominations before the March 31st deadline.

Established in 2009 to recognise and reward enterprise achievement and endeavour in the region, the steering group behind the Spirit of Enterprise Michael Dee Award include representatives from the South-East Regional Authority, the South-East Business and Innovation Centre, the local County and City Enterprise Boards, the Institute of Technology in Carlow and the Waterford Institute of Technology.

Nominees do not have to be living or working in the South-East but their activity or work must have had a positive impact on the South-East region as a whole. The inaugural Spirit of Enterprise Michael Dee Award was presented to Michael's wife, Helen Dee, and her family.

Speaking at the official launch of the 2011 awards scheme, Michael Maddock from the South East Business and Innovation Centre was keen to stress that the competition was open to all individuals, groups and organisations which have an involvement in enterprise. He said: "We're especially interested to hear about nominees which have transcended political and territorial boundaries by furthering the social or economic development of the South-East."

Maddock continued: "The independent judging panel will be seeking out nominees who have, in their opinion, enhanced the well-being of communities across the region or which have supported the development of a spirit of enterprise across the South-East."

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the Spirit of Enterprise website at www.spiritofenterprise.ie . The winner of the 2011 Spirit of Enterprise Michael Dee Award, which was crafted by a Clonmel-based silversmith, Rory Donohue, will be announced at a ceremony on Thursday, May 12th.