

**Schemes aim to break down barriers to businesses looking for high-technology solutions**



**NEW LINK: SMEs can forge relationships with universities like here in Glasgow**

## University challenge for Scottish business

SMALL businesses have a strong track record of finding innovative solutions to difficult problems. A recent Federation of Small Businesses' (FSB) membership survey underlined.

In the last year, over half of our membership introduced new products or services.

However, there seems a barrier to small businesses, especially those in non hi-tech sectors, looking for technological solutions to their business challenges.

How this barrier can be broken down was the subject of debate at a

recent Technology Transfer Opportunity Mechanism (TTOM) meeting in Edinburgh.

The TTOM Awards are designed to help Scotland's SME sector forge new partnerships with Scottish universities so they can develop new technology, products and processes.

The awards offer businesses the chance to access the vast store of technology and know-how developed by some of the finest minds in our universities.

They provide a £5,000 grant to fund feasibility studies, allowing the participants to assess the

potential and feasibility of a new product or process.

The money is not used for the continuation of research the university is already doing, it is for something that the company needs. See [www.ttom.org.uk](http://www.ttom.org.uk) for more information.

Elsewhere, the Scottish Funding Council has launched the Innovation Voucher Scheme. This allows small companies in Scotland (those with a registration commencing SC) to team up with a Higher Education Institute (HEI) to develop new products and processes to benefit the business, the institution and the Scottish

economy. The aim is to build broader links between Scotland's HEIs and small businesses and the awards are targeted at new partnerships which have not received and previous funding.

The award is for up to £5,000 and will be paid to the academic institution by the Scottish Funding Council to offset the costs of the collaborative project. The company contribution is then expected to match the grant contribution.

For more information see [http://www.interface-online.org.uk/view\\_item.aspx?item\\_id=3410&is\\_search\\_result=true](http://www.interface-online.org.uk/view_item.aspx?item_id=3410&is_search_result=true)

## Women are missing out

WOMEN driving on business are "missing out" on important driver training, according to research.

The poll, conducted by IAM Drive & Survive and the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) covers both genders.

It found that 61 per cent of females drove to or for work, but only 22 per cent of these were offered driver training by their employer.

Almost the same proportion of men drove to or for work (60 per cent), but 94 per cent had been offered driver training by their employer.

The poll also found that only 47 per cent of females feel perfectly safe on the roads.

Department for Transport figures show that in 2007, 530 females were involved in KSI (Killed or seriously injured) accidents compared to 1,640 men.

Simon Elstow, IAM's head of training said: "These are very interesting results. "The poll suggests that women are missing out on beneficial driver training simply because statistically women appear to be safer drivers overall."

**International cast on stage at the world's biggest arts festival thanks to FSB member**

## It's showtime for Edinburgh agent

FSB member John Barrow will attempt to sell 17,000 tickets for 145 shows featuring 65 different acts from countries including America, Ukraine, Poland, Ireland, India, France, England and Scotland at the Edinburgh Festival.

Dr Barrow (right) masterminds the biggest music venue of its type on the Festival Fringe which starts in August. John and

his Stoneyport Associates' colleague Martin Coull are also involved at another major venue, The Queen's Hall.

So, it's a busy time for the Edinburgh branch member.

Among the acts he will showcase are globe-trotting Dick Gaughan.

One of Europe's best jazz singers, former stonemason Tam White, is

also on stage. Also appearing are the critically acclaimed award-winning Kenny Young and the Eggplants from New York.

Local talent includes Sandy Brechin, the wild man of accordion, Simon Kempston, one of Scotland's best young songwriters, and singer-songwriter Sophie Bancroft.

