

## ULTIMATE SEAL OF APPROVAL AT MX AWARDS

AESSEAL plc of Rotherham was crowned the UK's leading manufacturer by Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Minister of State for Industry and the Regions, at last night's (29.6.06) Manufacturing Excellence (MX) Awards.

The impressive company, which employs over 300 people on three main sites in the UK, demonstrates world class performance in all areas of its manufacturing, sales and distribution. Established in 1981, AESSEAL specialises in the design and manufacture of mechanical seals which are used in pumps to stop harmful liquids and gases leaking into the environment. With sales in 83 countries and a turnover of £62 million, its current rate of growth is 25% per annum.

John Ling, MX Project Manager, commented: "AESSEAL is an excellent example of how UK companies can successfully compete in a global market."

Organised annually by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, the MX Awards ([www.mx2006.org.uk](http://www.mx2006.org.uk)) are backed by numerous influential organisations including the DTI's Manufacturing Advisory Service and Barclays. They are designed to promote best practice among UK manufacturers and all entrants receive a free comprehensive benchmark report. They are generally considered to be the toughest industry awards in which to succeed with the rigorous judging process involving self-assessment audits, company visits from a team of MX assessors and presentations to a panel of industry experts, chaired by Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya KB CBE of the Warwick Manufacturing Group.

The RSM Robson Rhodes Award for the Best Small or Medium Enterprise went to Power Panels Electrical Systems, based in Walsall with 172 employees and a turnover of £13 million. The innovative company, which designs and builds electronic assemblies, is another worldwide exporter whose emphasis on quality is helping to 'China proof' itself against cheaper overseas competition.

The DTI Minister of State for Industry and the Regions, Margaret Hodge, said: "These finalists show that business success is driven by people with vision, people with a 'can do' attitude. I hope they inspire others to follow the example of these innovative companies like these. We have winners up there amongst the best in the world, companies that are rising to the global challenges, and creating world beating products."

"Manufacturing is a vital part of the UK's economy. Over three million people work in manufacturing and the sector contributes more than £150 billion a year to our GDP.

"The Government supports and encourages skilled and high value manufacturing. The most important way we can help is by maintaining a stable and growing economy, with low inflation. At the same time we promote innovation and fund research, both directly and through research and development tax credits."

Other MX winners who were presented with their awards at last night's ceremony, held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel and compered by Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague MP, included:

- Renishaw Award for Product Innovation  
***Wrightbus (Northern Ireland)***
- Barclays Award for Financial Management  
***Sulzer Pumps (Leeds)***
- BP Award for Best Partnership between Business & Education  
***Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery (Lincoln)***
- MNT Network Award for Innovation in Microsystems & Nanotechnology  
***SELEX Sensors & Airborne Systems (Southampton)***
- Kellysearch Award for Customer Focus  
***AESSEAL (Rotherham)***
- Sandvik Coromant Award for Process Innovation  
***Magal Metallifactory (Nottingham)***
- Warwick Manufacturing Group Award for Logistics & Resource Efficiency  
***AESSEAL (Rotherham)***
- Professional Engineering Award for People Effectiveness  
***BGB Engineering (Grantham)***
- IBM Award for Business Development and Change Management  
***Power Panels Electrical Systems (Walsall)***
- The National B2B Centre Award for Integrated e-Business  
***The Protomold Company (Telford)***

A final category, the UKRC Award for Equality, was not awarded for second year running as there was no clear winner. Whilst the Judges acknowledged that there were good examples of best practice, no single company stood out as excellent.

**- ENDS -**

**Note to editor:**

Photos of the ceremony and all recent factory site visits are available on request.

**Further Information:**

Nick Heath (Ink PR) 020 7350 1736 / 07720 297972 / [nick@inkpr.com](mailto:nick@inkpr.com)