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BEDFORD FIRM WINS SMALL BUSINESS MERIT AWARD

Michael R Peters, an independent electrical retailing business based in Bedford, is on a winning streak having picked up its second award in two years. The company was presented with a special national Merit award at the British Small Business Champions ceremony on 10 November. It also won 'Bedfordshire's Small Business of the Year' award last year.

Michael Peters, managing director, attended the prestigious British Small Business Champions event at Claridge's in London, where he was presented with the national small business Merit award for his company's commitment to the local community and its exceptional contribution and support to local charities, by newscaster and TV presenter Fiona Armstrong and Sir Christopher Meyer, the former UK Ambassador to Washington and current Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission.

Michael also attended a reception at Number 11 Downing Street hosted by Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in recognition of the achievements of all the small business award contenders.

The awards, now in their third year, are held by the Federation of Small Businesses, Lloyds TSB, the Daily Mirror and Business in the Community, to highlight and celebrate the contribution small businesses make to the UK economy and to their local community. This year, the ceremony also falls on the eve of National Enterprise Week, 15 - 21 November.

The 2004 Merit winner, Michael R Peters, is a small electrical retailer competing successfully against large high street electrical stores, by providing exceptional customer service. **.../more**

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It is the main sponsor of the oldest UK Sunday football league and also sponsors twelve community buses, which transport the elderly from door-to-door without charge, allowing them to get their shopping and attend medical appointments. The buses carry out over 300 journeys a week.

Michael Peters said: "This award is recognition of 38 years hard work devoted to retailing, proving that big is not always beautiful and that success and service goes hand-in-hand. Our community involvement is an extension of our business beliefs, and we are thrilled to have received this award."

Stephen Pegge, head of communications for Lloyds TSB Business, said: "This company is a shining example of what make Britain's small businesses so great. The level of care and commitment they give to customers, staff and their community is inspiring. Michael R Peters truly deserves this national Merit award."

John Emmins, for the Federation of Small Businesses, said: "These awards are in recognition of the achievements of Britain's diverse and vibrant small business community. We're now in the third year of choosing champion businesses and the sheer hard work, aptitude and vision demonstrated by all of this year's finalists have made it a more difficult task than ever."

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Notes to editors:

- Photographs and profiles available on request.
- The 5 other national merit award finalists included: Pocklington Montessori School from Pocklington, Escot Ltd, an East Devon rural estate, Rosemount Children's Centre from Dollar in Scotland, Knock Travel from Belfast and Badgers Café from Llandudno in Wales.

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