

This Press Release is issued on behalf of City of Inverness Marketing Group

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INVERNESS THE CITY IN THE HIGHLANDS - LAUNCH OF A NEW BRAND IDENTITY FOR THE HIGHLAND CAPITAL

A major new branding campaign aimed at improving the image Inverness projects to the outside world was unveiled today (Thursday 25th March 2004).

Focussed on the theme "Inverness the City in the Highlands" the initiative aims communicate what is best about the city in the 21st century.

Developed by the City of Inverness Marketing Group (CIMG), a private and public sector partnership, with the backing of Inverness and Nairn Enterprise and The Highland Council, the £60,000 campaign was launched today in the heart of the city with the assistance of three local young people.

Kimberly Wright and Jaia Pirrie, both 12-years-old, from Central Primary Gaelic medium school and Inverness Royal Academy student Andrew Dyce joined Inverness and Nairn Enterprise (INE) chief executive Stuart Black and Inverness Provost William Smith to unveil a banner bearing the branding theme at Falcon Square. Andrew, a member of the Highland Youth Voice, the area's youth parliament, last year became Scotland's youngest representative on a local enterprise company board when he took his place among INE directors at the age of 17.

The event was followed by an official campaign launch at Inverness Town House, where the Provost, Mr Black and City of Inverness Marketing Group co-ordinator Jean Ramsay Smith gave a detailed briefing on the initiative to an invited audience of leading figures from business and the public sector in the city.

Branding has become an increasingly important way of cities and regions competing for investment, tourism and prosperity. CIMG believes it is vital that Inverness, which is in direct competition with other centres in Scotland and the UK, projects an image that emphasises what it offers. The marketing campaign is not simply about producing a slogan or logo, but represents an attempt to summarise the key attributes of the area.

Research by the marketing group found that the main strength of Inverness was seen to be the quality of life associated with being located in one of the most beautiful regions in the world. That is why the campaign focuses on Inverness being the City in the Highlands. Inverness also projects an image of a place growing in confidence where new ideas and people are embraced and welcomed. The use of the term city reflects the granting of city status in 2000 and the positive attributes of confidence and dynamism that is bringing about.

The new brand identity, which has been developed by local consultancy Designmill Partnership Ltd, will be used in a range of promotional materials, such as a city guide, information, signage and websites. Banners will be displayed in the city centre and window stickers issued to shops, restaurants and bars. There are also plans to feature the branding at the main entry points to Inverness. The emphasis on the "in" of

Inverness will be used in a variety of ways such as exploreinverness, shopinverness and cultureinverness.

Over coming months the marketing group will be conducting workshops and seminars encouraging businesses to use the new branding. Companies will be able to adopt the branding free of charge to support their own marketing activities, presenting a consistent, modern image of the city to customers across the world.

Stuart Black, who chairs CIMG, said the city branding was a vital step in promoting the city.

He added: "Inverness is a success story and we want to build on that success. As a tourist destination, as a commercial centre and as a place to live, we have a lot to offer.

"We have therefore developed a new brand identity for Inverness that will project our unique style and personality more strongly than ever before.

"By co-ordinating our marketing and communication messages and speaking with a single voice, we can make sure that Inverness is seen and understood as the very special place it is.

"This has potentially huge benefits for Inverness, its economy and all of us who live and work here."

Provost William Smith, who is chairman of the City of Inverness and Area Committee of the Highland Council, said: "Everyone was so proud when Inverness became a city - now we want to promote the city so that everyone knows we are here and we are ready to do business.

"We must ensure that we sell Inverness as best we can and at the same time do everything to ensure we improve what we have to offer.

"We must be famous for the right reasons - we need to reinforce the qualities about Inverness that are positive, memorable, and attractive. The qualities which show us to be different from other cities."

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Notes to editors:

1. City of Inverness Marketing Group was formed in 2002 to develop brand positioning and a marketing strategy for the city. Its members are: The Highland Council; Inverness and Nairn Enterprise; HOST; Inverness City Centre Management & Events Management; Inverness Chamber of Commerce; Inverness Hotel Association; Inverness Bed & Breakfast Association, and Inverness Visitor Attractions.

2. A colour photograph is available free to accompany this release and can be sent in electronic format. Please contact Hugh Webster on tel: 01862 892298 or email: info@stockscotland.com

For further information contact:

Jean Ramsay Smith, CIMG, tel: 01463 233451

Stan Arnaud, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, tel: 01463 244244 Gordon Fyfe, The Highland Council, tel: 01463 702020