

Draft Media Release  
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## **Far North Tall Poppy crop thrives**

2009 won't be remembered as a year for business growth and prosperity - but that hasn't stopped Far North businesses lining up to contest this year's Top Energy Tall Poppy Business Awards.

Set up to recognise and celebrate excellence in business practice, the annual Tall Poppy Awards are contested throughout the Far North region and have been sponsored by local electricity generation and lines distribution company Top Energy since 2003.

According to Top Energy CEO, Russell Shaw the number of entries received is about the same as last year and, given the current state of the economy, a very encouraging result. 'Obviously I'm not privy to actual entries (as these remain confidential to the Judging Panel) but I do understand it's clear a lot of thought, time and effort has gone into many of the entries this year. I imagine we'll see the standard set very high again", he said.

A panel of three independent judges will preside over judging this year; Gary Gabbitas (Economic Development Officer with the Far North District Council and a Kaikohe resident), Maurice Penney (Top Energy Consumer Trust, Trustee and a resident of Pakaraka) and Jacky Stevens (Business Consultant and Russell resident). Entries will again be judged under strict criteria including, business development, marketing, systems & processes and leadership. For entries in the Trusts / Charities & Not-for-profit Organisations category, different and more appropriate judging criteria are set.

According to Shaw, the Tall Poppy Business Awards are now well established in the Far North region and are highly regarded by the business community. "Following last year's competition, 3 or 4 of our Tall Poppy winners went on to win in the Northland Regional Business Awards as well. What that tells me, is that there's a lot of savvy business people running excellent businesses here in the Far North and I'm looking forward to seeing them compete well again this year."

The Awards are announced and celebrated at an Awards Dinner & Presentation function, which is to be held on Saturday, 26 September 2009. END.

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