

Media Release

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Tall Poppy contenders thrive in the Far North

An all-time record, 50 plus entries have been received for the Top Energy 2006 Tall Poppy Business Awards as the judging process now gets underway.

The Tall Poppy Business Awards are designed to recognise and celebrate excellence in business practice and with Top Energy as Sponsor, are contested on a region-wide basis, in association with district Business Associations in Kaitaia, Kaikohe, Kerikeri, Paihia, Russell and Kawakawa.

Categories for this year's Awards are Retail, Manufacturing & Primary, Tourism & Hospitality, Export, Technology / Innovation and Service Industry.

Entries are again being judged under strict criteria, including business development, marketing, service levels, business growth and environmental, cultural & community sensitivities, by a panel of three 'regional judges': [Chair] Heather Ayrton, (Coroner, JP and resident of Kaikohe); Robin Shepherd (Top Energy Consumer Trust Deputy Chairman and Kaitaia resident); and John Halse (Enterprise Northland, Business & Industry Development and Russell resident) assisted by 'district judges', nominated by each Business Association, who will provide and 'local perspective' and conduct the mandatory site visits.

Says Roger de Bray, Top Energy Chief Executive, "As Kiwis, we don't seem to recognise business talent - or even value it in quite the same way we do with sporting success. So these Awards give our community a way to recognise and celebrate business excellence too. The Awards highlight outstanding business achievement - which in turn creates job opportunities, growth and wealth across our region. As sponsors, we're delighted to see so many Tall Poppies thriving in the Far North."

Following the judging over July / August, category winners from each district will be announced early September. They will then go through to a regional Awards competition, where the most deserving category and Supreme Award winners will be chosen from across the region and announced late October. END.

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