

NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY celebrates a win in Europe.

MasterCard award Newcastle Building Society best 'Multi-Channel Marketing Program'

Newcastle Building Society has been honoured..... At the 1st MasterCard Europe Prepaid Conference in Prague, MasterCard presented Newcastle Building Society with the best Multi-Channel Marketing Program award. Prepaid card specialists (programme managers, processors and issuing banks) gathered from around the globe for a gala dinner in the breathtaking 17th Century Troja Castle, in Prague on the 10th May 2007.

Newcastle Building Society, one of the strongest mutual building societies in the UK, turned its attention to issuing prepaid cards two years ago. This initiative has created new opportunities for the Society which has brought to the public a range of prepaid card programmes in association with companies such as Lastminute.Com, Club 18-30, Think Banking, Chequepoint, Bliss, Smash Hits and The Bullring shopping centre to the UK market and the Dundrum Shopping Centre and Perfect Card to the Irish Market.

Acting as electronic money, the prepaid card market is already a billion dollar industry in the US with Europe tipped to follow the same trend. Prepaid cards offer a number of applications ranging from a simple electronic gift to combating exclusion in our society by bringing the advantages of electronic payments to those people who don't already have a bank account.

Newcastle has recently further expanded its card operations from the UK and Ireland into Europe gaining licences to issue cards in Belgium and Germany with more countries including Spain, Malta and France to follow as part of a Europe wide SEPA licence agreement with MasterCard.

Colin Greaves, Operations Director, comments:

"As a keen innovator in the financial sector we are delighted to be recognised for this award. We continue to be really proud of the quality of schemes we are launching and feel our successes in this arena are aided by the strong partnerships we have established. This is an exciting time in this maturing marketplace. We believe the prepaid and managed debit platform offers tremendous potential for growth; already at the end of 2006 we saw the production of our 1 millionth card and with our new SEPA wide licence the opportunities to expand are now even greater."

MasterCard announced three further awards at the European Prepaid Conference - Best Newcomer 2006/7, Best Usage/Expansion Program 2006/7 and the Best Cardholder Service 2006/7. The best newcomer winner was Altair, who are key partners of NBS in developing and delivering a range of managed pre paid card programmes. The winners of the four categories were chosen by a special panel of independent judges and were based on excellence in prepaid innovation.

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About the conference

The 1st of MasterCard Worldwide and MasterCard Prepaid Annual Prepaid Conference's took place in Prague on the 10-11 May 2007. The key theme of the 2007 conference was 'Innovation delivered' and invited speakers to discuss global highlights of the industry, government and corporate prepaid propositions, opportunities and emerging challenges. The 2nd MasterCard Prepaid Conference will take place on the 8-9 May 2008 in Cannes, France.

About Newcastle Building Society

Newcastle Building Society is the biggest building society based in the North East and one of the strongest mutual building societies in the country. With assets under management of over

£4bn we are certainly large enough to cope but small enough to care deeply about the needs of our members.

The Newcastle Building Society is committed to remaining mutual and by doing so we feel we are better placed to continue to provide our investors with the quality of service expected from one of the country's strongest building societies.

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