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Kent fencing specialist claims South of England 'Business of the Year' prize at the Chamber Awards 2012

A fencing and access control specialist that celebrates its 65th birthday this year has secured a prestigious achievement for Kent after it was announced as the Chamber Awards 2012's Business of the Year for the South of England (sponsored by Westfield Health).

Jacksons Fencing, which employs nearly 200 people across its national operation, beat off competition from across the region to land the prestigious title, impressing judges with its ability to bounce back from recession through diversification, innovation and excellent customer service.

Originally a supplier of quality timber fencing for the farming community, the company has evolved dramatically from the early days and now provides a diverse product mix, which ranges from residential fencing and access control to security fencing, detection systems and specialist sports fencing.

Its client base is equally varied, with the Kent firm supplying the domestic marketplace, schools, prisons, high profile commercial premises, data centres and even embassies as far away as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The ability to target and service new sectors has definitely paid off for Jacksons, with the company expecting to turnover £22.4m in 2012 through its three fencing centres across England and international sales.

There were eight other winners from across the South of England, including a global relocation specialist, a bespoke solutions provider of online employee benefits and an entrepreneur who is transforming the legal profession.

The full list of Award winners includes:

- Acumen Business Law's Penina Shepherd (Entrepreneur of the Year)
- Carswell Gould (Marketing Campaign of the Year)
- HCR Ltd (Sustainability Award)
- Minimise Ltd (Most Promising New Business)
- MPR IT Solutions (Commitment to People Development)

- Nova IT Solutions (Excellence in Customer Service)
- Quorum Technologies (Achievement in International Business)
- Thomsons Online Benefits (Excellence in Innovation)

President of the British Chambers of Commerce Martyn Pellew said: "There has never been a more important time for businesses to showcase the amazing work they are doing on a day-to-day basis.

"The Chamber Awards is a perfect platform for them to do just that and receive the recognition and profile they deserve for helping move the economy forward and create employment, often in local areas."

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) Chamber Awards 2012 is committed to finding the best businesses in Britain through a series of regional heats followed by a National Final, due to be held at London's Guildhall on November 29th.

Now in its 9th year, the competition is one of the showcase events for the 'Business is Good for Britain' campaign that highlights the role of business as a positive force for the UK recovery and the success of local communities and individuals.

Jacksons Fencing, who is a member of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, received specific praise for its involvement in the launch of the Gate Safe Campaign (www.gate-safe.co.uk) in the wake of the tragic deaths of two young children in separate accidents.

The focus of the campaign is to raise awareness of the need for an enhanced understanding of automated gate safety amongst the professionals associated with the installation.

Following the presentation of a petition to 10 Downing Street, the company has worked tirelessly to gain the support of the HSE, RoSPA, IOSH (Institution of Occupational Safety & Health) and the Door Hardware Federation.

Key milestones to date include:

- A letter sent to education authorities urging them to check that all automated gates are compliant
- Development of new physical guidelines for automated gates
- Launch of Gate Safe Steering Group
- Hosted Gate Safe Summit 2012 in London
- On-going development of an accredited training course for installers/safety practitioners

Jacksons Fencing, along with the eight other winners, will now represent the South of England in their respective categories in the Grand Final, with the chance to win £25,000 and the title of "Outstanding Business Achievement", courtesy of the RBS Group.

Martyn concluded: "A record number of firms have taken part this year, all determined to prove that 'Business is Good for Britain!"

The Chamber Awards 2012 is supported by the RBS Group, BT Business, Dell, DHL Express, Westfield Health and Acua Limited.

For further information or to book your place at the National Awards Final, visit **www.chamberawards.co.uk**

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Notes to Editors

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is the national voice of local business.

The BCC sits at the heart of a powerful nationwide network of Accredited Chambers of Commerce, serving over **100,000 businesses** across the UK, which **employ over five million people**.

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