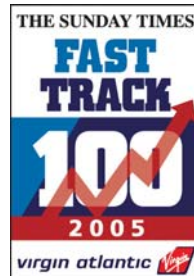


STOBARTS LTD 75TH OUT OF FASTEST GROWING 100 UK COMPANIES

West Cumbrian company announced in Sunday Times as one of the UK's fastest 100 growing companies, achieving 75th place nationally and 17th out of 21 Northern companies. Stobarts Ltd are the only Cumbrian company on the league tables achieving a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 65.69% between 2001 and 2004.



Cumbria, UK – Stobarts Ltd, a multidiscipline contractor in the construction, nuclear, decommissioning and facilities management industries, were today recognised as the 75th fastest growing company in this year's annual Sunday Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100 league table, published in the Sunday Times newspaper. The Sunday Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100 is the UK's most prestigious national league table of Britain's one hundred private companies with the fastest growing sales over a three-year period

Sir Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic who have sponsored the league table for the past nine years comments: "The 100 companies on this year's Sunday Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100, have on average more than doubled sales every year from 2001 to 2004, and their combined sales totalled £3.3 billion in 2004. They have collectively created over 18,781 new jobs since 2001 and directly employed 24,108 staff at the end of their 2004 financial year. They are all profitable and all were required to forecast an increase in sales this year."

Most of this year's Fast Track 100 companies are headquartered in London (31), the Southeast of England (26) and the North of England (21), with the remaining breakdown as follows: the Midlands (15), east of England (4), southwest of England (2), Scotland (1). There are no companies from Northern Ireland or Wales.

Stobarts Ltd also achieved a position of 17th out of the 21 companies based in the North of England and the only Cumbrian company to make this year's league table.

John Stobart, Managing Director comments: "To be recognised in the Sunday Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100 is a tremendous recognition of the hard work and commitment that all of our valued employees have displayed for over twenty years. Over the past four years we have gone from strength-to-strength with the pace of growth becoming ever faster. I am absolutely delighted to see Stobarts Ltd ranked as one of the UK's fastest growing companies and truly believe that this success will breed further prosperity for the company."

Stobarts Ltd have become a first choice contractor to many national and multinational organisations. Having invested substantially in training and development of its staff, along with technology and innovation, the company offers an unparalleled service in terms of expertise and customer service. Through training and development, the company has a unique ability to react responsively to customer requirements through a bank of suitably qualified and experienced personnel, which it can mobilise at short notice. For clients such as British Nuclear Group and UKAEA this means that the company has a unique ability to provide highly qualified personnel to the nuclear industry to take care of any eventuality at any time of day or year.

The company has been operating a strategy it's entitled 'Building Partnerships' for the past two years which seeks to reduce challenges in the supply-chain and foster an environment of trust and innovation. Both clients and suppliers to Stobarts Ltd benefit from their heavy investment in technology that reduces transaction costs in dealings with the company. Through these innovations Stobarts Ltd has developed prosperous partnerships that enable the company to be a first choice for many wishing to have multidiscipline works carried out in Cumbria.

The Fast Track research showed that with clients such as British Nuclear Group, the NHS, Cumbria County Council and the Environment Agency, sales have increased 66% a year, from an annualised £2.2m in 2001 to £9.8m in 2004. Also showing a healthy 2005 sales growth, Stobarts Ltd hopes to maintain its position in next year's Sunday Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100 league table.

About Stobbarts:

Established over 20 years ago by John Stobbart, in Workington, Cumbria, Stobbarts started supplying joinery services to major contractors in the area. Today after much success, the company leads as a major contractor on many projects throughout Cumbria, North Lancashire, South Scotland and Northumbria. Having vastly expanded the scale and scope of the services it can provide in-house the company continues to go from strength-to-strength it now acts as a multidiscipline company, currently employing 240 people directly across a number of sites in construction and facilities management roles. The company has achieved profitable growth successively for a number of years through a skilled and trained workforce, providing high quality services to a diverse client portfolio. Core skills include, but are not limited to: building, civil engineering, demolition, decommissioning, ground works, term contracts, nuclear works, formwork, joinery, responsive repairs and maintenance. www.stobbarts.com

About Fast Track:

Fast Track is an Oxford-based research, publishing and networking events company that tracks Britain's top-performing private companies and entrepreneurs. Fast Track was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who is also an associate fellow of Templeton College, Oxford University.

In addition to the Fast Track 100, it also produces the Tech Track 100 league table of the fastest-growing technology companies, the Profit Track 100, which is based on profit growth, the Top Track 250, which ranks Britain's biggest middle-market companies and the Top Track 100, which ranks Britain's biggest private companies. www.fasttrack.co.uk

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