

Investment boost for young Donegal entrepreneurs

BY KATE HEANEY

SANTA Claus came early this year for two enterprising young Loughanure brothers when they received an investment of €4,500 for their unique pen manufacturing business.

A listener to RTE's Morning Ireland show on Monday was so impressed by Ronan (14) and Conor (11) McGarvey he decided to provide them with a new workshop and lathe to assist their expansion. Alan Grant of Expert Hardware told the Donegal News yesterday he was "passing on the good karma" he received when he set up his own business in 2005.

Ronan and Conor were thrilled with the offer from Mr Grant which will provide the brothers with improved working space and a new lathe to turn the wood for the pens.

Earlier this year the McGarvey brothers launched Donegal Pens business, creating unique hand made pens from a range of native and exotic woods.

When Mr Grant heard on Morning Ireland that the entrepreneurial brothers were too young to qualify for any business government grants and the banks would not entertain them, he decided to back them.

The broadcast resulted in retailers offering to stock their pens and individual orders which came in by phone and email.

The very grateful boys were back on radio yesterday morning to graciously accept Mr Grant's offer.

Speaking to the Donegal News

Conor said they were thrilled with the offers which had been pouring in since their radio broadcast.

"We are very excited about the offers and having a bigger workshop will definitely make a difference as our own shed is on the small side. We also got ordered for pens from people who were listening to the Morning Ireland show so that will help to boost sales as well," Conor said.

Orders for their pens have been coming in from across the globe to their Donegal pens website.

Mr Grant said his company would also assist the boys with expertise from their head office to include marketing and mentoring.

"It is great to get a chance to pass on the good karma we got when we set up our business which represents small and medium hardware stores where the owner is behind the counter. The boys came up with the idea and made it work and have to be admired for that. People still have time to order pens which will make very special Christmas gifts for friends and family and support a growing business," Mr Grant added.

The finely crafted pens are made from a variety of native and imported woods including bog oak, yew, ash, elm, beech, olive, walnut and spalted beech.

"We also get foreign timbers such as olive wood on eBay. There's a smell of wine off of it when you turn it!" Ronan added.

Each pen is individually turned, polished, waxed and then examined to



Brothers Ronan, 14, and Conor Mc Garvey, 11, of Loughanure.

make sure they are in optimum condition.

To hone their woodturning skills and to learn more from masters of the trade, the brothers are now members of the Irish Woodturners' Guild.

The pens are currently on sale in Gweedore, Donegal Airport, Glen-

vagh National Park, Ionad Cois Locha, An Clachan Craft Centre, Peace of Earth Pottery and Crafts, Mullaghderg, The Craft Shop, Donegal Town and The Craft Shop, Kilmacrennan and from the website www.donegalpens.com.

'Loss of Garda cars will have no impact'

THERE is no immediate threat to the fleet of garda cars in Donegal, a senior Inspector has confirmed.

At this week's meeting of the Letterkenny Joint Policing Committee, Cllr Tom Crossan raised concerns that a number of patrol cars were to be lost in Donegal.

In asking Inspector Gately for clarification, Cllr Crossan asked: "I have read recently that we are to lose six patrol cars and I would like to know if they are all to go from the Letterkenny area?"

Inspector Gately confirmed that the loss of garda cars would be across the entire Donegal Garda Division and added: "I don't think there is any immediate danger of the loss of any of our fleet. It won't impair or impact on the service we provide to any person that needs it. This is a situation that is occurring nationwide."

Cllr Dessie Larkin also said it must also be noted that the only confirmed closure of garda stations in Donegal to date have occurred in stations which have been unmanned for a number of years.

"I think it has to be welcomed that there has been no closure of stations which are actively operating. I would suggest that we write to the Department and welcome this fact. It would also service to enhance the fact that we cannot afford closures of stations in Donegal which are manned."



Cheering on competitors crossing the finish line at the annual 'Turkey Trot' organised by Letterkenny Athletic Club.

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