

Press release: 13th October 2006

Irish in America told, “Roscommon needs you” – Western Development Commission to attract Irish New Yorkers back home

The Western Development Commission (WDC) is to highlight the opportunities available to those wishing to live and work in county Roscommon at the upcoming FÁS Jobs Ireland event in New York City. Whether those attending are Irish, Irish American or have no connection at all with Ireland, the WDC will promote the prospect of job and business opportunities and the great lifestyle offered in towns like Boyle, Roscommon and the rest of the Western Region.

According to Gillian Buckley, CEO of the WDC, “Many of those Irish living in the States may not realise that the West of Ireland has changed dramatically in recent years. Over 40,000 people have moved into the seven western county region over the past four years. The West has experienced considerable economic and social development in the past few years. There has been significant population growth, new and growing industries - very many of them American, with exciting job opportunities.

“The West is now recognised as a vibrant, exciting place to live and work, with thriving towns, wonderful villages and regenerated rural areas. We are attending the Fás Exhibition in New York to promote the Western Region. Many people have made the move West in recent years and the WDC has also had enquiries from people in the US through our www.lookwest.ie website, some of whom were interested in setting up businesses ‘back home’”.

The *LookWest* campaign has been very successful in drawing attention to the benefits of life in the West. Over 100,000 people have accessed the website www.lookwest.ie since its launch and the skills register on the site has attracted people to give details of their qualifications and skills. To date, the advertising and promotion of Look West has been targeted primarily at the greater Dublin area with some advertising on overseas websites and media. Ms. Buckley said “this event gives us a unique opportunity to talk to thousands of New York based Irish people face to face and to bring the message of *LookWest* to a much wider overseas audience.”

“Of those people who may be considering a move back to Ireland, they may think that Dublin is their only option in terms of job opportunities, services, lifestyle and entertainment. *LookWest* can show them how much more towns like Boyle, Roscommon and the West in general has to offer, with a wide range of high skilled jobs available, shorter commuting times, good quality, more affordable housing, cheaper services and overall a less stressful lifestyle”.

Ms Buckley urged “We are asking that people throughout County Roscommon who have friends and families in the US, to tell them about the FÁS event where we can inform them about the opportunities available, whether they are looking for a job, planning on setting up a business or interested in relocating an existing business.”