

Bombardier scoop top business award

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HI-TECH manufacturer Bombardier Transportation UK Ltd has been named Plymouth's Business of the Year at The Herald's Business Awards.

The Estover-based plant took the top accolade at a sold-out and high-profile black-tie ceremony compered by TV star Angela Rippon, at Boringdon Park, Plympton, last night.

The firm, which employs about 90 people making railway signalling technology, received the honour, sponsored by the Positively Plymouth brand, in front of 300 of Plymouth's leading business figures.

Announcing Bombardier's victory, Miss Rippon said: "With such a high standard of entry in all categories, the judges were slightly unnerved at the prospect of having to decide which of all the entries should be given tonight's coveted title of business of the year.

"But the winning business is one at the forefront of the priority sectors identified in the city's local economic strategy.

"It is a firm which requires high skill levels, which engages with the community and which is an innovator as well as a leader."

Bombardier was one of 13 category winners, announced from a shortlist of 37 firms and individuals, themselves whittled down from 147 nominees.

The awards were presented by The Herald, supported by Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, in a bid to highlight the best of Plymouth business.

In his speech, Bill Martin, editor of The Herald, said: "This is the first time we have presented The Herald's business awards since 2007 when our ceremony reflected an economic climate very different from today's.

"Things have been tough, for many they still are, but what has been clear is that as all businesses have been forced to face some of the toughest questions and challenges, many small and large have continued to flourish despite the cold winds of recession and retraction.

"That progress, that determination, aspiration, and excellence is reflected here by all of you tonight."

He said this year's field of entries was exceptional in both quantity and quality, and that even being shortlisted was "quite some achievement".

"We have also rarely enjoyed such support for a celebration of business in Plymouth of this kind," he said.