



For its 80th anniversary, SWA will stage a one-day conference at Doubletree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro, Perthshire.

SWA MARKS 80TH ANNIVERSARY WITH FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND TRAINING

DEVELOPING a skilled workforce and working with members to invest in the future sustainability of the wholesale industry is top of the agenda for the Scottish Wholesale Association (SWA) in its 80th anniversary year.

The Edinburgh-based trade body will discuss both these issues at a special industry conference to mark this significant milestone in its history this autumn.

Chief executive Colin Smith explained: "We want to inspire a new generation of wholesalers to take an active role in protecting and developing the industry and if our members are to continue on their current growth trajectory they must invest in their people.

"As an industry we must also encourage young people starting out on their work journey to look at wholesale as a viable option for a fulfilling career with prospects."

Smith confirmed that the SWA will stage a one-day conference at Doubletree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro in Perthshire on Thursday, 1st October, followed by a celebratory Highland gala banquet at Stirling Castle that evening.

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Colin Smith, Chief Executive, SWA.

"It's a special year for us so we're moving away from our usual summer weekend conference and changing the format," he said. "We need to ring the changes and we are also responding to members' feedback calling for a shorter, different annual event."

In 2020, in addition to focusing on training, the SWA will place further emphasis on the need for Scottish wholesalers to tackle the many environmental challenges facing the industry – from transport and energy to packaging and waste.

“We’re already working on members’ behalf to highlight the full and potentially damaging effects that the deposit return scheme (DRS) will have on the food and drink wholesale industry,” Smith pointed out. “As an industry we want to play our part in protecting the environment but our actions must be measured and not stifle our members’ growth and competitiveness.”

“Our theme for 2020 is ‘Harnessing a Sustainable Future for Wholesale’ and this will be central to all of our activity during the year.”

Further details on the SWA’s training programme, and the official launch of its new Training Academy, will be unveiled in due course.

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“Let’s not forget that wholesalers deliver £2.9 billion to Scotland’s economy – we’re a huge industry,” Smith continued. “We have members who are building new depots and expanding their premises, others who are implementing technology to fuel future growth and some who are diversifying into new business areas.

“Our aim is to ensure that the wholesale industry is an attractive one to work in by creating a legacy that will inspire the next generation – and, of course, training, business building, and lobbying and legislation will also be at the forefront of everything we do.”

THEMES

THE THEMES that will be covered will include how wholesale has and will continue to sustain its presence as *THE* route to market for the independent channel. The conference will also present how members are looking at the global context of our actions and environmental challenges to redress the way we’re doing business both within our physical premises but also the way we relate/deal with our customers.

Colin Smith added: “Harnessing a sustainable future will present members with real-life examples, as well as future developments, of where being more responsible in the way we do business improves business performance.

“Those who don’t change and see the opportunities may be left behind as their customers – and their customers’ customers – demand that the food and drink supply chain becomes more environmentally sustainable.

“Consumers will increasingly demand information on everything from the way in which food is grown, sourced and certified to how it is stored, packed and distributed through to how it is served, presented and recycled.”



Stirling Castle, the venue for SWA’s celebratory Highland gala banquet on 1st October 2020.