Omagh’s Kyle scoops NI ‘Young Apprentice of the Year’ title

THE best local construction apprentices from across Northern Ireland tested their skills in 11 different construction trades at Skillbuild NI 2015 held at Belfast Metropolitan College’s Castlereagh campus in April. Skillbuild NI, run and governed by CITB, is held annually each Spring with the top local construction apprentices competing to win coveted titles in skills areas ranging from brickwork to wall and floor tiling. The winners may then go on to represent Northern Ireland in the Skills Show UK and potentially at WorldSkills.

South West College (SWC) scooped 12 medals across eight competitive disciplines and secured gold in carpentry, electrical installation, joinery and painting and decorating. Local apprentice, Kyle Weir, from South West College was also awarded the title of ‘Young Apprentice of the Year.’

Commending the competitors on their hard work and dedication shown in their area of expertise, Employment and Learning Minister Dr Stephen Farry said: “Skills are widely accepted as a key driver in how Northern Ireland can achieve our economic goals and developing the skills and talents of our young people is central to enabling local businesses to develop and grow, to improve our collective prosperity and meet the present and future needs of our economy.

“This competition is an excellent opportunity for our young people in the construction sector to showcase and celebrate their high level of skills and talent, as well as reflecting the high standards of training in our further education colleges and training organisations. Skills competitions are an essential part of the pursuit of excellence in our training systems and working practices.

“Northern Ireland has a proud record of success in skills competitions at regional, national and world level. I am confident once again Northern Ireland will have an excellent representation on Team UK competing at WorldSkills 2015 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in August.”

The competition is supported by the Department for Employment and Learning, Construction Employers Federation, Haldane Fisher, City and Guilds, Colleges NI and the Health and Safety Executive, along with local construction employers who sponsor each competition category.

Maurice Johnston, Chairman CITB NI, said: “Skillbuild NI is the premier skills competition for construction and we recognise the accomplishments of all the competitors taking part in the 2015 finals. This competition provides the perfect platform to demonstrate the enormous talent we have in the construction industry in Northern Ireland, helping to showcase the professionalism of our brightest recruits and industry as a whole. Skillbuild NI couldn’t happen without the support of the local sponsors and we thank the local employers for investing in the future of the construction industry.

Speaking about the continued success of South West College (SWC) in the Skillbuild competition arena, Maria Hackett, head of training department at SWC, said: “I am truly delighted and would like to congratulate all the trainees on their magnificent achievements. The students worked extremely hard to achieve this success. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment of their lecturers who supported the students in their preparation for the competition finals.”

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South West College apprentice and silver medal winner in the plastering and dry wall category of the Skillbuild NI 2015 finals held in Belfast Metropolitan College, Dylan Wilkinson, from Omagh, is congratulated by his tutor, Noel McIntyre. SU2027LD

Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning, congratulates Kyle Weir, from Omagh, who was awarded the ‘Young Apprentice of the Year’ title at the Skillbuild NI 2015 finals held in Belfast Metropolitan College. Kyle was also the gold winner in joinery. He is congratulated by television presenter, Sarah Travers, and Maurice Johnston, chairman of the CITB NI. SU2029LD

Gold medal winner in the electrical installation category of the Skillbuild NI 2015 finals was Fivemiletown student, Stuart Graham, who studies at the South West College, Omagh campus. He is pictured with Maurice Johnston, chairman CITB NI., television presenter, Sarah Travers and Minister for Employment and Learning, Dr Stephen Farry. SU2028LD