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## **HEART OF ENGLAND AWARDS INSPIRES EXCELLENCE**

The cream of the Heart of England's tourism industry was celebrated at a glittering awards ceremony in Birmingham last night.

The premier tourism providers from across the West Midlands were joined by industry stakeholders, and media at the annual Heart of England Excellence in Tourism Awards ceremony at the International Convention Centre.

Hosted by BBC presenters Nick Owen and Suzanne Virdee, the awards celebrated the very best in tourism from Birmingham, The Black Country, Staffordshire, Coventry and Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire.

Brian Summers, chairman of Tourism West Midlands said, "The calibre of the winners is the highest I have ever seen. The wonderful ceremony last night made me very proud to be involved in tourism – which is truly at the heart of the West Midlands' economy and culture.

"This year we have had record entries and a record attendance. All the winners demonstrated outstanding levels of customer service, plus exemplary facilities. They have also shown a deep commitment to sustainability, the environment and being accessible to all.

"I was delighted to see a range of new and more established attractions attending, clearly demonstrating that the tourism sector isn't standing still, but is constantly looking forward and growing.

"Thank you to everyone who entered and who was involved in the awards for your commitment, passion and dedication."

Winners of the publicly voted awards, sponsored by the Orion radio group, for Best Day Out, was won by Alton Towers and the award for Best Pub, sponsored by the Publican, went to the Armoury, Shrewsbury.

The Outstanding Contribution Awards (Individual/Organisation) went to Ian Walden OBE of the Black Country Museum and to Drayton Manor Theme Park.

All gold winners will be entered into the national Enjoy England Awards to represent the West Midlands in early 2010.

**For further information please contact David, Suzie or Jenni at BHMG Marketing on 0121 236 2871.**