

## ■ Digital support group to significantly expand its services £1½million boost for DPN

by Max Channon  
Staff reporter

PENZANCE based Digital Peninsula Network has received a massive boost – an Objective One grant worth around £1½million.

DPN, which supports a fast growing group of over 220 creative, knowledge and IT businesses in West Cornwall, has been given the go ahead for a £530,000 two-and-a-half year project to significantly expand its services.

With Objective One support, DPN plans to assist its members in generating long term, sustainable increases in turnover and jobs by providing technology, support and services that the cluster of small and micro businesses need to grow.

It will also enable smaller members and start-ups to interact with more established high growth members.

A key objective is to help the membership 'download' wealth from contracts outside Cornwall and beyond the UK.

The project will see the network's digital facility centre in Brewer's Yard, Penzance, have its facilities upgraded with new equipment and software that members require.

It will also offer members extremely fast broadband, remote access to e-mail plus improved online and on site training and meeting facilities.

Membership costs start at \$5 per month and members include website designers, new media companies, consultants, photographers, filmmakers, IT support businesses and digital artists.

The network has also helped start up businesses, creating work for people who were previously unemployed.

DPN chairman John Cowles said:



□ Digital Peninsula Network celebrates getting Objective One funding. Front row, left to right: Simon Reed (Penwith Council), Caroline Sargent (Penwith Council business liaison officer), John Cowles (chairman DPN), Andrew George MP and Peter Stephens (project manager, Cornwall Enterprise).

"More and more skilled individuals and companies are relocating or returning to Cornwall as the ability to work anywhere makes this possible.

"Now Cornwall has broadband it is becoming a fantastic location for digital businesses.

"For those of us already here, our geographical remoteness is finally becoming less of a barrier.

"We are extremely grateful to the South West Regional Development Agency and to Penwith District Council for vigorously supporting our bid.

"They and other funding partners, including BT, have recognised that Cornwall's economic future lies in new technology and the development of fast moving and flexible small businesses that can exploit it.

"Our aim has always been to make Cornwall the 'digital peninsula' – now that dream is becoming a reality."

Penwith Council's chief executive Jim McKenna welcomed the news that DPN's Objective One bid has been successful.

"We are delighted this project is going ahead. The network will help to

make Penwith one of the most digital rural districts in the UK – an ideal base for ICT companies as well as an area where e-government flourishes.

"Penzance is already proving itself to be a hotspot for new media and knowledge businesses.

"We will work with DPN to grow this cluster and spread its benefits across the whole of Penwith."

■ Anyone wanting more information or to join the network should call Pz 333700.