

US ONLINE GIANT AMAZON OPENS IN WALES

Today (April 16) marks the official opening of Amazon's new logistics centre in Swansea Bay, Wales, an investment which will create 1,000 new jobs this year with a further 1,700 full and part-time over the next five years.

First Minister for Wales Rhodri Morgan said, "This is one of the biggest investments announced in Wales since the creation of the Welsh Assembly Government nine years ago. It is a powerful shot in the arm for the Welsh economy and the Swansea Bay area in particular. I am proud of the role that the Assembly Government has played in attracting Amazon to Wales."

"Amazon is an iconic global company right at the forefront of the e-economy," he said. "It is one of only a handful of truly world brands that have emerged since the internet changed the way we live our lives, alongside Google, eBay, AOL and more recently Facebook and MySpace..

"To have such a big name in e-commerce set up a major European base in Swansea Bay, bringing with it more than a thousand permanent jobs and almost double that at peak seasons, is an outstanding achievement for Wales.

"Other e-economy companies will sit up and take notice of Amazon's decision to opt for Wales and the impressive turn-around time from the initial approach to completion, and put us on their short list.

"The speed of delivery of this project has been exceptional, taking just 16 months from initial approaches between Amazon and the Assembly Government to the opening of this mega-facility. It is an absolutely text-book example of how to do regional economic development.

"In that time the 33 acre site has been cleared and prepared, a new access road and the reconfiguration of the existing road and roundabout completed, and the new centre built and fitted out with state-of-the-art computerised systems.

"The Assembly Government led on the overall process of attracting Amazon to Wales and in negotiating the grant package deal. Neath Port Talbot Borough Council led on infrastructure provision and planning.

"Partnership has been the key to this success and Team Wales looks forward to working closely with Amazon to ensure their on-going success and development in Wales. It is an extremely important investment creating thousands of new jobs that will offer a range of flexible working opportunities for people in the area.'

The Swansea Bay facility is the largest of Amazon's four UK centres – the others being in Glenrothes and Gourock in Scotland and Milton Keynes in England.

Amazon will recruit over 1,000 new employees this year to fill a mixture of permanent and temporary roles. Over the next five years the workforce will grow to 1,200 permanent and 1,500 temporary jobs. They will all be based at the flagship centre, which sends a wide range of items available from amazon.co.uk direct to the customer and also provides extra capacity for an ever-increasing selection of products.

Notes for editors

Amazon.co.uk announced plans for the development of the new Swansea Bay centre in March 2007.

The company describes it as a Fulfilment Centre because items are delivered directly to customers from the site. The term distribution centre refers to an operation which sends out goods to another site before it reaches the customer.

The new access road built by the Welsh Assembly Government will also provide access to other development sites that the Assembly Government will be bringing to the market.

Amazon is one of the fastest growing companies in the world, having been launched from the founder's home in Seattle USA in 1995. By 2006, global turnover was \$10.76 billion, and it continues to grow by 25 per cent year-on-year.

Originally billing itself as the world's largest bookstore, Amazon now also sells a vast range of goods including CDs, DVDs, electrical equipment and a wide range of items for the home. New product categories are continually being introduced.

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