



2007 - Progressive continues on course of steady growth

At the Society's 93rd Annual General Meeting held in Ballymena on 29 April Dr Joan Smyth, Chairman, reviewed the performance of Progressive during 2007. She said, "The past year was a challenging period for the mortgage sector as the strong rise in local property values came to a halt and the global credit crunch created stresses in the financial markets that contributed to the problems experienced by Northern Rock Bank. The key factor leading to Northern Rock's difficulties was an insatiable appetite for growth. In contrast, Progressive's strategy for many years has been that of steady, organic growth and this ensured that the Society did not become overextended due to excessive lending. We continued to provide a safe haven for our Members' savings and all our key indicators showed a further strengthening of the Society."

Savings receipts rose by 10% to £357 million. This was a record figure and reflected the Society's efforts to provide a high return to Members.

Despite the halt in the rise in property values experienced last year mortgage products remained in demand and lending increased by 7%, to £294 million.

The rise in business volumes, careful management of interest margins and tight control of costs all contributed to a 3% increase in pre-tax profit to £9 million with over £6 million being added to reserves, after tax.

The Society's drive for efficiency continued last year with the result that Progressive's management expenses to assets ratio improved further in 2007 to 0.55%, one of the best efficiency ratios in the building society sector.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2008 the Chairman said, "Whilst house purchase transactions may have slowed we will be able to achieve our business targets by filling the gap with re-mortgage business attracted from competitors and, having reviewed our business in the first quarter of the year, I am pleased to say that both mortgage and savings business is running ahead of our targets and we expect to have another very successful year.

We do expect uncertainty in the financial markets to continue, probably into 2009, but, due to our strong funding base, we will be able to continue doing business as normal until confidence in the banking sector returns".



Dr Joan Smyth

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IT'S A GREAT TIME TO OPEN A PROGRESSIVE CASH ISA

Now that we've entered into a new tax year there's never been a better time for taxpayers to use their cash ISA allowance. You can top up an existing ISA or open a new one and the interest earned is tax-free.

You can invest in two separate ISAs each tax year - a stocks and shares ISA and a cash ISA.

At Progressive we offer the cash ISA. You can open a cash ISA for as little as £10. You can add to this at any time up to the yearly subscription limits (for the current tax year the limit is £3,600).

Rates as at 1st May 2008 are:

£30,000+	5.75% (gross/AER)
£25,000—£29,999	5.35%
£20,000—£24,999	5.15%
£ 10—£19,999	5.05%

If you have an ISA elsewhere, why not ask to transfer it to Progressive? Why not call into one of our branches and discuss your ISA with our cashiers?

MICHAEL BOYD - MARATHON DES SABLES

In Issue 5 of Homegrown News we printed an article informing Members that Michael Boyd, our Secretary and Head of Risk Management, intended to take part in what is billed as the toughest footrace in the world - running more than 150 miles through the Sahara Desert - the Marathon des Sables. We are delighted to update you with the news that Michael not only completed the race but came in number 345 out of a total of 801 runners. He also managed to raise in excess of £13,000 for his chosen charity - Wooden Spoon. This is a phenomenal result and we would like to offer our congratulations to Michael on this magnificent achievement.

TOP TALKER WINS THE LAST WORD ON "SIZE ZERO" TOPIC

Grace Stafford, a pupil of Royal School, Dungannon, took first place in the 25th Annual Youth Award Public Speaking competition, supported by Progressive Building Society.

Organised by Soroptimist International, the Northern Ireland competition is open annually to female students who are in Years 12 & 13, and are in full time education. The final recently took place in Bangor Grammar School.

Representing the Dungannon Soroptimists, Grace won the opportunity to speak out about the topic "Size Zero: dying to be thin", by competing in her local heat of the competition.

As the winner, Grace took home the Soroptimist Youth Award Perpetual Salver (donated by Oneida), a bursary award of £250 towards her education, and an invitation to deliver a speech at the Joint Soroptimist conference in the Royal Hotel & Leisure Centre, Bray, Co. Wicklow (16th - 18th May). Her school received a prize of £150 book tokens.

Speaking at the event, Elaine Molyneaux, Progressive Building Society, said, "Progressive is proud to support this competition that encourages young women to develop such valuable tools as good communication skills. I've been highly impressed by what I've heard - both the content and delivery of the speeches have been excellent. These young women have developed the skills and abilities necessary to voice their opinions on topical subjects in an informed and confident manner. It is not surprising that this competition is recognised within many educational establishments as one of the premier public speaking events in Northern Ireland."

Congratulating all girls on making it to the final, Jennifer Loughridge, Regional President, Soroptimist International, said, "Soroptimist International has been running Public Speaking Competitions for young women since 1982 to promote and encourage young women to meet, compete and to widen their horizons. We are delighted to be working alongside Progressive Building Society whose very generous support has helped enhance our work with young women in Northern Ireland during our silver anniversary of the competition. Last but not least, thanks must go to all the participants, their teachers and parents. Everyone has been very supportive which encourages us to strive for growth year after year."



Grace Stafford, winner of the Soroptimist International's 25th Annual Youth Award Public Speaking competition, pictured receiving her award from Elaine Molyneaux, Progressive Building Society (left) and Jennifer Loughridge, Regional President, Soroptimist International.



Grace Stafford, winner of the Soroptimist International's 25th Annual Youth Award Public Speaking competition, supported by Progressive Building Society.

COMMUNITY AWARDS

Progressive is always keen to hear from its Members about local community groups who are committed to working for the benefit of their local communities, which is why it set up the Progressive Building Society Community Awards Scheme a couple of years ago.

The Community Award Scheme's panel of judges meets several times each year and Members are encouraged to apply as early as possible for each round of funding. Simply pick up a form from your local Progressive Building Society Branch and return it promptly to ensure that the project will be considered for an Award in the next round.

In the last round of awards, Progressive donated over £5,000 in total to support seven community groups. The groups who received awards in the round were: Armagh Athletic Club, Fishermen's Mission, Ballymena Area Children's Contact Service, Aware Defeat Depression, Assisi Animal Sanctuary, Sirocco Works FC, and Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Awards granted ranged from £200 to £2000, depending on the project and its estimated costs. Activities supported typically ranged from those requiring training materials or equipment to those needing marketing support, for example, to produce materials that will help raise awareness of their group's services.



Pictured getting in some practice for the Armagh Road Race that will be assisted by a Progressive Community Award is (third from right) Progressive's Tommy O'Neill with Armagh Athletic Club representatives (from left) Stephen Kerr, Luke O'Neill, Dermot Kerr, Danielle Fegan and Shane Kerr.



A Community Award helped ASSISI Animal Sanctuary meet increasing costs that escalate in the new year period when unwanted 'Christmas presents' are often brought into them. Pictured depicting the problem is Tara Smith, Animal Welfare Assistant, holding 8-week-old pup Cher, and Progressive's Ian Nelson, with 8-year-old Ned. Ian got his own dog, Rory, from ASSISI in Autumn 2007.



Pictured with a booklet entitled "Depression in Later Life", which will be updated and reprinted thanks to a Community Award, is Noel Murray, Progressive Building Society, and Margaret Wedlock, Aware Defeat Depression.



Representatives of The Fishermen's Mission, Patricia Slater, Volunteer, and Alex Slater, Senior Superintendent are pictured receiving a 'life line' Community Award from (left) Trevor James, Area Manager, Progressive. The Award contributed to their "Action for Disaster" Fund that helps families in times of tragedy at sea.

Pictured at the presentation of a Community Award that has helped Ballymena Area Children's Contact Service expand its services to Antrim, by equipping the coordinator with IT equipment, is (left) William Burgess, Progressive Building Society, with the group's Christine Bell, Ballymena Coordinator, and Richard Marshall, Vice Chair of the Management Committee.



COMPETITION

To be in with the chance of winning £50 worth of Marks & Spencer vouchers simply answer the following question and send your answer along with your name, address and contact number to Homegrown News Readers Competition, 33/37 Wellington Place, BELFAST, BT1 6HH or drop it into any branch or agent.

What is the maximum investment that can be made into a Progressive cash ISA per tax year?

Employees and Agents of the Society and their families are not eligible to enter.

Competition closes: 1st September 2008. The winner will be notified in writing and his/her name will appear in the next edition of Homegrown News.

The winner of our Member's Feedback Questionnaire draw was Mrs. Emmeline Dorrian from Portavogie. Congratulations!

AWARDS FOR TOP PERFORMERS

At the Annual General Meeting on 29 April, the Chairman, Dr Joan Smyth, presented the coveted Branch of the Year Award to Amanda Wilson - Branch Manager, Omagh. Amanda was delighted to accept the award on behalf of her team and Declan Moore (Area Manager) was on hand to offer his congratulations on a job well done.

Other awards included:

Mortgage Sales Award — **Enniskillen**
Productivity Award — **Wellington Place, Belfast**
Cross-Sales Award — **Donegall Square South, Belfast**
Savings Sales Award — **Portadown**
Customer Service Award — **Ballymena**

The Chairman offered her congratulations to the winners and commented that the Society really could not have achieved the level of success that was enjoyed without a tremendous effort from all parts of the Society.

The Society has donated £2,000 to the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice - the amount was raised by the Society offering to donate 20p for every voting form returned during the Annual General Meeting this year.



Branch Manager (Omagh) Amanda Wilson (right) pictured receiving her Branch of the Year Award from Chairman Dr Joan Smyth and Chief Executive Bill Webb.



Area Manager (Enniskillen) Declan Moore (right) being congratulated by Chairman Dr Joan Smyth and Chief Executive Bill Webb.

RETIREMENT OF MR. ROBERT CULLEN—DIRECTOR

Another presentation took place after the Annual General Meeting—this time it was the turn of Mr. Robert Cullen to receive a 'memento' on behalf of the Board for 15 years of loyal service to the Board of the Society. Robert Cullen joined the Board in May 1993 and took up the seat that his father had just vacated following his 10 years as a Progressive Director.

In her speech the Chairman commented that a 25 year relationship with the Cullen family had come to an end and that the Society's links with the family, and Mr. Robert Cullen in particular, had been a very fruitful one. Robert's expertise, wise counsel and friendship will be sorely missed by all his colleagues on the Progressive Board.

We all wish Robert continued success and much happiness in the years ahead.



Robert Cullen (right) reviewing the 2007 Annual Report with Chairman Dr Joan Smyth and Chief Executive Bill Webb.