



MCP receives NHO's 2005 Innovation Award

Grimstad, Norway, August 31, 2005: Maritime Communications Partner (MCP), the world's leading provider of mobile phone coverage at sea, has been awarded the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry's (NHO's) Innovation Award for 2005.

The award was presented to MCP by Norway's Crown Prince Haakon at a ceremony on August 30, organized by "Småtinget", a group of business leaders and politicians established by the NHO. The assembled members honored MCP's innovative mobile technology, which enables users aboard cruise ships and ferries to make mobile phone calls while at sea.

According to Trygve Sten Gustavsen, CEO and co-founder of MCP, the award is a welcome surprise for the company. "Three years ago, we saw that the major mobile phone operators were concentrating on customers on land. We wanted to provide mobile coverage where it was non-existent," he says. "The choice was between air and sea, so we chose the large passenger ships." Gustavsen accepted the award with his three partners, all former Ericsson engineers, who together, started the company in 2002.

World-leading mobility at sea

Gustavsen says NHO's Innovation Award will help boost the company's growth. "The American market is important to us and since Americans tend to do business with market leaders, we anticipate strong growth in this region," says Gustavsen. "So far, we have only two competitors, but we believe that we have the industry's best technical and commercial solution."

In addition to its industry leading solutions, MCP's greatest market advantage is that the company targeted international customers from the very beginning. Indeed, the company has reached agreements with more than 150 international telecom operators and is supplying large ships with antennas, cables and other vital communications equipment. MCP already provides equipment and services to more than 20 vessels, and at present, is negotiating with various global cruise ship companies to equip an additional 120 vessels with MCP solutions.

Innovative solutions, commercial success

In 2004, MCP had a turnover of NOK 8 million. This year, turnover is anticipated to exceed NOK 30 million. The founders and employees currently own about 20 percent of the shares in MCP, while Telenor has approximately 34 percent. MCP has also attracted capital from Northzone Ventures, Andreas Ugland, Innovation Norway and Sørlandets Teknologisenter.

As the world's first maritime cellular operator, MCP solutions are innovative. By installing a radio network onboard the vessels, signals can be transferred to the PLMN network via satellite, linking the vessel with terrestrial networks. As a fully recognised international cellular operator, MCP is capable of handling all legal and regulatory challenges associated with state-of-the-art technology and service solutions it provides to its customers.

"MCP is an excellent example of how new, highly competitive companies can emerge based on the expertise gained by individuals trained in larger, established companies," says senior adviser Rasmus Falck of NHO. "Increasingly, we are seeing former employees of big multinationals break off to start their own business -- with local help. This is a formula for success we expect to see more of in Norway," he says.



About Maritime Communications Partner AS:

MCP is the global maritime cellular operator focused on providing cost effective GSM and CDMA communications solutions specially created to fulfill the requirements of the shipping industry. MCP provides seamless connectivity via personal mobile phones to both passengers and crew onboard cruise ships, ferries and other vessels around the world.

For more information about MCP, please visit our website www.mcpinc.biz

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About the NHO

The NHO has been rewarding innovation since 1981. The purpose of the Innovation Award is to recognize the initiative and drive of entrepreneurs while generating public interest in dynamic, new companies. The award is managed by "Småtinget" a business organization established by the NHO representing Norway's largest gathering of small business leaders and politicians. The theme this year is the pursuit of business politics. Participants include 130 politicians and 250 business leaders.

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