Our Maternity Hospital is the safest in country

By DYMPHNA BRACKEN

A BABY boom has been happening at the Regional Maternity Hospital with the total number of births at the hospital rising by 15 per cent last year.

The boom was welcomed at Friday’s meeting of the Health Board.

Limerick’s lack of success in recent All-Ireland hurling finals was put forward as a reason for the boom by Tipperary members of the board.

A total of 3,734 babies were born at the hospital last year.

The perinatal mortality rate, deaths in and around the time of birth was the lowest ever at 7.0 per 1,000.

"We are delighted with this achievement and of course the baby boom is good for business after some years of a falling birth rate," said Ian Carter assistant chief executive of the Health Board.

Major investments in personnel, equipment and buildings have been made over the past year and they are now paying off, he said.

The appointment of Tom Stack the first neo-natologist, at the end of 1996 and Mark Sheehan, a new obstetrician/gynaecologist, according to Mr Carter were significant factors.

The Health Board have spent £3m at the hospital over the past four years in upgrading wards and facilities.

“Our next priority will be to start on a new outpatients department within the next six weeks,” explained Mr Carter.

“We have always had an excellent staff and this is reflected in the fact that the hospital has the lowest perinatal mortality rate of any of the major maternity hospitals in the country," he added.

He further explained that last year was a particularly difficult year for the hospital because the large increase in births coincided with the refurbishment of one of the wards resulting in overcrowding during the later half of the year.

“Now that we are getting state of the art facilities we hope to give an even better service to the public,” he added.

Girl guides have adopted a code of ethical practices

By PADDY MORONEY

THE new Code of Ethics and Good Practice for the Irish Girl Guides, just launched, is directed at protecting children from harm — in particular, abuse.

It aims at making parents and guardians more confident that their younger charges are engaged in the best of activities when they join lines currently in use have been formalised in booklet form.

The Code of Ethics and Good Practice was launched at a national conference at Portlaoise, to facilitate guide leaders from all over the country.

At least 10 of the 150 delegates were from Limerick.

Among those from Limerick at the event were Niamh Wall, Carol St George, Mary O’Meara, Marie Flannery, and Margaret Corr, as well as Evelyn Hayes, Pat Snow, Mary Conway, Lorraine Quane, and Jean Planagan.