



Minister Brendan Smith cuts the tape to open Limerick's new Greyhound Stadium. Pictured left to right were: board member Danny Reilly, Minister Peter Power, Mayor Maria Byrne, CEO Adrian Neilan Dick O'Sullivan, IGB Chairman, stadium manager Declan O'Halloran, and Board Member Teresa Wall.

Smith opens dog track

By PETULA MARTYN

THE latest addition to Limerick's sports landscape was officially opened by the Minister for Agriculture on a weekend when sport took centre stage in the city.

Over 2,000 people filled the €18 million state-of-the-art Greyhound Stadium on Friday night which stands as a monument to economic optimism on the 12 acre site.

"It really is a new facility in Limerick that people can be proud of," said general manager, Declan O'Halloran. "If we get in excess of 70,000 visiting the stadium next year, we'll be very, very happy."

The Limerick facility is considered the best of the stadia designed by architect Seamus McCloskey, and rightly so given that Limerick is the headquarters to the Irish Greyhound Board, greyhound racing is not just a sport, it's a passion.

"We'd like to think that the

Limerick stadium is the pinnacle and as good as it gets," Mr O'Halloran said.

There is a 190-seater restaurant, two corporate boxes that can seat another 90 people, as well as four bars in the stadium which will provide full and part-time employment to 120 people.

The latest technology has been incorporated in the stadium so that racing can be run in the most professional manner.

Minister Brendan Smith took the opportunity to pay tribute to the Limerick and Clare greyhound owners and breeders whose tenacity in pursuing the development of improved facilities in Limerick never waned and indeed all the faithful punters of the region who have gallantly supported the local greyhound industry.

The minister said the Limerick stadium will need to have the support of breeders, owners and trainers as well as the punters in order to prosper.

Bord na gCon, led by it's

Chairman Dick O'Sullivan together with Limerick Greyhound Stadium, and it's Chairman Tony McKenna, have gone to great lengths to put in place a top of the range facility with a wide variety of packages to suit the entire spectrum from the informed follower of greyhounds to the casual punter. Quality is the byword in this stadium, it pervades every aspect of the development.

"I am delighted to hear that the feedback on this stadium is very positive, attendances to date have been very encouraging and there is great interest in bookings for the Christmas period, with many local groups deciding to host benefit nights and fundraisers at the stadium. Most importantly trainers and owners have reported their satisfaction with the facilities on offer to them."

At the official opening, the people who worked at the former facility in much less salubrious conditions were remembered in the naming of the Markets Field Bar

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