

Top business group sends a warning on airport demise

By **RON KIRWAN**

SHANNON Airport is expected to fall behind both Dublin and Cork Airports in its share of total air traffic into Ireland by the year 2002, a shock report has warned.

Shannon is at present in second place ahead of Cork—with 14 per cent of all air traffic to Dublin's 77 per cent. Cork Airport is last with nine per cent of total traffic.

But this is expected to

change within five years as Cork Airport inches past Shannon's dwindling 8.9 per cent market share by handling 9.2 per cent of the total, the Mid-West Business Forum warned.

The high powered group from IBEC in the Mid-West, Shannon Region Hotels Federation and the chambers of commerce of Limerick and Ennis have already briefed Transport Minister, Mary O'Rourke, on Shannon's slide and pointed to Cork's growth in terminal, domestic and British traffic in comparison to services at Shannon.

According to the IBEC president, Seamus O'Sullivan: hotelier John

Fahy, and Limerick and Ennis chambers of commerce representatives Paul Flynn and Tadhg Kearney, Shannon is losing its share of traffic even though passenger numbers are increasing and every survey of the region's 1,500 businesses continues to highlight the

Clean-up underway

IT'S all systems go for Shannon Tidy Towns as they begin their outdoor activities of litter pick-up and setting of flower beds and containers.

They are making a strong appeal to householders, shops and businesses to start painting their premis-

es, need for improved road infrastructure to expand Shannon's catchment area, lower unrestricted fares with the introduction of a high volume low cost carrier, a daily service to Continental Europe and better and earlier services to and from London.

es, arrange hanging baskets and overhaul gardens in preparation for his year's competition.

The committee has been busy planning new projects which will make a colourful impact on the town. Join them every Monday evening



Peter O'Mara, SIFA Ltd, Shannon, Safety Representative-of-the-Year winner who was presented with his award by Jim Meehan, National Irish Safety Organisation, Mid-West.

50 new jobs for Shannon

OVER 50 new jobs will be created in Shannon in a £6.5m investment plan unveiled this week.

Bay Networks Inc, currently based at the National Technology Park in Plassey, outlined its plan for expanding its Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) Operations Centre in Ireland at Shannon Free Zone.

The company which already employs 67 people will transfer to the new

Operations Centre will be located in a specially constructed 42,000 square-foot building. It will house the manufacturing, supplier development and customer service functions for Bay Network's business across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

According to Liam Nagle, managing director of Bay Networks, Ireland, this new investment reaffirms the company's commitment to build on the success of their Irish operations.

D-day for duty free looms

MAY 19 could be D-Day for the future of the duty free industry, according to Munster MEP John Cushman.

He told a Fine Gael conference on duty free that abolition of duty free would be inconsistent with many of the aims of the Amsterdam Treaty.

"The ECOFIN Council of Finance Ministers which meets on May 19 will discuss a proposal whether or not to commission a study on the social and economic effects of the abolition of duty free. If any individual member State opposes such a move it underlines the difficulty that exists with regard to obtaining the necessary unanimity to overturn the current decision," said John Cushman.

"Furthermore, an obstinate determination to press ahead with abolition will fly in the face of the sentiments and objectives of the Amsterdam Treaty," he claimed.

"This treaty places the issues of unemployment and citizen's rights at the heart of the European agenda and it would be somewhat ironic if at the same time that member State governments are pressing for the endorsement of the Amsterdam Treaty they persist with a decision which will significantly increase unemployment and