

"MERRICK" FUNDING BOOST

The organisers of next month's Merrick Forest Stages Rally have received a £5000 windfall to help towards the cost of constructing a central service area near Glentool.

The money has been awarded through the Dumfries and Galloway Community Enterprise Regeneration Fund (CERF), and matches a contribution made from the rally's own funds.

Forestry Commission Scotland is transforming a former engineering depot at Glencaird into a hard-standing parking area for the rally cars and support vehicles.

It will be officially opened by the Environment Minister Michael Russell on September 1st - a week before the rally.

At other times of the year, the facility will be available for a range of outdoor activities; from mountain bike events to military exercises.

Welcoming the CERF funding, Merrick Rally Manager Allan Marshall thanked the local community for their support.

He went on: "We've been most encouraged by the backing we've received from the Cree Valley Community Council, Newton Stewart Business Association, Glentool Residents Association and local Councillor Graham Nichol".

Mr Marshall added: "Hopefully the construction of this excellent facility will increase entries to the rally, which in turn will help boost the local economy".

The CERF scheme - which runs until the end of 2007 - includes contributions from Dumfries and Galloway Council and the European Regional Development Fund through the South of Scotland Objective 2 programme.

It was set up to support sustainable community-based projects which will bring demonstrable economic benefits to their local areas.

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