

## PRESS RELEASE

**Contact:** Nic Millington, The Rural Media Company  
01432 344039  
[info@ruralmedia.co.uk](mailto:info@ruralmedia.co.uk)

**Date:** 22 June 2007

---

### **Sir Digby Jones says media literacy should be “deep into the DNA of the education process”**

Former head of the CBI, and now UK Skills Envoy Sir Digby Jones yesterday gave his views on why Media Literacy is important to the region’s economy.

**Speaking on Monday 18 June at the Birmingham launch of ‘Switching On To Media Literacy: a media literacy strategy for the West Midlands’ Sir Digby said “(we need to) get media literacy deep into the DNA of the education process”. He also added, “It must become part of every educational, social and economic strategy in our country”.**

The campaign, headed up by **The Rural Media Company’s MediaNet** project, and **Screen WM**, the region’s screen agency, aims to put media literacy at the heart of the region’s skills and education agendas. Adrian Lambert, Director of Youth and Education at Rural Media explained that as a result of this partnership, the West Midlands is the first region in the country to have a co-ordinated approach to developing media literacy. He went on to say, “ The media is now a major influence in all aspects of society. It is vitally important that people understand how it works and are able to use it effectively to improve their own lives, services and communities”.

To an audience of key regional stakeholders representing industry, education and the community media sector Sir Digby underlined his passion for pushing forward the importance of raising the skills levels. Citing the high infant mortality rates and second lowest skills base in the country, he said the West Midlands region “has got a bigger challenge than anybody else”.

When asked what his message to Gordon Brown on media literacy would be, he said “We must get it into schools – it actually begins and ends there”. He also said he would tell the soon-to-be Prime Minister ‘for once just back off – stop meddling - allow other forces in society to make things happen.’

Sir Digby talked about his own change of views on media studies as a subject. Following a visit to an incubator unit for micro businesses in Barrow In Furness he saw how ‘media studies’ and creative industries contribute to a

restructured 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. "I have never, from that day to this, ever denigrated media studies."

Copies of Switching On To Media Literacy can be downloaded from [www.medianetonline.org/medialiteracy](http://www.medianetonline.org/medialiteracy).

## **Release Ends**

### **Note to Editors**

- **Switching On To Media Literacy** was held at The Orange Studio, Cannon St, Birmingham from 9.30am – 12 noon on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June.
- Full copies of Switching On To Media Literacy and photographs of the event are available on request from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June. Please contact Lou Llewellyn on 01432 344039.
- **The Rural Media Company** works throughout the West Midlands providing production, training, media education and advocacy services for the voluntary and public sectors. For further information visit [www.ruralmedia.co.uk](http://www.ruralmedia.co.uk)
- **Screen WM** is the regional agency, which supports, promotes and develops a sustainable and thriving screen media sector in the West Midlands. For more information please telephone 0121 265 7120 or visit [www.screenwm.co.uk](http://www.screenwm.co.uk).
- **MediaNet** is the West Midlands network for media education and media literacy. It is run by The Rural Media Company in Hereford and funded by Screen WM through its access fund. MediaNet helps support those working in the sector through its website, [www.medianetonline.org](http://www.medianetonline.org), regular networking meetings and events.
- **Sir Digby Jones** was appointed as the Chancellor of the Exchequer's UK Skills Envoy in 2006, campaigning for both private and public sector employers to raise the level of skills of all of their employees to Level Two by 2010. Since leaving his role as Director General of the CBI in 2006 he now holds a number of senior corporate advisory positions at companies including Deloitte, Barclays Capital, Ford of Europe, JCB and is also Special Advisor to His Royal Highness the Duke of York in connection with his role as the UK Special Representative for International Trade and Investment.

[www.ruralmedia.co.uk](http://www.ruralmedia.co.uk)