

Spotlight on governance

Institute acknowledges companies' progress towards better governance

► The Hong Kong Institute of CPAs recently paid tribute to Hong Kong firms for going the extra mile towards good governance. At a media conference on 29 November, the Institute announced the winners of its Best Corporate Governance Disclosure Awards 2005.

The awards, now in their sixth year, were announced at a ceremony at the JW Marriott Hotel, with Frederick Ma, secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, as guest of honour. Joining Ma were Edward K.F. Chow, president of the Institute, Jim Wardell, chairman of the Awards Organising Committee and Chew Fook Aun, chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee. The awards are designed to promote greater awareness of corporate governance, encourage improvements in disclosures and give recognition to organisations whose annual reports and practices set a very high standard.

Hang Seng Index category

Diamond award	CLP Holdings Ltd.
Platinum award	HSBC Holdings plc
Gold award	Li & Fung Ltd.
Significant improvement	Hutchison Whampoa Ltd.

Non-Hang Seng Index category

Diamond award	Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd.
Platinum award	Hysan Development Company Ltd.
Gold award	Standard Chartered plc
Significant improvement	Standard Chartered plc

Growth Enterprise Market category

Diamond award	Media Partners International Holdings Inc.
----------------------	--

Public Sector / Not-for-profit category

Diamond award	Airport Authority Hong Kong
Platinum award	Securities and Futures Commission

Special mention

MTR Corporation Ltd.	Swire Pacific Ltd.
----------------------	--------------------

Who's next in line?

▶ Voting for the Institute's 2006 council got underway on 29 November and will run until 14 December. A total of 15 candidates are running for seven seats. The winning candidates will be announced at the Institute's Annual General Meeting on 16 December at the World Trade Centre Club Hong Kong. This is the first year the Institute's 25,000 members have been able to vote for their candidates electronically.

Shenzhen visit

▶ Paul Chan, vice president of the Institute, and Peter Kung of the Mainland Legal and Taxation Sub-Committee led a delegation to the Shenzhen Local Taxation Bureau on 7 November to meet its new director, Ji Ju Sheng, and vice director, Xu Jin Qiang. The two sides discussed the latest developments on cross-border tax issues, including unifying foreign and domestic enterprises income tax, implications for Hong Kong residents of the new Individual Income Tax Law, and the current policies on advance tax recognition for related party transactions.



>> Paul Chan (right) receives a welcoming gift from Ji Ju Sheng

Hong Kong listings rise

▶ The Securities and Futures Commission reported that it received 36 stock market listing applications in the third quarter, up 56.6 percent from the second quarter.

Unfair audit for Henderson

▶ Henderson Land Development has rejected claims from the government's Audit Commission that Henderson increased the number of allowable flats in one of its developments without paying appropriate taxes.

Million mark for park

▶ On 23 November, Hong Kong Disneyland said it reached its one-million-visitor goal, inside the first 100 days of operation.

Betting on Hong Kong

▶ Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (SJM), Stanley Ho's Macau casino company, has invited banks to submit proposals for an initial public offering of up to HK\$7.8 billion. SJM reported gambling profits of HK\$34 million in 2004. Insiders don't expect the listing to happen until late next year.

The show must go on

▶ The Hong Kong Institute of Chartered Secretaries has produced a five-part television series for broadcast on TVB Pearl. Twenty leading businessmen and regulators, including accountants, have been interviewed for the series, which aims to advance the cause of corporate governance and raise the profile of chartered secretaries.