



South Eastern Regional College Refrigeration Apprentice Ciaran Weir receives his Gold medal and trophy from Tina Campbell, also pictured are fellow SERC students and runner's up Christopher Wilson and Anthony Bradley and Brian McMullan, Competition Manager - SERC.

## Medals haul for local SERC apprentices

THREE Lisburn students won silver, gold and bronze medals in the largest multi-trade skills competition in Northern Ireland at South Eastern Regional College (SERC), Newtownards campus.

In the refrigeration category Ciaran Weir, Anthony Bradley and Christopher Wilson who study at the Lisburn campus of the college claimed Gold, Silver and Bronze respectively.

Providing a unique stage to showcase excellence and talent, Skillbuild NI is held annually each spring, with over 100 of the top construction apprentices competing to win coveted titles in 13 different craft areas ranging from brickwork to wall and floor tiling. The winners may then go on to represent Northern Ireland in the UK Skillbuild Finals and potentially the UK at WorldSkills.

Skillbuild NI competition test pieces are designed to challenge the ability of apprentices to follow detailed instructions, produce accurate and neat work and be economical with materials while working to strict timescales – all essential requirements for today's construction industry. The competition not only encourages trainees to improve their own skills, but provides

an example of the high quality work being produced in training organisations across NI to meet local industry skill needs.

Commending the competitors on their hard work and dedication shown in their area of expertise, Alan Shannon, the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Employment and Learning, said: "The Skillbuild Northern Ireland competition allows our young apprentices to demonstrate that they have the high level of skills which our economy needs to stay competitive.

"Skillbuild, as with all skills competitions, is about raising the status and standards of professional and technical education and training, and industry benefits from having more skillful, highly motivated staff."

Ken Webb, Principal and Chief Executive of SERC, added: "It's been an honour to host this prestigious competition. Skillbuild has given 110 young people, embarking upon their construction careers, the opportunity to showcase their skills.

"We are delighted for all the winners and wish them every success in the UK final. I commend also the commitment from their lecturers, family and friends who have been supporting them."