

## An Encouraging Start for '142'



SIMI Director General Alan Nolan.

A total of 4,264 new cars were registered on July 1st, the first day of the new 142 registration plate - this compares to 1,924 on the first day last year.

The Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) had previously outlined its hopes that more than 4,000 cars would be registered in the first week of the new 142 year. In addition, 292 new vans were sold, compared to 138 on the same day last year.

According to SIMI Director General Alan Nolan: "We knew (that July 1st) was going to be one of the busiest days of the year for car sales, with additional cars being added to the car hire fleets, but we didn't expect such a good start compared to last year, which was the first year for the new split-registration plate. In fact, it has turned out to be the highest day for new car registrations this year and nobody expected that."

"Although it has to be put in the context that we are starting from a low base. it is clear that an increasing number of consumers are returning to the market.

"Dealers are currently competing for customers with strong new car offers and a wider range of finance options and it's evident that consumers are seeing the benefit of the new mid-year registration period. Overall, it is a sign that we're seeing an improvement in the economy."



New SIMI President James Brooks (MD of Kia Ireland).

Meanwhile, Dublin native James Brooks is settling into his role as President of SIMI, the representative body for Vehicle manufacturers/distributors, Franchise Dealerships, Independent garages and many other businesses in the Motor Industry in Ireland. Speaking at the Society's recently held AGM at Killashee House Hotel, Naas, Mr Brooks, the MD of Kia Motors Ireland said that his presidency commences at a time of improved outlook for the Industry.

"I hope that we are now turning a corner and that during the course of my year in office we will see our Industry head towards sales of 100,000 units," he said.

He acknowledged that he was honoured to take on the role of President in an industry that is a major contributor to the Exchequer and provides almost 40,000 jobs around the country.

"Not so long ago we employed almost 50,000 so we have some way to go before we are back to normal," he said.

He noted that the biggest challenge in the Industry today is to see what can be done to keep the older cars on the road, as safe as they can be, while they are being used. The average age of a car in Ireland is nine years old, older than most other EU countries.

"Despite the fact that the average new car has far more safety equipment than that of 10 years ago, this is not reflected in our ageing car fleet; 50 per cent of cars are failing their NCT with four per cent being classed as dangerous.

"It's very understandable, people having to question their spending on everything when their income is reduced, but to me saving on keeping their car safe enough to be used on the road is a very false economy."