



Professor John Woodward with his Business Person of the Year award. Image credit: Claire McKie-Reid, Newcastle Chronicle.

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North East's top business leader award for academic with space vision

[Professor John Woodward](#) has been named the North East's top business person of the year for his work to develop the new £50 million North East Space Skills and Technology Centre at Northumbria University.

Professor Woodward, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International), has worked with local and national government; regional, national and international industry leaders and colleagues across the University to drive the development of the centre, which is [known as NESST](#).

He was awarded the [Business Person of the Year](#) title at last night's [North East Business Awards](#), which celebrate the best in innovation, entrepreneurship, technology and creativity and shine a light on the people and businesses making a difference in the region.

Described as a “game-changer” for the UK space economy, [NESST](#) will bring together industry and academia to collaborate on internationally significant space research and technological developments from its base on Northumbria's city campus in Newcastle.



Artist's impression of the NESST building currently under construction at Northumbria's city campus in Newcastle

The centre, which is being delivered in partnership with the [UK Space Agency](#) and [Lockheed Martin UK Space](#), is expected to directly support the creation of over 350 jobs and inject over £260 million into the North East economy over the next 30 years, immediately becoming a catalyst for the wider development of the UK space sector in the North East region.

As well as putting the UK at the forefront of research and innovation in areas including [optical satellite communications](#), [space weather](#) and [space-based energy](#), NESST will also provide the specialist education and training required

to ensure the UK space sector has the highly skilled workers it needs in the future.

Professor Woodward said: “NESST is a truly transformative project for the North East region and has allowed us to bring one of the largest satellite and technology companies in the world, Lockheed Martin UK Space, into the UK for the first time. The fact that they are coming here, to the North East, will bring significant inward investment and will create unprecedented links for regional companies to access the global space market.

“I’ve described NESST to many people by saying we used to build ships on the Tyne and now we’re going to build spaceships. For me, this perfectly describes the natural evolution of the region’s industrial base towards the new industries of the future.

“NESST is a huge collaborative effort which will play an essential role in launching the UK as a space superpower, reaping huge benefits the North East on every level. I am delighted that NESST has been so well received by the region’s business community, and I am equally delighted to accept the award on behalf of everyone involved in NESST.”

Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University said: “I know that John will be the first to say that NESST is a major team effort, but it is thanks to his leadership and vision for the project that we are creating something truly exciting for the region which will create opportunities, unlock potential and contribute to economic development right here on Northumbria’s city campus.”

Click here to [find out more about NESST](#) and how Northumbria is powering the next generation of space innovation, or watch the video below.

[View embedded content here](#)

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

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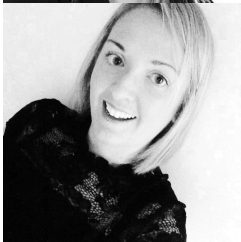
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