

Newcomers line up for NFE

By Alison Coleman

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BUDDING business owners seeking out the latest franchise investment opportunities could find what they are looking for at the National Franchise Exhibition, taking place on October 2 and 3 at Birmingham's NEC.

Sponsored by Express Newspapers, this is the UK's premier franchise event, where visitors have the chance to explore more than 150 new and well-established franchised businesses offering investment opportunities to suit all interests, skills and budgets.

New exhibitors this year include Spheremania, which involves letting people roll rapidly downhill inside inflatable spheres;

Earle's Sandwiches, which appeared on the BBC's Dragons' Den; DIY franchise Hire a Hubby, and **Telcoinbox**, a telecoms opportunity. Envirovent will be demonstrating its air pollution reduction methods, alongside Mobi-Tyre repair tyres, and Hong Kong Orange Elephant, a children's art and craft idea from Russia.

Home James is a chauffeur service, S H Goss offers weed control and Bidding Buzz is an ebay-based concept. Also new to the event are Royle Security, Marla Custom Blinds and Easy-ID. Top American tool company Mac Tools will also be appearing at the NEC for the first time, as will SkidProof International, with its innovative anti-slip floor coating.

Among the established and recognisable franchise brands appearing at the National Franchise Exhibition will be Mail Boxes Etc, McDonald's Restaurants, Kumon, Papa John's, Prontaprint, Snappy Snaps, Subway, Cash Generator and Signs Express.

A free, informationpacked conference programme planned for the two-day event will cover key franchise-related topics ranging from women in franchising, to hands-on franchising and franchise resales.

The British Franchise Association (bfa) will also present seminars on subjects ranging from how to choose the right franchise to how to expand a business through franchising.

All exhibiting franchise companies have met the bfa's code of ethics.