



**AWARD:** From left, Trevor Best, of BAE Systems, Kriss Akabusi, Brian Toward, of BAE Systems, and Christine Murray

## Hurdler hands out medals

**ATHLETICS** hero Kriss Akabusi has joined forces with a Hartlepool firm to promote health at work.

The 400 metre hurdler, who picked up a gold medal at the World Championships as part of a UK relay team in 1991, teamed up with specialist training provider Amacus for his latest move.

The Hartlepool-based company hosted the North East Better Health Awards, held at Gateshead College, at which Kriss presented prizes to many of the region's leading business organisations.

He said: "I know from my own career the benefits to be gained from being fit and healthy and how big an impact it can have on your performance in the workplace.

"It makes good business sense for employers to focus on the wellbeing of their employees and has a massive impact on motivation and productivity."

Christine Murray, the managing director of Amacus, said: "This region traditionally has been among the poorest in health and fitness. The awards are designed to tackle

this, raise awareness of health initiatives and create a better workforce by offering advice on healthier lifestyles and support services.

"The number of people involved and the impact has been brilliant – particularly the health advocates who are the real stars in driving the awards.

"We're delighted someone as enthusiastic about health and fitness as Kriss has been here to celebrate with us. There are so many fantastic stories to tell."

Those taking part introduced a wide variety of initiatives such as health MOTs for workers, healthy eating programmes, cycle and walk-to-work schemes, stress awareness sessions, weight loss campaigns, prostate cancer awareness and smoking cessation.

Organisations which collected awards included Jobcentre Plus and BAE Systems.

Those taking part work towards bronze, silver and gold awards over a three year period to demonstrate improvement.