

New UK Technology and Innovation Centres under development

The Business Secretary Lord Mandelson has asked the Technology Strategy Board to guide the development of a network of technology and innovation centres that will help deliver the industries and jobs of the future.

The Board has been tasked to work with industry, stakeholders, and wider government including the Research Councils, Regional Development Agencies and Devolved Administrations on the implementation of the recommendations in the Hauser review, a report by technology entrepreneur Hermann Hauser. The report looks at leading technology and innovation centres in other countries and recommends that the UK builds its own network.

The elite group of centres will help commercialise the output of the UK's world leading research and will drive economic growth in potential high growth sectors that will emerge from commercialising new technologies. This could enable the UK to capture a significant proportion of global markets potentially worth billions of pounds.

Welcoming the report, Lord Mandelson, said it recognised the UK was strong in many technology areas and the centres to be developed would help exploit that commercially. He commented, "Centres can play a vital role in bridging the gap between research and the market, strengthening our national capabilities in innovation."



Maintec 2011 dates announced

EasyFairs has announced that Maintec 2011 will run from the 29-31 March at the NEC, Birmingham, providing industry professionals with an efficient and highly effective opportunity to meet face-to-face with the sector's most innovative people in a single visit. Maintec promises to show

you products and technologies that will ensure timely intervention to prevent faults and failures, boost plant performance and productivity, reduce costs, improve safety and ensure environmental compliance.

There is more information at www.easyfairs.com

Helping South East businesses go green

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) has allocated £3.8 million to help businesses throughout the region become more environmentally friendly and also established a £4 million sustainability loan fund.

The £3.8 million will pay for 2500 businesses to develop initiatives within a framework of six sustainability-led projects.

These will focus primarily on waste reduction, sustainable procurement and the development of sustainable technologies. Qualifying businesses will be given training and undergo environmental audits in order to establish methods that boost profits through energy reduction.

More information can be found at www.seeda.co.uk



Manufacturers struggling with new emissions scheme

The new Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme is now with us, but many businesses are still confused about what the legislation means, how it applies to them, and how to work with it. According to the latest npower Business Energy Index – the seventh annual study into business attitudes and opinions on energy, half of businesses believe government advice on the CRC has been inadequate and are unclear on the obligations it places on them to buy allowances and forecast emissions.

The majority of businesses also say that the target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 80% by 2050 was unrealistic, although both SMEs and MEUs have more faith in the government's interim target, with 39% of SMEs and 48% of MEUs believing that the 34% reduction target can be met in 2020.

Businesses across the board indicate that they are likely to increase initiatives in both energy efficiency and energy management, but their primary motive is to reduce cost and not CO₂.

Download the latest npower Business Energy Index at www.npower.com

More information about CRC on page 8.

Environmental guidance for your business

NetRegs is a government initiative to provide free environmental guidance for small and medium-sized businesses in the UK. NetRegs will help you to understand what you need to do to comply with environmental law and protect the environment. It may even help you to save money by showing you ways to use your resources more efficiently.

This environmental guidance is for businesses that cut, shape, cast, join or assemble raw materials to manufacture metal products, including: machined parts and fasteners; metal containers; metal packaging; metal tools, eg cutlery, hand tools, knives and cutting blades; steam or vapour generators, boilers and radiators; and structural metal products for use in construction and metal buildings.

See related guidance at www.netregs.gov.uk

Figures show small firms losing out on energy deals

With figures suggesting big companies are able to secure far better energy prices than small businesses the Forum of Private Business (FPB) is urging firms to shop around for better deals.

The latest industry data available from the government shows that average electricity prices for small and medium-sized firms increased by 15-17% between the third quarter of 2008 and the same period of 2009. However, prices increased by 9-11% for large businesses and by just 5% for the UK's biggest companies.

According to the figures from the Department of Energy and Climate Change average non-domestic gas prices went up by 8% for the smallest businesses but fell by between 14 and 52% for all other commercial customers. In recent research carried out by the FPB more than 84% of respondents cited rising utilities costs as a 'major concern'.

Members of the FPB can take advantage of a free, independent service from Utility

Options, a utilities consultancy which monitors when utilities deals are up for renewal and negotiates detailed contracts and service agreements.

There is more information at www.fpb.org/page/474/Utilities.htm



Industry called to action on safety alerts

All sectors of industry are being urged to play their part in sharing information to prevent accidents. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has revamped its Safety Bulletin system which warns industry of problems with equipment, process procedures and substances that may lead to injury, with bulletins now available automatically via email, text message or RSS feed, as well as on the website.

HSE is now calling on industry to commit to sharing such information more effectively when sending out their own alerts. HSE Chair, Judith Hackitt said, "With this new and updated way of issuing safety alerts, we are initiating a better, joined up approach to sharing information that will help towards reducing death and injury at work. HSE is keen to move with the times and take advantage of new ways of communicating. We are encouraged by the positive response we have already seen from a number of



sectors, but we need to get all areas involved to maximise the benefits of this approach."

HSE recently held a workshop, 'Safety Alerts: Everyone has a role to play – what's yours?', to demonstrate the benefits of its new system and to encourage industry to do more to help improve the safety alert system as a whole.

For further information on Safety Bulletins, visit www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins

Hillhead main Pavilion sells out

After the postponement of the event in 2009 because of the challenging economic climate, Hillhead has bounced back strongly in 2010, and is looking like a must-visit exhibition. The organisers report that they have completely sold out of stands in the main Pavilion, and plans are now in hand to extend the exhibition area within the Registration Pavilion.

Get the latest on Hillhead 2010 at www.hillhead.com

