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BIG-Kent 2nd Industrial Workshop on Innovative Product Development

After the successful industrial workshop hosted by BAE Systems, Rochester, in July 2011, the second workshop will be hosted by Cummins Power Generation (Ramsgate) on the 19th January 2012.

The purpose of this workshop is to bring together companies in Kent and the surrounding areas, to discuss and share experience in manufacturing engineering, focusing on strategic issues related to new product development and associated lifecycle activities. You are invited to participate alongside senior industrial speakers from BAE Systems, Cummins Power Generation and other leading product development professionals. The format of the workshop will be interactive discussions about industrial problems, issues, solutions and trends.



Inside View at the MJ Allen Group - 30th November 2011



The first in a series of “BIG - Inside View” events was held on the 30th of November 2011. This series of events is designed to highlight manufacturing across Kent and give Kent based manufacturers the opportunity to benchmark and share experiences.

The first event visit took place at the MJ Allen Group based in Ashford, which is a family owned manufacturing business with sales of around £27m. Their services include expertise in patterns, casting and machining (MJ Allen), punch tooling and dies (Rydal), metrology (Verdict), sheet metal working machinery (Airworks, RMT, Gabro), architectural, restoration and conservation metalworking (Mather and Smith), after-market automotive clutch and brake (National Autoparts) and automotive transmission systems design (Countytrac).

The event was well attended by senior members of local manufacturing, engineering and construction companies, and provided a useful insight into the manufacturing processes and practices used in various methods of manufacturing at the MJ Allen Group.

Inside View at the Sunray Engineering Limited and SICO Europe Limited.



As part of the BIG-Kent Inside View series, facilities tours at two regional manufacturing companies are to be confirmed for the first quarter of 2012. The Inside View series allows companies to experience the manufacturing processes, practices and inside knowledge of a company with an aim to provide a benchmark and sharing of best practice.

The dates of the facilities visit are to be confirmed, to request to be notified when these available, please contact Jason by email at wj77@gre.ac.uk.

BIG Companies to benefit from National HE STEM and EU funded specialist centres at University of Greenwich



BIG-Kent member companies now have two additional forms of business support that can be accessed through the network, HE-STEM and the i-MOCCA project.

The HE-STEM initiative aims to give employers, employees and members of the public, easy and available access to knowledge in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. For industry, it provides highly effective routes to up-skill a workforce with specialist knowledge and give employers the ability to gain business improvement through work based learning and continuous professional development.

The i-MOCCA project is an interregional network of competence centres in the field of industrial data communication and embedded systems, funded by ERDF (INTTREG). The project offers advanced training to industry and works to develop innovation within the field. The University of Greenwich at Medway, Kent, will be home to the UK centre as part of a 7 member EU consortium with other centres in France and Belgium. The project consortium has been awarded over €2 million and the project in total will be worth over €4.5 million. The centre at the University of Greenwich will receive approximately €0.5 million over three years up to 2014.

BIG Companies to benefit from Enterprise Europe Network



The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is dedicated to helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to make the most of the business opportunities in the EU. Launched in early 2008, the Network forms an important part of the EU's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) which aims to encourage the growth and competitiveness of European Businesses.

The Network was built upon the knowledge and experience of two previous Networks: the Euro Info Centres and the Innovation Relay Centres. Euro Info Centres offered information and advice on European legislation and policies, as well as assistance in finding commercial business partners and accessing EU programmes. The Innovation Relay Centres focused on facilitating the transfer of innovative technologies between European SMEs or between universities / research institutes and companies. The EEN aims to improve the services offered to European firms by integrating and developing these services, so that companies can access concrete and effective solutions to their business needs whoever they first contact (the "no wrong door" concept).

The EEN mission is implemented practically through the provision of a range of integrated business and innovation support services, offered locally and mostly free of charge to SMEs and other organisations wherever they are located in Europe. If you need a certain technology to improve your business or a way to profit from your innovation, the EEN can help you find it. Using the world's largest database of technology offers and requests, the Network brings research and commercial applications together.

Services to SMEs include:

- Advice and support in tackling the challenges of doing business in the Single Market:
- Help with EU regulations
- Finding business partners whether agents, distributors or suppliers
- Hands-on help for businesses looking for technology partners
- R&D partners – finding the right partners to develop your innovative business into new markets
- Licensing arrangements and IPR assistance

For more information on any of the above news and events, please visit our website at www.big-kent.org.uk/Events. To register your interest for an upcoming event please contact Jason by email at wj77@gre.ac.uk or call on **(01634) 883912**.

www.big-kent.org.uk

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