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LSC PREPARES TO LAUNCH APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

All employers in Derbyshire are the target for the second national Apprenticeship Week from 23 to 27 February 2009, organised by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) – and one Ilkeston company is a shining example.

The week is a national celebration of the success of Apprenticeships across England. The event seeks to raise the profile of Apprenticeships and encourage more employers to take on apprentices.

There will be a variety of events going on through the East Midlands – from visits to schools from employers advocating the Apprenticeship programme, to Sir Alan Sugar’s former “apprentice” Saira Khan visiting the region and spreading the word about the campaign which aims to get apprentices into jobs.

Company managing directors will be “going back to the floor” to turn back time and try out the work of an apprentice. Meanwhile, East Midlands MPs will be having a go at being an apprentice for the day – and regional journalists will be given the chance to sample courses like brick laying and stable management at local colleges and training providers.

The LSC – which funds Apprenticeship programmes - is charged with raising the number of Apprenticeship placements offered by employers by matching them with approved training providers who can support them and their new apprentice throughout their period of training.

Nick Rashley, LSC director of Apprenticeships for the East Midlands, said: “Our aim is to let local employers know just how beneficial an apprentice can be to their continued business success. We have many success stories where businesses have taken on apprentices and those people have gone on to senior roles in the

organisation. It is essential that this type of investment is made to develop the future, skilled workforce that the East Midlands needs.”

Apprenticeships can help businesses across all sectors by offering a route to harness fresh new talent. The programmes provide on and off the job learning so that apprentices achieve the right mix of practical skills and qualifications to suit them and the needs of their employer.

Nick added: “A business can benefit greatly from the ideas an apprentice can bring to it and, at the same time are training their workforce of the future.

Apprenticeships offer cost-effective recruitment leading to a well-trained, motivated workforce and contribute to increased productivity and performance.”

One company which is a big believer in Apprenticeships is **Gardner Aerospace of Ilkeston**. The company is among the highest performing companies in its field in the UK. Recognising the need for skilled personnel in their field, Gardner Aerospace implemented an Apprenticeship programme and is now reaping the rewards.

The development of current employees through the Gardner Development Programme embraces the continual development ethos which includes learning at all levels in a diverse range of initiatives. This enables the skills gap to be addressed and allow for Gardner to have a competitive advantage in the global market place.

Samantha Lawrence, HR manager at Gardner Aerospace said: “We invested in an apprenticeship programme several years ago and since doing so Gardner has gone from strength to strength. Many of our ex apprentices have developed through the company to senior roles and act as mentors to the new learners that come in. Our bespoke training programme embeds the company’s ethos into each of our learners from the outset so they hold the strong values and provide the level of service we expect.”

Pavan Sangha, who enrolled on an Apprenticeship with Gardner in 2007, said: “I’ve really enjoyed the first year of my Apprenticeship here. I’ve learnt lots of different things such as tooling, how to read engineering drawings and practiced operating different machinery. It’s been good hands on experience for me and I’m looking forward to developing the skills I’ve learned so far.”

Ends

Pic caption:

Picture 035 David Farrell, team leader & Matthew Stark, first year apprentice

Picture 139 Dave Smith, engineering manager & Pavan Sangha, second year apprentice

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Notes for Editors

Learning and Skills Council: The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers. www.lsc.gov.uk

Apprenticeships: Apprentices follow a framework, which consists of a NVQ qualification, key skills qualifications, and, where applicable, a technical certificate. Two levels are available – an Apprenticeship Framework and an Advanced Apprenticeship Framework, offering qualifications at either NVQ Levels 2 or 3* (equivalent to add GCSE and A level equivalent). There are over 160 occupational frameworks on offer including business administration; information technology and customer services and many sector specific frameworks such as chemicals and pharmaceuticals through to tourism and hospitality.

Level 2 is equivalent to five GCSE passes

Level 3 is equivalent to two 'A' level passes or one vocational 'A' pass.

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Apprenticeship Awards: The LSC East Midlands Apprenticeship Awards 2009 will be held at East Midlands Conference Centre on 2 June 2009. The national awards event will be held in London on 16 July 2009. All regional winners will be automatically entered into the national awards. The closing date for entries is 27 February 2009. For more information please email:

realsuccess@headstorm.co.uk or call 0845 058 0490.

