

17 July 2009  
em-59SPRutland Plastics

## **Skills Pledge celebrates two years in Rutland**

An injection moulding company from Oakham, Rutland, which is committed to developing the skills of its workforce, is supporting the second anniversary of the Skills Pledge.

Since its launch in 2007 the Skills Pledge has already helped 375 employers in Rutland and Lincolnshire to make the public commitment to drive their organisations forward, training more than 29,000 employees. Nationally more than 17,000 employers have made the Pledge which means almost 6.5million employees now have the opportunity to embark on training programmes at work – far exceeding the original employee target.

Rutland Plastics, based on Cold Overton Road, made the Skills Pledge in April 2009. The company, which employs around 100 staff, is an approved centre to offer National Vocational Qualifications in polymer processing and related operations to levels one, two and three with its own qualified assessors and verifiers. It has also been working with Cogent, the sector skills council for the polymer industry, to take on apprentices through local colleges.

Steve Ayre, a director at Rutland Plastics, said:

“Making the Skills Pledge has been important for us as it proves to our customers and staff how committed we are to training and offering a highly skilled workforce capable of even the most technically demanding injection moulding work.

“It also helps boost our employee’s careers and as a result we have a low turnover of staff, which is important as we are located in a very rural area where skilled labour can be hard to find.”

The company also has several apprentices working towards their qualifications at any one time. This includes injection moulding as well as other engineering disciplines. It also has its own training facility which it uses to develop its staff with minimal disruption to the manufacturing process. This is also available for use by external training suppliers.

One trainee is machine operator Stuart Jolly who completed an NVQ level 1 in polymer processing and related operations last month. Stuart, 57, said: “It’s great that my company invests so much in their staff. I really enjoyed my NVQ.”

Steve Ayre is also working with a Business Link Skills Broker to find appropriate higher level training for the team in other engineering disciplines. This will further enhance the skills base and give more support to the design and manufacturing operation.

Stuart Muir, Business Link Adviser, said: “A skilled workforce performs much better than those who are not trained. It’s good for our local economy that key businesses around Rutland recognise and respond to this.”

Sue Peake, Skills Development Director, Learning and Skills Council East Midlands, said: “We are delighted that so many employers have made the Skills Pledge. Skills are vitally important to any organisation but it’s more important than ever in the current climate for individuals, for their future employability and for success of organisations throughout the UK.

“By making the Skills Pledge Rutland Plastics has committed to ensuring their workforce receive the training and development necessary to keep their skills up to date.”

To find out more about the Skills Pledge call 0800 015 5545 or visit <http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employers-pledge.html>

## Notes to Editors

**A photograph of Stuart Jolly and Steve Ayre is available on request - please call the number below.**

**The Skills Pledge is** a public commitment made by the leader of an organisation confirming that they will develop the skills of their employees, including all of those lacking **basic skills or a first full Level 2 qualification**. It is a promise that, through training, they will work to boost the productivity and efficiency of their organisation and realise the potential of their employees by developing their basic skills and working towards relevant, valuable qualifications. Level 2 is the minimum standard, however as understanding skills needs and priorities is the key to an organisation’s success, employers are encouraged to upskill their people to the level required by their industry and their specific organisational needs.

- Research shows that one of the most significant benefits from making the Skills Pledge is the public demonstration of an organisation’s commitment to valuing employees
- Employers see the Skills Pledge as a valuable way to increase productivity, retain and develop their staff and enhance their reputation
- By developing tailored action plans, the Skills Pledge enables organisations to take control of training and focus on the skills that they need to succeed
- Making and implementing the Skills Pledge enables organisations to drive forward one comprehensive, strategic training programme for the entire workforce, resulting in cost and time efficiencies

- By making the Skills Pledge, employers are driving a culture change in the workplace, which improves morale and provides staff with the opportunity to improve their wider careers and life prospects

## **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.

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