

Event highlights the importance of innovation in current climate

Local companies are invited to attend an event to celebrate the importance of innovation in business at Innovation Day 2009 on 2 April. The event will also launch the region's new Butterfield Enterprise Hub.

Innovation Day 2009 has been created to stimulate and nurture innovation and an enterprising culture in the region. The day will see high-calibre speakers including leading business names and academics offering their thoughts on how to successfully introduce new concepts into business activity, along with practical short sessions on innovation in enterprise and with a variety of stands from businesses in the region.

Trevor Baylis OBE, renowned inventor, will be the event's special guest speaker with a presentation on motivating small to medium sized businesses (SMEs) and entrepreneurs to focus on converting invention into innovation to sustain their competitiveness and grow their businesses.

The region's newest enterprise centre, Butterfield Enterprise Hub (BEH), will receive its official opening at the event. BEH is sponsored by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and its stakeholders the University of Bedfordshire,, Luton Borough Council and Basepoint. The Enterprise Hub aims to provide high quality and practical support for innovation and business growth in the area. In order to nurture and harvest a culture of innovation, it is vital to have a continuing innovation agenda from schools to university through to business. Therefore, the Enterprise Hub will be working with its sponsors Luton Borough Council, Bedfordshire County Council and the private sector to launch Butterfield Young Innovator Programme for the schools in the region.

Dr Abdul Al-Jibouri, the University's Innovation Director, said: "Innovation is essential to survive and compete, especially during tough economic times. The launch of Butterfield Enterprise Hub for the region offers local companies the opportunity to work with experienced professionals who can offer guidance, practical assistance and ideas covering a range of business needs."

He added: "Butterfield Young Innovator Programme will build a strong foundation to create and develop a culture of innovation in the area. The programme is designed to encourage natural creativity and inquisitiveness in school children, through the application of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As the next generation of inventors and innovators, it is important to nurture the digital generation to create a knowledge-based economy."

SMEs based in the region are also invited to take a free stand at the event to promote their business and gather contacts. The day will also offer the chance to network with other local business delegates interested in innovation and collaboration.

The event offers the chance to explore innovation subjects through practical short sessions on: the definition of business innovation; how to identify and implement innovation and the benefits it can achieve for business; protecting intellectual property; access to financing innovation and research and development.

Innovation Day 2009 runs from 9am to 5pm at Basepoint Innovation and Business Centre, Luton.

For further details or to attend please contact Dr. Abdul Al-Jibouri.(abdul.al-jibouri@beds.ac.uk)