Medtech meets lifestyle: a new convergence

Hertfordshire LEP are holding a second Convergent Medical Technology conference. Hold 22nd October in your diaries as this is an event you will not want to miss, with speakers from Google, The Technology Partnership, UCL, RowAnalytics, Toumaz Group, Digital Health Forum and many more. The event will take place at the The Fielder Centre at Hatfield Business Park, to book your space and for more information click here to register.

Hertfordshire Business Awards

Hertfordshire LEP are proud to co sponsor the Best New Science and/or Technology Award with Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst.

Skills Summit update

Our Skills Summit held on 16th September proved to be a successful event, we bought over 100 attendees together representing employers, training providers, SMEs and local authorities.

New infographic on our £200 million Growth Deal

This month we published an infographic setting out the key points from our £200 million Growth Deal – including investment in three key growth areas, as well as support for specific sectors and in boosting skills.

We’re also preparing for the next round of funding - the Government has provided very short timeframes for the 2016/17 round, so we are looking for submissions by 10 October 2014.
Medtech Meets Lifestyles: A New Convergence

22nd October 2014
9:30am-4:30pm
Fielder Centre, Hatfield Business Park

Hertfordshire LEP and the University of Hertfordshire are hosting the second in a series of conferences on ‘Convergent Medical Technologies’.

This year’s conference entitled ‘Medtech Meets Lifestyles: A New Convergence’ brings together leading innovators and experts in Digital Healthcare to explore the convergence between Digital Health products designed for use by professional medical providers and those targeted at consumers interested in their health and wellbeing.

Key areas to be covered include:

- sensing technologies
- mhealth and patient experience
- ‘Big Data’, mhealth for consumers
- human factors in product design
- how to fund DH businesses

Speakers confirmed for this event are:

The Technology Partnership, TTP
Toumaz Group
Google
Our Mobile Health
UCLIC
DFJ Esprit /Digital Health Forum

Our presenters will also offer an overview of where the markets are going in respect of best practices and new frontiers. Plenty of opportunities for Q&A and networking. If you have or are thinking of developing a new Digital Health product or service you will be most welcome – please come along and discuss it with the experts! Will be of interest to healthcare professionals, IT innovators, medtech and digital health businesses, start-ups, academics and researchers together with anyone interested in the future healthcare landscape.

To register and book your tickets please click here.
Attendee Lee Mason from Liebherr-Great Britain Ltd said “This event has been a really useful forum, in that it has brought together like minded and proactive individuals, organisations and establishments who have shared ideas and suggestions on how we can best assist each other in delivering on the Hertfordshire economic development and skills agenda. I believe this will act as a catalyst and from this point forward will gain momentum ultimately bringing prosperity to people, businesses and Hertfordshire alike”

79% of Hertfordshire businesses report skills gaps

Over 100 people representing over 70 Hertfordshire employers attended a Skills Summit on Tuesday 16 September hosted by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Hertfordshire County Council to discuss the finding that 79% of Hertfordshire businesses report skills gaps amongst their employees.

The survey, conducted by the University of Hertfordshire and its business support arm, Exemplas, received responses from 149 businesses. 45% of those surveyed said that an inability to recruit people with the necessary skills was a key problem for their organisation.

Employers attending the Skills Summit focused on four key issues: preparing young people for the world of work; developing skills for a thriving economy; attracting, training and retaining key workers; and helping the vulnerable into employment.

Other topics included work-related skills gaps such as problem-solving, oral and written communications and advanced IT skills, as well as problems associated with the tightening of labour markets. Their discussions, along with the survey, will inform a Skills Strategy Action Plan which will include recommendations for businesses, Hertfordshire LEP, Hertfordshire County Council and key stakeholders.

Andy Forbes, Chair of the Skills and Employment board, said: “Ensuring that employers have access to people with the right skills is a key part of the LEP’s role. It was great to see that 62% of small businesses saw over 5% growth in the last year – investing in their employees’ skills will help them continue to thrive. The LEP is committed to consulting with employers through events like this Skills Summit, gaining insights into the skills they actually need and helping us develop a skills strategy that is targeted to the needs of Hertfordshire’s large number of thriving businesses.”

Councillor Chris Hayward, Hertfordshire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Education and Skills said: “One of our key priorities at Hertfordshire County Council is to support a strong, resilient and successful local economy. We have some great strengths in life sciences, research and development, and high tech businesses, but the jobs and skills market is changing significantly and we find a mismatch between the supply of employees and demands of employers.”
Hertfordshire Research Organisation performs well at the Eastern region National Apprenticeship Awards

BRE has beaten off competition from hundreds of entrants to win at the Eastern Region National Apprenticeship Awards 2014 in the Newcomer Large Employer of the Year category.

The National Apprenticeship Awards, now in their eleventh year, are run by the National Apprenticeship Service and recognise excellence in two areas: businesses that grow their own talent with apprentices & apprentices that have made a significant contribution to the workplace.

The Apprenticeship Newcomer Employer of the Year categories seek to acknowledge and celebrate employers who have recently invested in Apprenticeships and can demonstrate the immediate benefits this has brought to them. This category is only open to employers whose involvement in Apprenticeships started after March 2012.

BRE’s diverse Apprenticeship scheme currently employs 22 Apprentices working in a range of areas across the Business whilst studying for their Apprenticeship programme with Oakland’s College.

Tara Bishop from BRE said ‘Our apprentices have injected new life blood into our workforce. They are client facing, practical, professionals who are great ambassadors for our business. Their enthusiasm and energy has infused the people they work with. They are a fantastic asset to our business – I am very pleased that our organisations and our apprentices have been recognised in this way’.

Other notable successes at the Awards event included MBDA (based in Stevenage) whose staff won both the Best Intermediate Apprentice, Eastern Region and Best Higher Apprentice, Eastern Region and Hilton Worldwide (Based in Watford) who received a highly recommended in the newcomer large employer category.

Any employer interested in recruiting an apprentice should either visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk or visit the Hertfordshire LEP website.

Oaklands College celebrated further success with their clients at the regional awards this year who won a range of titles for their Apprenticeship programmes delivered in partnership with the College. These include:

- Leibherr, Best Large Company, Eastern Region
- Leibherr, Lee Mason, Apprentice Champion, Eastern Region
- MBDA, Best Intermediate Apprentice, Eastern Region
- MBDA, Best Higher Apprentice, Eastern Region
- E2V Technologies UK, Best Large Employer South East Region
- E2V Technologies UK, Chris Hawkins, Apprentice Champion, South East Region

All finalists will now go on to compete at the National Awards in November.

TV fame for local motor vehicle apprentice

Local motor vehicle apprentice Michael Young appeared on Channel 4’s Sunday evening classic car restoration show, ‘For the love of cars’. Michael has been working for Evanta Motor Company for three years, starting as a level 2 motor vehicle apprentice before progressing onto a level 3 apprenticeship.
During Michael’s time at Evanta the company has grown from strength to strength, building bespoke modern cars influenced by 1950s designs.

Evanta and Managing Director Ant Anstead have featured on Channel 4’s classic car restoration show, ‘For the love of cars’, and Michael featured on this episode which restored a classic Mini.

Michael’s apprenticeship delivered in partnership with North Hertfordshire College provided a framework that has enabled him to continually expand his knowledge and progress his career. Speaking about Michael, Ant said: “He has come on leaps and bounds and throws himself into tasks. Michael is a valued part of the team and soon will be able to complete the whole car build start to finish!”

For further information on how an Apprentice can benefit your business and details on recruiting an Apprentice please go to www.apprenticeships.org.uk or visit the Hertfordshire LEP website.

---

**2016/17 Local Growth Deal**

We have recently written to stakeholders alerting them to the government’s intentions to progress the 2016/17 stage of the Single Local Growth Fund. Partners have been asked to consider the resubmission of projects which were close to being approved in Stage 1 of the growth deal or submitting proposals which are well developed and suitable for inclusion in the next round. At this stage initial information from Government indicates a short submission timeline and therefore we will require the initial application form to be returned to info@hertfordshirelep.co.uk by no later than **10 October 2014**. Applications received after this date will not be considered for submission as part of the 16/17 Local Growth Deal.

There is likely to be significantly less budget available for the 16/17 Local Growth Deal than that available for 2015-16. This is because the national (provisional) allocations for 2016-17 that were agreed in the 2015/16 deal process have taken up most of the allocated funds. Our selection process for 16/17 proposals will therefore reflect this.

Get in touch with us at info@hertfordshirelep.co.uk if you have any questions.

---

**Grants4Growth scheme still open for applications**

The popular Grants4Growth scheme closes to new applications at the end of December 2014. The LEP backed scheme, is currently funded by the East of England European Regional Development Fund programme. We will be working through our Enterprise and Innovation Programme Board and the Hertfordshire LEP area EUSIF committee to explore opportunities and assess the likely demand for a replacement grant scheme funded but the EU Strategic Investment Fund. This will become live in 2015. Firms interested in applying for Grants4Growth before the scheme closes should contact Stuart Thomas, the grants for growth business broker at: **Stuart Thomas, Business Broker (Hertfordshire) Grants4Growth / Local Enterprise Growth & Efficiency Programme Mobile : 07920 - 246824**
We asked Stuart Ager, Senior Fund Manager of Finance East, to tell us about the East of England Regional Growth Loan Scheme and how it supports SME growth...

With the economy reviving and growth now firmly on the agenda for many SMEs across Hertfordshire, the financing of business investment and growth is still a major issue. After the severity of the recession Balance sheets have been weakened, cash resources utilised and the working capital impact of growth is often underestimated. Since 2008 many SMEs have found it difficult to access traditional bank finance and although this is improving, it remains an issue, with many businesses unsure where to turn for funding. There is an increasing demand for flexible funding as the limitations of traditional financing are no longer allowing businesses to fulfill their growth plans.

This Government funded scheme provides loans of up to £200,000 to SMEs across East Anglia. Decisions are made on the basis of whether the business has the potential to achieve its growth plans and generate sufficient free cash flow to repay the borrowing over a 2-5 year term.

The loans are paid back at competitive interest rates, but the funding is available to businesses with a higher risk profile and its aim is to support credible future growth, which the private sector does not often cater for.

The loan scheme is complementary to more traditional funding such as bank finance – in many cases, we work closely with banks across the region to develop appropriate funding packages for SMEs, often with the Bank lending alongside the RGLS loan. Pulling together such a package can transform a company, enabling it to develop technologies, break into new markets and, potentially, attract more substantial funding from private investors.

In our work with a range of SMEs across the East of England, we often find that many of the most compelling SMEs need funding which matches their innovative business models and growth forecasts. They are the most likely to be turned away by the more traditional funding sources, but it is these very businesses that are most likely to be eligible for alternative funds because they can demonstrate a clear sustainable advantage over competitors.

Paul Witcombe, Enterprise and Business Innovation Manager at Hertfordshire LEP said "I am delighted to see Finance East getting some traction in Hertfordshire as the Bramfield based VIT Security Group case study offered by Finance East shows…""
Regional Local Growth Loan Case Study

VIT Security Group Set for Global Expansion with £200,000 Regional Growth Loan

From its beginnings as a surveillance and security consulting firm in 2005, the team of security specialists at VIT soon found a gap in the market which they believed they could fill. While advising clients on how to best choose from the systems available, it became apparent that there was not always a satisfactory and evidential security solution for their needs. As such, the management team took the decision to invest the profits from the consultancy business into developing the products that they knew the market was missing.

VIT Security Group Chief Executive, David Harmon, comments: "As a consultant and adviser, it was frustrating not being able to find products to fulfil the requirements of our customers. I had been working as a developer of surveillance systems for 15 years prior to setting up VIT and I was confident that with the right focus, we were capable of producing equipment to a standard that would exceed what was currently available."

VIT Security Group has now developed into a leading designer, developer and manufacturer of high-end, evidential quality security equipment and systems. Providing military grade products and associated services to government agencies and commercial customers in the UK, VIT has quickly become an established player in this market and is now seeking to expand its already escalating international operations.

David adds: "Our unique ultra-low-light and fog cameras employ world beating technology to produce high-quality, evidential grade images in truly adverse light and visibility conditions. Much of our business to date has come from the UK but there is now a good deal of interest coming from overseas. We have started to trade internationally, but there is much work to do in order to establish VIT as the recognised leader in this industry globally."

To assist with this expansion in a complex global market that is often dealing with governments, military and other large scale institutions and agencies, David and the team have sought funding that includes a £200,000 Regional Growth Loan from Finance East, which complements over £1million in private equity investment that the company has acquired to date. It is anticipated that this loan will aid investment in sales and marketing to enable further overseas expansion, whilst supporting up-front manufacturing costs to meet major export orders already secured.

Stuart Ager, Senior Fund Manager at Finance East says: "The global market for the security and surveillance industry is substantial and VIT are already starting to tap into this, most recently with a multi-million overseas order newly confirmed. It is always exciting to be supporting local businesses that demonstrate they are at the forefront of innovative product design and development and we are excited to be helping VIT achieve the global customer base warranted by their cutting edge product range."
**Rural Development in Hertfordshire: the Eastern Plateau**

Hertfordshire LEP has supported the Eastern Plateau in their bid to Defra to support the rural economy in North and East Hertfordshire from 2015-2020 through RDPE (Rural Development Programme for England). Hertfordshire LEP commissioned in partnership with the Eastern Plateau an Economic Assessment through their retained consultant to undertake research and consultation to identify the issues facing small businesses, the agricultural sector and the local community. Results from the Economic Assessment can be found at the following link [http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=29784](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=29784). The strategy identified that there was a high entrepreneurial culture, with self-employment amongst the highest in England and Wales across the Eastern Plateau area (which also includes Uttlesford and parts of Epping Forest), however jobs and growth had been declining since 2005. The focus of the RDPE programme in the future will be on jobs and growth to help tackle this.

The Eastern Plateau submission commits to the delivery of growth outcomes in three LEP areas and has received formal support from Hertfordshire LEP, Greater Cambridgeshire Greater Peterborough LEP and South East LEP.

The Eastern Plateau under the previous programme supported 36 projects with grant assistance of £1.6m with private sector match of £2.4m to give an overall boost of £4m to the rural economy. Projects supported included assistance to develop small business workshops, conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into holiday lets and assistance to help small businesses grow and develop.

East Herts Council has acted as both Accountable Body and Delivery Agent for the previous programme and will perform these functions should the new bid be successful.

The Eastern Plateau RDPE if successful will be in addition to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) OF £1.5m awarded to Hertfordshire LEP to support the rural economy in Hertfordshire. The Eastern Plateau programme has representation on the Herts LEP Enterprise and Innovation Board and the European Strategic Investment Fund Group. The programme will also seek to make a contribution to the emerging Hertfordshire Growth Forums (M11/A10 Corridor). This input will continue to ensure strategic alignment with a range of programmes in Hertfordshire.

**Hertfordshire Business Awards 2014**

Hertfordshire LEP are proud to co sponsor the Best New Science and/or Technology Award with Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst. The award will be presented to any company from any science and technology sub-sector which although may not yet be nearing commercial success, has achieved milestones and positioned itself well for future commercial success.

The awards ceremony takes place at Knebworth Barns on the grounds of Knebworth House on 27th November when more than 420 of the county’s business leaders come together under one roof. [Click here](#) to find out more.
Meet the Team: Joan Hancox

What is your job role?
Working across Hertfordshire to understand what strategic infrastructure Hertfordshire needs and then trying to make that happen. I’m also responsible for the Growing Places Fund and the transport element and bringing development sites forward through the Single Local Growth Fund.

What does your average day look like? Normally a bit of time in the office working on Local Growth Fund or Growing Places or supporting the Strategic Infrastructure Board, meetings with HCC or one of the district Councils and occasionally a trip into London to meet with civil servants.

What do you enjoy most about working at the LEP?
Lots of things! Having a county-wide overview, that it’s a relatively new, small and nimble organisation and working with “can-do” people.

What have your highlights been at the LEP so far? The result of the Growth Deal and being told that our transport submission was amongst the best (all the credit to HCC team) which made all the work worthwhile.

If you could wave a magic wand, what single thing would you want to see happen in Hertfordshire? For all the planning authorities to a) set out what the land allocations would be for housing and employment so could work out what the infrastructure requirements actually were and b) work together to plan how best Hertfordshire would accommodate the housing and employment it needs for economic growth.

Where do you see yourself and the LEP in several years time? I’m looking forward to taking a trip on Croxley Rail Link. I think the LEP will go from strength to strength with more businesses influencing what we do.

Contact Us
Give us a call for more information about our plans and activities
Hertfordshire LEP
BioPark
Broadwater Rd
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 3AX

+44 (0) 1707 358 744
info@hertfordshirelep.co.uk
Visit us on the web at :
www.hertfordshirelep.co.uk