

International Offshore Wind Business Conference to be held in Lowestoft

PRESS RELEASE / MEDIA INVITE

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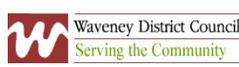
by Suffolk County Council, East of England Energy Group (EEEGr), Waveney District Council and Renewables East

An international offshore wind business conference will be held on 5 October in Lowestoft, organised by the European POWER (Pushing Offshore Wind Energy Regions) Project. More than 30 businesses from Germany will take part in an event that aims to create business networks between companies in the East of England and Northern Germany.

Michael Moll, UK Manager for the POWER project, says "The POWER partner regions in the Southern North Sea are current global leaders in offshore wind energy and together have the full economic supply chain in place to serve this evolving market. POWER research shows that the regional skills and capabilities between Germany and the East of England are complementary, combining Germany's manufacturing capabilities of wind turbines with the East of England's expertise in offshore engineering obtained from the oil and gas sector. This networking event will take advantage of this match of skills."

The POWER conference will feature speakers from the Department of Trade and Industry (Dti) and the German Wind Energy Agency Bremerhaven/Bremen, introducing the offshore wind markets in the UK and Germany. It will also profile the East of England offshore wind capabilities and a number of regional businesses. The conference will be the only regional event of the European Week of Regions and Cities in the East of England, in which the East of England focuses on sustainable energy. It will be held at Astral Centre at Lowestoft College, renowned for its courses and facilities in offshore and energy related training.

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“The East of England developed a highly capable offshore industry through experiences in the oil and gas industries”, explains John Best, Chief Executive of the East of England Energy Group (EEEGr). “These skills are directly transferable to putting wind turbines out to sea. Links with German companies with more experience in onshore wind energy could be highly beneficial for our businesses.”

Cllr Eddy Alcock, Suffolk County Council’s Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste Management and Economic Development, says “Offshore wind energy offers a significant opportunity for our businesses to diversify and grow, in particular in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. Suffolk County Council is keen to support regional businesses seeking involvement in this sector, through POWER as well as OrbisEnergy, and is delighted to have been able to initiate this important event.”

“OrbisEnergy will become a hub for the emerging offshore renewables industry”, adds Steve Clarke, Offshore Renewables Director of Renewables East, “supporting businesses in the industry, as well as enabling technology transfer and links to research. International links for this project are indispensable.”

Cllr Wendy Mawer, Delegated Portfolio Holder Economic Regeneration at Waveney District Council, says “Waveney District Council is fully committed to the POWER project and we have forged international links between European partners to further develop skills and training in offshore wind energy.

“We are delighted to showcase Lowestoft College’s facilities to the German visitors, with its Centres of Vocational Excellence in Offshore Technology and Energy.”

MEDIA ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE ON 5 OCTOBER, FROM 10.00 TO 14.00, AT ASTRAL CENTRE, LOWESTOFT COLLEGE. INTERVIEWS WITH SPEAKERS, ATTENDING BUSINESSES AND POWER REPRESENTATIVES, FROM THE EAST OF ENGLAND AND GERMANY, CAN BE ARRANGED. PLEASE CONTACT SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL OR EEEGR.

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Notes to the editors

1. The conference is part of the European POWER – Pushing Offshore Wind Energy Regions project. It is organised jointly by Suffolk County Council, the East of England Energy Group (EEEGr), Waveney District Council, Renewables East and the German organisations Wind Energy Agency Bremerhaven/Bremen and Windcomm, with support from East of England International, OrbisEnergy and Lowestoft College. It is aimed at businesses from the East of England and Germany with capabilities in the offshore wind sector.
2. The POWER - Pushing Offshore Wind Energy Regions initiative creates a North Sea competence network for offshore wind energy. The project assesses environmental and planning as well as acceptance issues of offshore wind farms, supports the development of a reliable regional supply chain for the sector, and elaborates skills development measures. The project brings together 37 organisations from five countries around the North Sea. It is co-financed by the Interreg IIIB North Sea Programme. For more information, see www.offshore-power.net
3. The conference is an official decentralised event of the Brussels Open Days – European Week of Regions and Cities. The OPEN DAYS 2006 – European Week of Regions and Cities is the biggest annual event in the EU regional policy calendar. The main events and seminars will be held in Brussels, but in parallel, the European Week of Regions and Cities will come to life in local events. The East of England is participating in OPEN DAYS as part of a consortium of regions promoting their sustainable energy credentials. POWER and the East of England will also be presented in two seminars in Brussels.