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PD PORTS MAKES A LASTING IMPRESSION

PD Ports, which owns and operates Teesport, has reinforced its commitment to staff training and development by backing a drive to boost the skills of the region's workforce.

/24-7PressRelease/ - LONDON, UK, June 20, 2008 - PD Ports, which owns and operates Teesport, has reinforced its commitment to staff training and development by backing a drive to boost the skills of the region's workforce. The company, which employs more than 1,000 people in the North East, has bolstered its training record by making the Skills Pledge at an event attended by the Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State for the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills.

The event, organised by the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC) to encourage employers to make the Skills Pledge, coincided with the first anniversary of its launch last June.

The Skills Pledge, driven in the region by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East, aims to encourage businesses and organisations to leave a lasting impression by committing to staff training and development. Since its launch, some 99 employers in the region have made the Skills Pledge.

Martyn Pellew, Group Development Director, PD Ports, placed his hand in cement along with Mr Denham at the event to signify the lasting impression of skills development.

Mr Pellew said: "We recognise that training and development are important elements required to continually improve the services we provide. By committing to the Skills Pledge we are sending out a clear message to current and potential new staff that we are committed to their development, which makes good sense in terms of staff retention and morale."

Employers that make the Skills Pledge have access to a Skills Broker through the Train to Gain service to help identify skill needs and come up with an individually tailored action plan. Train to Gain offers impartial advice and matches training needs to local learning providers, to ensure that flexible, responsive training programmes are delivered to meet employers' needs. A core element of Train to Gain is the access to appropriate funding of qualifications right through from Skills for Life to higher level qualifications.

The North East is one of the top performing regions when it comes to learners achieving through Train to Gain. Since the service was launched nationally in September 2006, 12,000 learners have achieved their qualifications and some 5,000 businesses have benefited.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: "We want to make skills a key talking point and put the attainment of qualifications and skills on the must do list of every individual and employer in England. We want employers to know that the Skills Pledge makes a lasting impression on their business and the bottom line.

"The Skills Pledge goes to the heart and soul of a business or organisation. There are huge advantages for employer, employee and for the region in raising skills levels. We must never become complacent but companies like PD Ports are proof that employers are getting the message, because it makes good sense for their business."

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Picture available on request or you can download it from our website.

Picture caption (see attached jpeg): L-R, John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and Martyn Pellew, Group Development Director, PD Ports, make a lasting impression.

Notes to Editors: June 2008

For more information about the Skills Pledge and how to make the commitment, visit www.lsc.gov.uk/skillspledge or call

0800 015 5545.

The Skills Pledge, being driven in the North East by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East, is a public commitment; a promise made by employers to drive their business forwards by training their employees. The Skills Pledge is voluntary - employers fulfil it in their own time and their own way. And they're supported with impartial advice from the Government's Train to Gain service.

When employers make the Skills Pledge, they make skills mean business. With one-to-one consultancy from training experts, employers can identify training of real, practical value to their company. Employers support their employees as they gain the skills to make their business succeed and grow. And businesses reap the benefits in employee productivity, motivation, confidence and retention.

Train to Gain Skills Brokers put together an action plan that's tailored to individual organisations and their employees. From basic skills to high-level specialist training, employers will find the right courses from the right providers, and organise a schedule to suit them.

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

Media contact:

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- PD Ports Limited was formed following the successful takeover of PD Ports plc by Babcock and Brown Infrastructure (ASX: BBI) in February 2006.
- PD Ports is a high performing specialist ports business offering a wide variety of supply chain services to improve customers' international product and material movements into and out of - as well as within - the UK.
- PD Ports employs over 1350 members of staff, and generates an annual turnover of over 130 million from 30 UK locations.
- PD Ports operates throughout the UK from bases at many key ports and logistics centres.
- The 3 business interests of PD Ports are:
 - o Port Operations- this includes:
 - Teesport: one of the top 3 UK ports, with flows of containers, bulk traffics and finished cars, handling 50 million tonnes of throughput p.a.
 - The Northern Gateway Container Terminal: a major new deep sea container terminal planned at Teesport on the South side of the River Tees. The 300+ million development will have a capacity of 1.5 million TEU (twenty foot equivalent unit) and is anticipated to deliver over 5,500 jobs to the Tees Valley, opening in 2011. Please visit www.thenortherngateway.co.uk
 - Portcentric Logistics: a new concept promoted by PD Ports for locating the storage and distribution of imported goods close to the point of arrival at a UK port. This concept avoids the slow handling and return of empty containers as well as eradicating unnecessary UK road mileage, which occurs when delivering to a traditional inland import centre, such as in the Midlands. In 2006 ASDA Wal*Mart opened a 350,000 sq ft import centre at Teesport and has saved more than 2 million road miles by adopting the portcentric concept. Tesco is also building a 1.2 sq ft import centre at Teesport to open in 2009.
 - Humber & Small Ports: owners and/or operators of ports on the Humber estuary, Rivers Trent and Ouse, and at Medina Wharf, Isle of Wight. Service offerings include ship's agency, chartering and stevedoring services.
 - Logistics: PD Logistics offers warehousing and distribution services at 15 UK locations throughout the North East, Humberside & East Anglia, including at Felixstowe. Please visit www.pdlogistics.com
 - o Conservancy - this includes:
 - Management of river traffic for the ports of Tees and Hartlepool, ensuring safe navigation and maintaining the required channel depth.
 - o Property- this includes:
 - Revenue and income from property and facilities owned by PD Ports and used by third party clients on long term leases.
 - Land that is not utilised for operational purposes and forms part of the potential for development.
 - The redevelopment of part (133 hectares) of Hartlepool docks known as Victoria Harbour.

See also www.pdports.co.uk

For more information, please contact:

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About Image Line Communications

Eye-catching adverts, thought provoking press coverage, informative newsletters or spectacular exhibition stands - you will be amazed what a bit of creative thinking can do for your business.

Offering businesses a comprehensive range of Public Relations, marketing and events services, Image Line Communications has over 20 years experience creating and delivering innovative, exciting PR and marketing campaigns.

Specialising in the maritime, logistics and supply chain industries, we have a thorough understanding of what our customers need to stand out from the crowd.