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Press release

SPIE UK Collaborates with Scottish Power Energy Networks to Train Apprentices to Solve UK Skills Shortage

SPIE ENS working with Scottish Power Energy Networks and local colleges to train apprentices and offer long-term employment opportunities.

London, UK - 28 April 2014 - SPIE, the independent European leader in electrical and mechanical engineering and HVAC services, energy and communication systems, has today announced that SPIE ENS is working in collaboration with Scottish Power Energy Networks (SP Energy Networks) and local colleges in Scotland, to address the shortage of skills in the electrical industry.

The SP Energy Networks initiative, which began in July 2012, has held four working group workshops so far and has developed a robust training programme to help to address the skill shortage in the Overhead Line sector. To develop training and long-term employment opportunities, the three parties work together to offer local people the opportunity to become trainee overhead linespersons. In this collaboration, SP Energy Networks provides the trainer and materials for the course, SPIE UK provides the tools and materials needed, as well as an apprenticeship position for the trainee at the end of the course, and the college provides the facility and funding.

To date, SPIE has held two of the 12-week training courses, working with nine students from Dumfries & Galloway College and six from Forth Valley College in Scotland, resulting in the employment of 15 apprentices to the SPIE workforce.

Liam McMyler, Senior Contracts Manager at SPIE ENS, commented: "Working with SP Energy Networks has helped us to recruit where we operate, through a uniquely collaborative approach. SP Energy Networks recognises that recruitment is an issue for both contractors and customers and that we both need to recruit to deliver the investment programmes of the next decade. This is an industry leading approach and one that is, most importantly, offering real, long-term jobs to the unemployed in our communities."

"We are now employing local people in local areas; this really benefits community relationships and customer service. The vast majority of the students who are accepted on the course complete the training and go on to full time employment with one of the contractors taking part in the initiative. It's great to see contractors such as SPIE ENS so eager to address the skills shortage in this industry and we look forward to continuing to work with SPIE to move forward with the programme," said David Climie, Asset Strategy & Network Programmes at Scottish Power Energy Networks.

Dr Ken Thomson, Principal at Forth Valley College, added, "Forth Valley College is committed to delivering programmes which deliver the necessary skills demanded by industry. This programme is a great example of our commitment to investing in up-skilling and transition training for local people to create sustainable local employment."

SPIE's work with SP Energy Networks complements the company's existing internal skills and training programmes, as well as ongoing collaborations with the National Skills Academy for Power and EU Skills.

contact

SPIE UK

Renaud Digoïn Danzin
Strategy & Development Director

Tel.: +44 20 7105 2416 (DDI)

r.digoin@spie.com [1]

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