



PRESS RELEASE! PRESS RELEASE! PRESS RELEASE!

**PRESTIGIOUS BEACON AWARD SUCCESS FOR
CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE STAFF AND STUDENTS**

Monday 24th November 2008

Cambridge Regional College's (CRC) Centre for Sustainable Development has won the Association of Colleges' (AoC) Beacon Award 2008, titled the "Edge Award for Practical Teaching and Practical Learning".

The Awards, which this year celebrate fifteen years of rewarding outstanding teaching and learning in further education colleges, were announced at a ceremony hosted by comedian, writer, musician and philanthropist, Tony Hawks, at the AoC's annual conference in Birmingham.

The College's Centre for Sustainable Development won the Edge Award for Practical Teaching and Practical Learning for its innovative construction curriculum, which gives students access to career opportunities in the construction developments emerging in the Cambridgeshire growth area. The College has excellent partnerships with manufacturers of modern building systems in the area and representatives from the manufacturers work with students and staff to demonstrate modern construction techniques.

CRC used its innovative teaching and learning in Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) as a basis for their Beacon Award bid. The College MMC course is aimed at those who are looking for an exciting career in the modern construction industry, and who wish to gain skills and knowledge in the latest cutting edge techniques of modern methods and sustainable construction.

The College's Modern Methods of Construction and Sustainable Development provision is delivered in the UK SmartLIFE Centre. The Centre, which is based at the College's Science Park Campus, combines an industry standard practical training area, with state of the art, industry standard equipment and IT rich classrooms and conferencing facilities.

On winning the award, Chris Lang, Director of Finance and Resources said, "The College is delighted to have one this prestigious award, particularly because Construction training is so vital to the Cambridge Region. The strong partnership with the County Council behind the SmartLIFE Project as bringing real advantages to this area of activity and making the College one of the lead providers in the country in this area".

The AoC Assessors visited the College in October where they saw first hand, the erection of a full size light gauge steel frame house, as well as a range of practical activities. This involved construction crafts, solar panel installation and electrical inspection and testing. The Assessors also met staff and students connected with the SmartLIFE project. James Hutt was an Apprentice in Heating and Ventilation at CRC and was awarded the Summit Skills East of England Training Award for Building and Engineering Services in 2006. He now owns his own company *Huttie*, who provides commercial and domestic plumbing and heating services.

On helping with the College's Beacon Award bid James said, "I enjoyed the course at CRC and it has helped me throughout my apprenticeship and career to enable me to expand my confidence and knowledge and therefore carry out complicated and different challenges in the construction industry. I am now running my own company employing three people, something CRC's support has helped me to achieve". Through his company, James fits a wide variety of renewable energy services, such as ground and air source heat pumps, solar heat transfer panels and solar energy storage.

Barrie Wicklen, Associate principal-Sustainable Development said, "Winning this Beacon Award is a tremendous endorsement of our unique curriculum and high quality teaching and learning which provides that essential bridge from student to highly skilled

construction professional, a professional capable of succeeding in a modern and rapidly changing construction industry”.

Cambridge Regional College will host a local celebration event in the New Year and receive a certificate at a national presentation ceremony due to be held at Westminster in February 2009.

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITOR:

1. The Beacon Awards programme was established in 1994 under the auspices of the Association for Colleges, at the suggestion of The Partnership Trust. The Partnership Trust wished to establish an awards programme for the Further Education sector after a similar awards programme for the Higher Education sector proved successful.
2. The Awards started with just six sponsors in their first year and 13 award categories. A total of 101 applications were received from 61 colleges and the winners were announced at the Annual Conference in Edinburgh. It now regularly attracts around 300 applications a year for more than 20 Awards.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

For more information, please contact Lesley Devaney, PR & Events Coordinator, on 01223 418773 or email ldevaney@camre.ac.uk