

Northampton, UK
27th October 2014

New UK Rail Academy takes shape to future-proof Railway Engineering skills

Construction is well underway on the multi-million pound national training academy that will act as a flagship for skills development in traction and rolling stock for the UK rail industry.

An event to view the progress of construction works for the National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR) took place today (27 October 2014), attended by Transport Minister Baroness Kramer. Opening in autumn 2015, the academy will grow the UK talent pool in rail engineering, plugging the skills gap that could otherwise become a barrier to growth.

Announced last year, NTAR is a joint project between the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE), the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) and the Department for Transport (DfT), who have provided half the funds required, with industry partner Siemens contributing the other 50 per cent.

Transport Minister Baroness Kramer said: *“The academy for rail, the first of its kind in the UK, is a crucial part of the government’s long-term economic plan to secure a better future for Britain. Generations of young people will benefit from the apprenticeships and training provided here to find new jobs and get on in life.*

“It is great to see this academy is well on its way to becoming a much-needed facility to support our railways which are being transformed, thanks to our plans to invest more than £38 billion over the next five years.”

The first students, including apprentices, will enroll at the new academy in autumn 2015.

BIS Minister Nick Boles said: *“The National Training Academy for Rail will play an important role in building a highly skilled workforce for the UK rail industry.*

“This new facility will be an excellent example of the industry-led training that helps ensure we have the right skills for the industry so it can grow and compete on the world stage.”

Richard Carrington, Head of Projects for Rail Systems at Siemens said: *“We are delighted to see the progress at the site. We are proud to work with NSARE on this project to ensure that railway industry employees have the skills and competencies required to maintain the next generation of trains in the UK– keeping our nation at the forefront of railway engineering excellence.*

NTAR will also collaborate with other organisations nationwide to help build up a network of complementary ‘spokes’ to maximise the reach of next generation training, including the National College for High Speed Rail.

General Manager of the National Training Academy for Rail, Simon Rennie, commented:

“We are at an exciting phase in establishing this unique facility and are currently consulting industry employers to enable us to develop a curriculum that best fits the needs and demands of today’s industry.”

Currently, some 13,500 people work in specialist traction and rolling stock roles across the UK, but a future skills shortage of around 4,000 people over the next five years is forecast – caused by factors including an ageing workforce, the technological advancement of rolling stock, and investment and growth in the industry.

Gil Howarth, Chief Executive of the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering said:

“Skills are the foundation of our thriving, hi-tech industry. The new National Training Academy is vital to support the development of the workforce in the rail sector, which continues to benefit from significant investment, as more and more people choose to travel by rail and trains become increasingly technologically advanced.”

NTAR will enable all organisations across the sector to access excellent training and development facilities, including passenger and freight train operating companies, train manufacturers and maintainers, equipment manufacturers and the wider supply chain including SMEs.

ENDS

Notes to editors

For images, build and fly through video animations and additional materials, visit www.ntar.co.uk.

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About the National Training Academy for Rail - NTAR

At NTAR, our ambition is to be recognised as an international Centre of Excellence for training in traction and rolling stock – to be the source of pride for the rail industry, acting as a flagship for skills development and for collaborative working, delivering a successful and sustainable model.

Born from an immediate need to train a workforce to maintain the new Thameslink rolling stock, a unique and more ambitious public/private partnership across government, agencies and private enterprise has been developed to address the Traction and Rolling Stock training needs of the market more widely. From this partnership, NTAR has been created with a core objective of playing a leading role in the new Railway Skills development programmes being driven by NSARE – all underpinned by strong collaborative working and consultation with the market to make sure prioritised needs of the industry are met.

Our immediate focus is on consulting with a wide range of potential customers across the industry so that when we open our doors in the autumn of 2015, we are truly responding to the immediate needs of the industry - while also developing what we will offer and how over the medium and long term horizons. We will be attending a wide range of events over the remainder of the year and we are consulting widely so that we really do offer what the industry needs.

- NTAR will establish a hub of core in-house expertise as part of a wider hub and spoke model at a world class facility in Northampton – currently in its build phase – providing a blended learning model, combining use of unique practical equipment and workshop facilities in addition to classroom based teaching
- During the build period, we will consult with the industry to understand and prioritise demand that matters most when finalising our curriculum

- We will build a network of trusted and qualified partners to deliver our syllabus, adopting and reinforcing NSARE's accreditation and skills recording
- We will collaborate with the training businesses, universities, colleges and professional organisations at different locations to help build a complementary ecosystem of training expertise – including delivering to other strategic organisations such as the National College for High Speed Rail. This will include building international relationships to harness knowledge and skills and expand the reach of our catchment.
- We will also make available our facility as a route to support both local and national training organisations in broadening their reach across the industry

About the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering - NSARE

Following two years of research and development, the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE) was established in November 2010, when the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills, Vince Cable, announced that the UK Government would support our Business Plan. NSARE Limited was incorporated in January 2011 as a 'not for profit' company, wholly owned by its Members. We 'opened for business' from our National Office in central London three years ago.

Our pan-industry Board is chaired by Terry Morgan, Chairman of Crossrail. We launched our corporate Membership scheme at our first national conference in June 2011; today we have **320** Member organisations and we are still growing. Our Membership includes railway companies, private sector training companies, Further Education Colleges, Universities, Qualification Development and Awarding Organisations. Two-thirds of our Members are SMEs.

Our five key areas of activity are:

- Promoting the rail industry in schools, colleges and universities
- Forecasting the skills challenges to deliver the railway of the future
- Developing the railway engineering skills standards and qualifications
- Accrediting the railway engineering training provision
- Supporting competency management processes and systems

About Siemens

Siemens was established in the United Kingdom 170 years ago and now employs 13,760 people in the UK. Last year's revenues were £3.36 billion*. As the world's largest engineering company, Siemens provides innovative solutions to help tackle the world's major challenges across the key sectors of energy, industry, infrastructure & cities and healthcare. Siemens has offices and factories throughout the UK, with its headquarters in Frimley, Surrey. The company's global headquarters is in Munich, Germany. For more information, visit www.siemens.co.uk

* Data includes intercompany revenue. Data may not be comparable with revenue reported in annual or interim reports

Rail Systems within Siemens provides expertise and technology in the full range of rail vehicles – from heavy rail to metros to trams and light-rail vehicles. In the UK, the Division employs around 750 people and maintains over 360 Siemens passenger trains for First TransPennine Express, South West Trains, Heathrow Express, Greater Anglia Franchise (Abellio), Northern Rail, London Midland and ScotRail. In addition to manufacturing the new trains for Thameslink, the company will also be supplying Eurostar with its new high speed fleet of trains.