

venturer



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Support for EEDA

The economy that can support hi-tech businesses at the same time, improve its image and since the closure of the all car manufacturing

EEDA has an ambitious plan to make the East of England one of the top 20 European regions by 2010. The region is currently third in the 11 UK regions in terms of economic performance, only 27th out of 77 European regions.

EEDA chief executive Marlow says: "Over the next year we take forward a very important project which will make a real difference to the bottom line of the East of England's economy." This includes the field Luton Technolark project.

Marlow adds: "In the last months we have established a close working relationship with the Government Office and the East of England Regional Assembly which will enhance our ability to bring forward quality economic development projects and ensure a strong and influential voice for the East of England."

EEDA is evolving as an organisation and, as well as

seeking continuous improvement for the region, we also strive for continuous improvement in the way we work ourselves."

The announcement comes as EEDA reveals it is to match the £0.5m the government has pledged from its Public Sector Research Exploitation (PSRE) initiative to set up an Eastern NHS Innovation Hub.

It is hoped the hub will create spin-off businesses and new jobs for the region, with new concepts and innovations translated into commercial ventures.

David Cudby, EEDA's life sciences sector adviser, says: "Enterprise Hubs are a key part of EEDA's vision to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. We will now work with the region's hospitals to ensure that the necessary commercial sector expertise is available to help turn innovation in the NHS into viable new business enterprises."

EEDA's cash boost was taken from the agency's basic budget allocation, but it is planned that the performance award will be put to other such business and regeneration uses to improve the region's economy.

Teleworking support hub opens at Spires



ANYONE unable to go out to work can now access support to set up business from home after the launch of a new project by the Luton and Dunstable Innovation Centre.

The Centre, which is part of the University of Luton, has won £200,000 in funding to establish a Telework Support Centre in the town, which is designed to offer help to people who have to be at home but who also wish to run a small enterprise, such as carers of elderly parents, people who retire early and parents.

Lynette Warren, the Innovation Centre's specialist in Social Enterprises, says: "Many ventures are initiated by women from home with family commitments, and it

is hoped that this project will provide support and encouragement to enable these enterprises to grow and flourish."

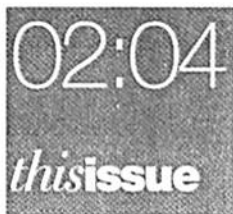
The Innovation Centre, based in the University's Spires centre, is combining forces with the Telework Association and other project partners, to produce a support pack, which will include membership of both organisations as well as a web camera and other items of low-cost hardware and software.

The pack will enable people to make a rapid start in running a home-based enterprise, as well as enabling existing teleworkers to see and talk to each other, to professional advisors, and to small business support organisations, over the internet.

The money was won by the Innovation Centre's 'Devices' project, one of only 26 schemes in Britain to receive funding under the award scheme, Building on the Best.

The 'Devices' project is pioneering the use of low-cost internet and communications technologies to support teleworkers and homeworkers. It was originally set up with an award of £110,000 from the Department of Trade and Industry's Phoenix Fund.

Innovation Centre manager Mike Anstey adds: "This latest award of funding really is brilliant news for the Centre and for Luton. It helps to reinforce the growing national image of the town as a location for new and innovative projects."



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