

Raising the region's profile in India

LITB has hosted three delegations from India; from Surat, Rajkot and Pune. Other such delegations are expected during this year. Local businesses will benefit from these visits by being able to have one-to-one business meetings and explore different collaboration opportunities.



The visit was very productive and well received by the businesses and the various organisations that the delegation met. The visit far exceeded its objectives and the important task now is to ensure that the necessary follow up work is carried out for the sub-region to fully benefit.

The project at the moment is Leicestershire based. However, it has helped and worked with businesses from the surrounding counties as well. There are opportunities for the project to become regional and serve the whole of the East Midlands.

As part of LITB's continuing effort to raise the profile of the region and attract businesses to the region, a delegation made up of four members visited India in June 2007, including Kishor Tailor, chief executive, LSEP, Yakooob Dassu, chairman, Leicestershire India Trade Bureau, John Day, chairman, Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Mahendra Mistry, manager, Leicestershire India Trade Bureau.

A programme consisting of meetings and presentations were set up for the delegation in Baroda, Surat and Mumbai. The itinerary included site visits to businesses, meetings with the Chamber and the Municipality Corporation in Surat, the Indian Merchant's Chamber and the Indian Motion Picture Production Association in Mumbai.

A number of business outputs were achieved, such as firm commitment from companies wanting to come to the region to assess feasibility of using it as a base for their business. Several film production houses have shown interest in considering using some of the scenic locations in the region for backdrops to their films. Two production companies have already made arrangements to come and do a scoping visit.



Local businesses are encouraged to use the service offered by LITB. Mahendra Mistry, LITB manager, will be happy to meet with any businesses wanting to know more about how they can benefit from the services.

Mahendra Mistry can be contacted on 0771 7896708 or emailed at mahendram@chamberofcommerce.co.uk

The objectives of the visit were to:

- Raise the profile of Leicester and the East Midlands in India
- Network with organisations in India representing industries within our region to benefit businesses in Leicestershire
- Further engage and strengthen our links with the South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Help understand the need for Leicestershire to work more proactively with India, thereby helping our industries to gain access to the opportunities that India offers
- Discuss a draft agenda for a proposed high-level visit from Leicestershire in January 2008
- Initiate partnership work in Mumbai with organisations such as the Indian Merchants Chamber (IMC) and Textile Manufacturing Association of India



Developing business links with China

East Midlands China Business Bureau (EMCBB) became fully operational in October 2006 and was formally launched in February 2007 hosted by councillor David Parsons, chair of the Regional Opportunity China Group and leader of Leicestershire County Council and Jeff Moore, chief executive of *emda*. A traditional Chinese lion dance was performed to mark the launch.



The EMCBB is an expansion of the very successful Leicester Shire-Sichuan Trade Bureau - built on a long standing friendship between Leicestershire County Council and the Sichuan Provincial People's Government - which then became the Leicester Shire-China Trade Bureau in 2004.

Baoqing Wang, ministerial counsellor for Science and Technology - Embassy of the People's Republic of China, was present at the event and expressed his support for the work of the Bureau.

The EMCBB has supported over 400 companies since last October, ranging from giving advice on export policies and assisting with business planning, to developing trade links with China.

As well as running a number of regional events, the EMCBB has also organised and delivered two successful Market visits to China. The first, in November 2006, targeted South West China and was led by councillor David Parsons. In March 2007 another successful visit was conducted to Shanghai and Ningbo which was led by EMCBB.

“Over the past three years, our region's links with China have grown considerably. We have come a long way, but our journey has just begun and we are determined to continue to develop our economic, cultural, educational and political links with China”

In October of this year the EMCBB will host the visit of Mr Huang Xiaoxiang, vice-governor of Sichuan Province and up to 100 Chinese companies looking for trade and investment opportunities in Leicestershire and the East Midlands. This one day event will serve to strengthen the links between Sichuan Province, Leicestershire and the wider East Midlands.

In November this year, the EMCBB will be organising a Market Visit to Chongqing Municipality and Sichuan Province. A major part of the Market Visit will be participating in the EU-Chengdu Incubation & Matchmaking event being held in South West China for the second time. This exciting event will see 300 Chinese companies 'matched' with up to 100 European companies, including 12 from the East Midlands.

During the first Market Visit, two 'East Midlands Days' will be held to highlight the strengths of the East Midlands and to enable our companies to meet with Chinese companies face to face.

David Parsons said, “Over the past three years, our region's links with China have grown considerably. We have come a long way, but our journey has just begun and we are determined to continue to develop our economic, cultural, educational and political links with China.”

The EMCBB has a strong programme of events, including seminars, briefings and Market Visits over the next 12 months and looks forward to working with companies in Leicestershire and the East Midlands.

For further information please visit www.eastmids-china.co.uk

Food and Drink firms signposted to success

Scores of new and fledgling food and drink firms in Leicestershire have been signposted towards the road to success after taking part in “Start Your Own Business” courses.

The courses have been run by The Food & Drink Forum – the East Midlands-wide specialists in the food and drink sector – as part of a two-year scheme that the Forum is delivering in Leicestershire.

Funded by LSEP and the European Social Fund, the scheme aims to boost the food and drink sector in the county by supporting small, newly-formed and emerging businesses, as well as farm diversification projects.

The Start Your Own Business course, which can also lead to an Institute of Leadership & Management qualification for successful participants, has been run three times by the Forum in the county under The Food & Drink Forum’s Food Entrepreneur scheme.

The Food Entrepreneur scheme is modelled on the successful Enterprise in Food initiative which the Forum has previously run in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and which helped launch dozens of new businesses.

In Leicestershire, the scheme has helped 87 companies and 52 individuals over the past two years – and scores of them have been on the Start Your Own Business course.

Maria Calen, The Food & Drink Forum’s Leicestershire business coach, said, “We are absolutely delighted that we have been able to help so many new and emerging firms in the county.



Fiona Anderson (MD Food & Drink Forum) presenting a certificate to Bindy Heer

“There have been some potentially great ideas for new businesses in Leicestershire in the food and drink sector, and this course has hopefully helped newcomers get off on the right footing.”

Enterprising Education

Leicester North West Alchemy Charitable Company, in collaboration with De Montfort University (DMU), has been working with secondary schools in north west Leicester in an active attempt to unlock the enterprise potential of young people aged 16 and over.

The enterprise work of DMU has also extended to other schools across the city.

To achieve this feat, they ran a two-day ‘You Can Do It!’ workshop on 27th June and 4th July 2007 which included the involvement of experienced Business Mentors. The Mentors provided guidance, support and assistance to young people in channelling and developing their business ideas, focusing on their business goals, challenging their thinking as well as offering help and advice in producing feasible business plans.

The event has culminated with a “Business Ideas” competition; which also includes an Award Ceremony to be hosted by the DMU in November. Sponsorship of £1,000 from LSEP will be utilised by LNW Alchemy to sponsor the “Creativity Innovation” award. This will provide ongoing business mentoring support to the participants.



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