

News Release

Young engineers quiz Government advisors on green vehicles

IMechE debate puts 'low carbon' budget under the microscope

24 April 2009

Hundreds of people are expected to converge in Bath next Thursday (30th) for top level talks with Government officials on the future of low carbon transport. The event, run by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) will include some of the most senior figureheads in the industry – including the Department for Transport's own Chief Scientific Advisor.

The audience at the **Prestige Debate: Future Vehicles** will range from students right across to the engineering community. Anyone is welcome to attend the free 'Question Time' style debate at the University of Bath, from 7.30pm – 9pm. The event comes just days after the Government's budget pledge to plough millions into the low carbon sector.

Professor Brian Collins, the senior scientific advisor for the DfT, will be joined on the panel by Jonathan Brearley, Director of the Office of Climate Change (DECC), Martin Dowson, Manager Advanced Hybrid Projects at Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), Tony Pixton, of Ford, Nick Owen, of automotive and engineering giant, Ricardo.

The panel will be quizzed on anything from electric car buying incentives, the future viability of green technology (such as hybrid and hydrogen power), and the overall future of the car industry. On Wednesday, Chancellor Alastair Darling announced £500 million will be invested in new technologies to further the low carbon sector and the audience will be keen to question Government advisors on how best it should be spent to help revive the ailing car industry.

Speaking ahead of the event, Dr Chris Brace, member of the IMechE's Automobile Division, Senior Lecturer in automotive engineering at the University of Bath and organiser of the event, said: "We hope this debate will attract young engineers to the low carbon vehicle industry. By mixing Government advisors and industry players, the audience will experience a well rounded view of all the issues involved in producing low carbon technology for the automotive sector."

Prof Collins comments: "Within the automotive industry, risks should be taken with innovation but some stability is needed within Government policy to attract investment into the industry. It is important that young people are aware about the decisions made in Parliament and events such as this serve that purpose."

Martin Dowson will reveal how JLR has been working on a concept to use power large heavy vehicles by hybrid. Ford's latest designs in low carbon technology will be discussed by Tony Pixton.

Encouraging people to choose greener alternatives is at the heart of the IMechE's work with its members. The Institution's Formula Student event, Europe's largest flagship motorsport event organised by the IMechE, launched its Class 1A category in 2007 to encourage students to design cars using alternative fuel, such as hydrogen and biofuels.

The Prestige Debate starts from 7.30pm at the University of Bath and admission is free.

Fact Box

- The budget has committed £500m to invest in new technologies to further the low carbon sector, with £2bn in green collar jobs and low carbon industries.
- Prime Minister Gordon Brown recently announced that consumers will receive between £2,000-5,000 if they choose to trade a car over 10-years-old for an electric vehicle.
- Business Secretary Peter Mandelson previously announced an offer of £1.3bn in loans from the European Investment Bank to support the ailing car industry in developing new low carbon technology.
- The Government must achieve 80% reduction in emissions by 2050.
- Road transportation accounts for nearly 70% of all CO₂ emissions from passenger transport.
- 157 million tonnes of CO₂ is produced by the UK transport sector.

Ends

Notes to Editors

- For more information on this release or to attend the event please contact the IMechE Press Office on 0207 304 6888 or email media@imeche.org or Chris Brace on 07967 144349.
- The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) was established in 1847 and has some of the world's greatest engineers in its history books. It currently has around 80,000 members in 120 countries representing mechanical engineers involved in a diversity of fields such as the automotive, rail, aerospace, medical, power and construction industries to name a few. Visit www.imeche.org for more information.