

BUSINESSEDGE

The magazine of Sussex Enterprise



2011 – the Year of Growth

Rural broadband speeds

Tackling the green energy conundrum



British Chambers of Commerce Accredited



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Welcome

Welcome to our first edition of our new look Business Edge. We very much hope you will enjoy it. We want to put much more emphasis on our members and their successes as part of the magazine going forward, so if you have got a story to tell, do get in touch.

We are also focusing on a particular topic each issue, and this time we are looking at infrastructure: from broadband to TIFs (Tax Increment Financing), to tackling the impending energy crisis.

We will also be looking at a particular geographical area in each issue, and this time its Newhaven, and the challenges the Port is facing, and MP Norman Baker's view on the town and the bright future he believes it has.

It has been a challenging year for the private sector, and it looks like being an equally difficult one for the public authorities this year. However, there are strong signs of hope during this Year of Growth, from the £300 million projects Howard Goodbourn is managing at Southern Water to Jeremy Burbridge's success at Ticketmedia.

The magazine is for you, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Contacts

Business Edge is a Sussex Enterprise publication.

If you have any stories you would like to tell us about or any comments please drop us an email at businessedgeenquiries@sussexenterprise.co.uk

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If you would like to get involved in the debate on rural broadband speeds email liz.cadman@sussexenterprise.co.uk

Super-fast broadband arriving too slowly

For many businesses, particularly in rural areas, the poor provision of broadband is a major issue. Sussex is no exception and there are plenty of people expressing concerns about areas where slow or non-existent broadband is holding business back.

The Government responded to such concerns in early December when it announced that every community in the UK will gain access to super-fast broadband by 2015.

It cannot come soon enough for Jeremy Leggett, Director Action in Rural Sussex, who said: "As far as rural Sussex is concerned, we clearly do not have the right infrastructure in place.

"We have multiple companies investing considerable amounts to compete on price for market share in the urban areas of Sussex, most notably the coastal strip, whilst we have a virtual monopoly in the hands of BT in the rural areas. The companies involved present this market failure as purely an issue of economic viability for their service in rural areas.

"This is, at best, a very partial truth as any business will always have to make a judgement about which customers and which parts of its offer cross-subsidise which others. In the case of broadband, a stronger form of regulation could enforce a more equitable delivery of a universal standard of service.

"The impact of the gaps on the rural economy is becoming profound. Commercial estate agents are very clear that absence of an acceptable level of broadband makes some rural areas a complete no-go area for even the smallest business relocation or start-up.

"Transport problems cost each Sussex business on average £29,000 per annum. With so many transport

projects shelved as a result of the Government's cuts, would comprehensive, reliable broadband offer a solution to this problem?

"The Holy Grail for environmentally-sustainable economic development in the South East is to de-couple GDP growth from growth in carbon emissions and especially car-borne transport.

"As a location for a new kind of rural economy that is rooted in the knowledge-based sectors, well connected to our three excellent universities, feeds economic benefit back into the local community and the local landscape but is still able to trade globally, it is second to none. But not without super-fast broadband!"

Martin Townshend, Managing Director, Infrastructure UK, a Sussex-based SME that offers IT and communication services, said: "Most broadband is provided over copper connections from the nearest BT exchange to the business premises, which means that the performance is dependent on the distance from the nearest BT exchange, the quality of your line and the quality of your broadband provider's network.

"BT exchanges are available for BT and third-party communications providers to provide their own network services. More exchanges are being used in this way, which increases competition and has resulted in new networks being implemented that offer a wider choice and improved services to businesses.

"The future of broadband access will be based on the new BT 21st Century Network (21CN) which is

improving the quality of the network, increasing the speed of access and providing additional services.

"When you will be able to access these services depends on the area where your business is located. The broadband infrastructure in Sussex is variable and in some cases non-existent. It is reasonable to expect that over time this will improve as more third-party companies expand their coverage in the market and BT's 21CN is rolled-out. It is likely this will take many years to complete and in the meantime we have to be innovative to find ways of getting the best possible connection today.

"The impact of coverage gaps is that some areas of the county are left without a cost-effective means of accessing high-speed Internet. Whilst rural areas are likely to be the worst affected, there are still urban areas unable to get good quality broadband services as networks struggle to cope.

"Operators upgrade their networks based on population density and the expected return on their investment. There are still four areas in Sussex - East Marden, Isfield, Plaistow and Sutton - that don't have BT broadband-enabled exchanges as they are deemed unviable.

"Technology is transforming the way we do business by providing the means to dramatically improve the way we communicate with our customers, colleagues and suppliers. That requires fast and reliable broadband technology."

Sussex Enterprise events

7th February - Sussex International Trade Forum

Venue tbc
6 - 8:30pm

The Sussex International Trade Forums are quarterly events for members and non members of Sussex Enterprise. The events provide an opportunity for those already exporting, or those thinking about it to meet and network with the right businesses.

8th February - The Guide to Growth (Part II)

The Old Ship Hotel, Brighton Seafront
7.30am - 10am FREE to attend

Back by popular demand! We are proud to present the second in a series of events designed to bring stories of exceptional business growth to businesses across Sussex. Taking the stage in Brighton will be business power ranger Penina Shepherd of Acumen Business Law. She'll share her inspiring story of exceptional business growth and deliver her insights into how you can adopt winning attitudes to make your business bloom.

17th February - Chequing Out? The end of cheques and the effect on your Business.

West Sussex, venue tbc

The Payment Council's plans to stop cheque transactions means big changes to the way SME's do their day to day business. This is your opportunity to get your voice heard to ensure your business needs continue to be met.

24th February - All aboard the Networking Express!

Bluebell Railway, East Sussex
11am - 2:30pm

Business advice seminar followed by networking and lunch on the 1pm Departure from Sheffield Park.

3rd March - Inspirational Breakfast

Assembly Rooms, University of Chichester (Bognor Regis Campus)

7.30am - 10am FREE to attend

Become a networking star - never forget another person's name again! Headed up by Director, Richard Robinson, The Brighton Science Festival returns for its seventh year and promises a plethora of events and activities to wow and amaze us. Included in the line-up is our 'Inspirational Breakfast' event where we combine business and science with enlightening results! On the agenda this year is the fantastic Ross Page from



TOM International. He will be unlocking the true capabilities of the human memory, giving you the tools to retain information in way you never thought possible.

■ Brighton Science Festival - see page 7.

11th March - New Members Event

Mid Sussex, Venue & times tbc

An informal seminar for new members of Sussex Enterprise to meet their account managers and network with other new members.

15th March - Blogging for Business

Cooden Beach Hotel, Bexhill

07:30 - 10am

Join us at our event in Bexhill as we hear how to write compelling content, engage with your audience and ultimately make more sales by using your blog to launch your business up the search engine rankings.

22nd March - To Infinity & Beyond: Making your IT & Comms work for your competitive advantage.

Mannings Heath Hotel, Horsham

07:30 - 10am

The comms and IT giants BT will share advice on how SME's can drive new business via professional presence on the WWW, control costs by combining services, enable flexible home working for employees, and look at the benefits of cloud computing as the new cost effective solution with added business benefits.

29th March - Sales Maximisation

Thales Training Facility, Crawley

07:30 - 10am

An essential seminar for SME's looking to gain more customers and turn their existing ones into gold!

Expert advice on all the practical sales points such as negotiation, having a plan, correct pricing and more! Not to be missed

PREMIER EVENTS

(Premier level members only)

3rd February - 2011 Economic Review with Nick Parsons

Wiston House, Steyning

7.30am - 10am FREE to attend

Please note this event has been rescheduled from the original date of 27th January

New Year, new opportunities. Join us in the dramatic setting of Wiston House for our 2011 high profile breakfast event with Nick Parsons, Chief Economist for Clydesdale Bank. Nick is a regular guest commentator for the financial press around the world and has extensive knowledge of interest rate and foreign exchange markets. He will be delivering his review of the past year's economy and providing insight into what's in store for 2011. Join us for peer to peer networking over a sublime full English breakfast.

4th March - Employment Law Update

Mayo Wynne Baxter Offices, Lewes

8 - 10am

Peer to peer networking over breakfast as we investigate the new years' changes to employment law legislation and what it means for your business.

Contact details

all bookings need to be made by emailing
eventbookings@sussexenterprise.co.uk.