



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

First RDPE grant inspires a green future

East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) has just awarded the first Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) grant since the new programme was launched in January.

Strawsons Energy, a subsidiary of family-run businesses G. D. Strawson, is set to receive £140,000 to help build an £826,000 Centre of Renewable Energy (CORE) in East Drayton, near Retford in North Nottinghamshire. Construction of the new facility is due to commence in June, and it will be used to showcase renewable energy technologies, provide expert advice to potential customers and offer managed workspace for businesses operating in the sector.

John Strawson, a farmer, business entrepreneur and Managing Director of Strawsons Energy, explained: "This facility is one of a kind and we're now entering a really exciting phase thanks to *emda's* investment. CORE will not only demonstrate the range of renewable energies available on the market, it will also offer a place where individuals and business representatives can get independent support and make direct comparisons between the different products.

"They will also be able to see many of the technologies in action since these are going to be incorporated into the fabric of the building to show real-time operation. In simple terms, CORE will offer a show room for renewable and sustainable energy products."

Biomass heating, ground and air source heat pumps, rainwater harvesting, a wind turbine, electricity-generating photovoltaics and solar panels are just some of the sustainable energy resources that will be integrated into the carbon neutral development. The overall aim is for the building to manufacture more heat, cooling, electricity and power through green technologies than it uses during its day to day operations. This will be achieved by utilising and demonstrating carbon neutral renewable energy products which are set to generate enough electricity and heat to supply the wider community.

John added: "What's great about this project is that by demonstrating the practical application of green technologies, we can highlight the cost benefits of any investment made. This will help more people recognise just how a small step can make a real difference - not only to people's pockets, but also in minimising the wider impact of climate change."

It is anticipated that CORE will create twenty-one new jobs over the next four years as emerging renewable businesses take the opportunity to move into the shared office area and work collectively to maximise their commercial potential. Hoval, a Newark-based company specialising in the commercial sector heating business, is already lined up to move into the facility to provide its staff and customers with a training centre on low carbon heating systems.

Commenting on the award of the first RDPE grant, Diana Gilhespy, *emda's* Executive Director of Regeneration, said: "We are delighted to be investing in the Centre of Renewable Energy. It's an extremely worthwhile project and an excellent example of what RDPE is all about. New energy technologies will be vitally important for the future.

"We've had a great deal of interest in RDPE since it was launched earlier this year, and have received 160 Expressions of Interest (EOI) from across the region. Many more projects will commence over the coming months, demonstrating how people living and working in the countryside can benefit and our rural economies can flourish."

The RDPE aims to support rural businesses across England until 2013. *emda* is responsible for its delivery on behalf of Defra and the European Union, and is investing in projects like CORE which promote diversification in the rural economy.

For further information about RDPE, please visit www.emda.org.uk/rdpe .

To find out more about CORE - which is due for completion later this year - or Strawsons Energy, go to www.centreofrenewableenergy.co.uk or www.strawsonsenergy.co.uk .

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A media opportunity has been scheduled at 8.45am on Wednesday 4th June at Strawsons, Manor House Farm, East Drayton, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 0LG with Diana Gilhespy and John Strawson. Journalists and photographers are invited to attend. If this is not possible, please contact Clare Baker, *emda* Media and PR Manager on 0115 988 8583 / clarebaker@emd.org.uk for further information or to request images or interviews.

About RDPE

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) is funded by Defra and the European Union, *emda* has approximately £60m available for projects in the East Midlands until 2013.

Projects must demonstrate how they add value to agricultural, horticultural or forestry products, improve co-operation and collaboration between businesses, and promote diversification in the rural economy to be eligible for grant funding.

Some of the money has been allocated specifically for livestock businesses to focus on projects that improve competitiveness, nutrient management and animal health and welfare. Funding will also be available for skills development in rural businesses and organisations – focusing on training in management and business development.

Visit www.emda.org.uk/rdpe to find out more.

About *emda*

East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) is one of nine Regional Development Agencies in England, set up in 1999 to bring a regional focus to economic development.

Working in partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations the aim is to deliver the 2006 Regional Economic Strategy (RES) 'A Flourishing Region', which sets out regional priorities until 2020.

The RES, coordinated by *emda*, highlights the themes of productivity, sustainability and equality and builds on the previous two strategies; 'Prosperity Through People' and 'Destination 2010'.

In early 2007 the National Audit Office announced *emda* had received the highest possible grade of 'performing strongly' in an independent assessment of our work - scoring 22 out of 24.

For more details visit www.emda.org.uk

About Strawsons Energy / CORE

Strawsons Energy, a subsidiary of family-run business G. D. Strawson, is the world's single largest grower and supplier of willow short rotation coppice (SRC). All products are sourced locally in the UK. The company delivers a wide range of renewable energy products including biomass fuel, biomass boilers, wood fuel stoves, ground and air source heat pumps, solar heating and much more.

Its latest project, the Centre of Renewable Energy (CORE), aims to tap into the demand for expertise and the need for companies that specialise in developing green technologies, sourcing materials and selling equipment. This is particularly important in the current climate with increasing Government pressure on extending and expanding renewable energy sources and technologies.

Construction work is due to start imminently, with the Gelders Group having been contracted to construct the CORE. It is anticipated that the development will be completed by the end of this year.

For more information, visit www.strawsonenergy.co.uk or www.centreofrenewableenergy.co.uk .

Other companies / organisations involved in the CORE's construction are:

- Project Development: Strawson Holdings Ltd
- Build Contractors: Gelders Group
- Letting Agents: Brown & Co.
- Project Environmental Sustainability advisors: SRM of JH Walter
- Architect: Rosamund Nicholson