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Teaming up to learn about forestry employer needs

Lantra staff recently accompanied Danny Logue from Skills Development Scotland on a tour visiting employers across Scotland to see first-hand the skills issues facing both employers and employees in the sector.

Willie Fergusson, Lantra's Director for Scotland said: Skills Development Scotland work with Lantra on many different levels, and are the main sponsor of Lantra's Land-based Learner of the Year Awards. Danny presented this year's awards on behalf of SDS. Through Danny's involvement with this event he expressed an interest in learning more about the sector and the people working in it, so we arranged for Danny to meet with a range of employers across Scotland.

A meeting with Ian Wilson, Trainer from the Forestry Commission Scotland provided the opportunity to meet a Modern Apprentice operating a forest harvester. Danny was shown how the machinery worked and the high level of technical and IT skills required for this role. The Forestry Commission are leading the way in taking on Modern Apprentices in the trees and timber industry, and highlighted the need to develop a Level 2 qualification in addition to a Level 3 qualification.

Ian Wilson said: With the increasing importance of the Scottish forestry sector, future production could be compromised by the general shortage of forest workers, especially young skilled forest machine operators. The Modern Apprenticeship scheme has gone a long way in filling potential shortages of operators in the west of Scotland, and hopefully we will continue to build on this success in the future.

Danny Logue, Skills Development Scotland said: This was an excellent opportunity to provide first-hand insight into the range and level of skills required across this sector. It also provided a huge amount of information regarding the range of careers and opportunities that are available. It is important that we provide our staff in Skills Development Scotland with this knowledge of the available careers, as well as the demands from the industry for Modern Apprenticeships. We will continue to support and work with Lantra in taking forward key areas of joint development .

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CREDIT FOR PHOTOS:

Danny Logue learns how to use a forest harvester

EDITOR S NOTES:

" Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector, is licensed by the UK Government to drive forward the new skills, training and business development agenda for the sector.

" Lantra represents 17 industries and 1.5 million workers and volunteers in agricultural crops, agricultural livestock, animal care, animal technology, aquaculture, environmental conservation, equine, farriery, fencing, fisheries management, floristry, game and wildlife management, land-based engineering, landscape, production horticulture, trees and timber and veterinary nursing. For more information see www.lantra.co.uk