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Sent: 04 March 2008 13:20
To: 'admin@tekc.co.uk'
Subject: Thanet & East Kent Chamber weekly bulletin "The Insider"

*** Welcome to the Thanet & East Kent Insider ***

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

4 March 2008

Property Developers

Concerned at the changes in the regulations on rates on empty commercial properties, Chamber members with an interest in real estate development will be meeting soon at the Chamber to discuss matters of common interest. If you would like to take part, please email the Chamber at admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line Thanet Chamber Property Forum and we will send you details. For the latest media coverage of the Chamber's campaign, see page 83 of Kent On Sunday or via the internet at <http://editions.pagesuite.co.uk/openpagesuite.aspx?pubid=262> then click on the newspaper for 2 March 2008 and turn to page 83.

What Goes Up, Keeps On Going up

"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes", so said Benjamin Franklin; but death does not get worse every year, taxes do. The British Chambers of Commerce has just published its 2008 Burdens Barometer. It shows that since 1998 the cost to UK business from additional taxes amounts to £65.99bn, up from £55.66bn in 2007. The top three burdens are The Working Time Regulations 1999 at £16bn, followed by Vehicle Excise Duty Regulations 2000 (£9.2bn) and the Data Protection Bill (£7.3bn). The smoke-free Regulations 2007 were introduced in July 2007 at a cost of £3m and a recurring annual cost of £43m.

Factory Wanted

A chamber member is looking to purchase a factory in Thanet of 30,000 sq ft with associated parking and HGV access. New build considered. If you can help, please email the Chamber to admin@tekc.co.uk

Nice Work If You Can Get It

The success of Infratil, the owners of Manston Airport, the splendid news about the China Gateway released at the Chamber event on 20th February and the opening of the Express by Holiday Inn on 24th January this year illustrate the remarkable resurgence in the area of what is now Kent International Airport. The sad story of London Manston Airport plc is history. Unsecured creditors of LMA stand to lose a total of £18m of which £16.2m is owed to Planestation Group plc. As is often the case, the real winners in the affair must be the administrators who handled the demise. The partners in question charged £419.41 per hour for their time. Let me think, that's around £7 per minute. Nice work if you can get it, indeed.

Kent Tourism

Kent Tourism Authority reports that visitors to attractions in Kent increased by 21% in the period July – September 2007. Occupancy rates for serviced accommodation in Thanet experienced a sharp fall in September of just under 15%, but the overall figure for the quarter of 73% compares favourably with Canterbury at 71%, Swale at 61% and Shepway at 52%. Kent Cross Channel carriers reported an encouraging growth of 3.5%, sustaining the solid performance of the first half of the year. Security delays at airports and the rising traffic at Dover cruise terminals have doubtlessly helped to boost passenger numbers.

Marlowe Innovation Centre

The fruit of multi-agency cooperation involving among others Thanet District Council and the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, this new development will open its doors to tenants in May this year. For full details on the 18 offices and 6 light industrial units available, contact Gabrielle Wilson by email at gabrielle@creativefoundation.org.uk or by telephone to 01303 842180. Chamber members may also telephone her mobile on 07738 907416.

Tell It Like It Is

Thanet & East Kent Chamber is launching a new service with the March Newsletter. For a modest fee of £30.00, Chamber members are invited to send 350 copies of an A4 or A5 flyer to be distributed with the March, April or May newsletter. Email admin@tekc.co.uk for details.

Chinese Banks

In contrast to the crisis at Northern Rock, Chinese Bankers must be dispensing with their table-tennis bats and buying golf clubs. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the Bank of Communications have stated that their year-on-year earnings rose have increased by over 60%. HSBC estimates that total pre-tax profits from all the Chinese domestic banks will total US\$85.4 bn.

Government Grants

Companies in Thanet may qualify for grants of 15% of project costs. As Thanet is a designated Tier 2 area, approved projects may also qualify for an additional 20% for companies with fewer than 50 employees. Medium sized-companies with no more than 249 workers can receive an additional 10%. Full details are available from South East Grant Advisory Service, tel: Jim Miller on 0780 866131 or Brian Short on 07721 452294.

This is a weekly news communication from Thanet & East Kent Chamber designed for members. All comments, advice and recommendations are warmly welcomed. Please email davidfoley@tekc.co.uk

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