

## **BD celebrates apprentices' award**

Thursday, June 16, 2011

PLYMOUTH manufacturer Becton Dickinson is celebrating after winning the Large Employer of the Year Award at the South West regional heat of the National Apprenticeship Awards.

BD's Plymouth plant, part of a global medical technology giant, will now represent the South West at the National Apprenticeship Awards in London later this month.



AWARD: Peter Burgess, fourth left, with apprentices and HR Co-ordinator Leanne Chubb and Barrie Palmer, facilities team leader

The plant, which manufactures a broad range of blood collection products and systems for haematology, coagulation and special chemistries, employs 11 engineering apprentices among a workforce of about 720.

At the regional heat, organised by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), at Taunton's Holiday Inn, the firm impressed judges with its "role model" organisation.

During the past 10 years, BD has found its next generation of engineers, and supplemented an ageing workforce, by bringing in younger skilled people.

The company, based at the Belliver Industrial Estate, has close links with city schools and the university offering work experience placements and site tours.

It is currently involved with the Engineering Education Scheme England which helps encourage young people into engineering.

A BD spokesman said: "It is great to be recognised for the efforts we put into our apprenticeship scheme.

"Apprenticeships are considered by BD as the foundation of a career, providing the essential skills needed to kick start their working life.

"With employer engagement and quality training, apprentices are an investment to BD and they can be developed to become potential leaders and managers of the future."

John Chudley, South West director for the National Apprenticeship Service, congratulated BD for its commitment to apprenticeships and said: "This year's awards were a terrific showcase of the outstanding wealth of apprenticeship talent we have across the South West.

"It's been a tough year for businesses and the economy, but the awards have given apprenticeships the chance to shine – showing they are key to growth during the economic upturn.

"All the finalists demonstrate what makes apprenticeships so successful, not only in the South West but throughout England.

"The winners are now ambassadors for apprenticeships and for the region's dedication to this programme.

"By acknowledging and rewarding the diverse learners and training opportunities in the region, we hope to encourage more individuals and organisations to take part in initiatives in future."

The awards are designed to celebrate the achievements of apprentices and the businesses employing them.

At the regional awards evening guest presenters were Simon Waugh, executive chairman of the National Apprenticeship Service, and Richard Hickin, territory business manager for City & Guilds.

There were 130 attendees representing 100 companies from across the South West.

Apprenticeships offer young people a training route which combines work-based learning with theory and a recognised qualification, whilst employers experience benefits when hiring an apprentice, including motivated, skilled staff and increased productivity.

More than 35,000 people started apprenticeships in the South West last year.

The National Apprenticeship Awards 2011 received a record number of applications with more than 1,600 entries – an increase of more than 25 per cent on last year. This year NAS, in partnership with City and Guilds, is looking for England's Top 100 Apprenticeship employers. As well as the four employer category winners, the 24 best other employers in each category will be honoured in the Top 100 Apprenticeship employers list.