

SKILLS SHORTAGE

Young women snub engineering scheme

CECA and scheme organisers have no choice but to give 85 empty places to young men.

By Ed Owen



Take-up: A disappointing zero number of applicants to the scheme

A scheme launched specifically to help young women into engineering careers in the north east has failed to attract a single applicant.

Instead, all 85 places available on the NVQ-level construction course, which is backed by the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) North East, Newcastle College and local employers, will now be filled by young men.

"We are both bemused and

disappointed," said CECA north east's director, Douglas Kell. "We want to see more women employed in our industry in this region. We already attract an encouraging number at graduate level."

The initiative was designed to attract female school leavers

aged 16 and above into engineering. Course requirements for the course were kept to just a numeracy and literacy test, to reach the widest possible audience.

Newcastle College provides training with further courses set to start across the north east. Students will be seconded to CECA members across the region.

"We hope more young women will respond at the next opportunity," said Kell. "If the job appeal is not there for them, we'd like to know what they do expect particularly from a lifelong career. Then we'll try to work that into it for them."

The scheme was developed after the Equal Opportunities Commission listed engineering as, "among the most heavily segregated sectors of the workforce in Britain" in 2005.

It also found that there was a "clear correlation between the employment sectors where men predominate and skill shortages".

briefs

WATER SAVING PEAKS AT 65M LITRES A DAY

Water companies and their customers have saved enough water in the past year to supply a city the size of Bradford, a report by water regulator Ofwat has revealed. The *Security of Supply 2006-07* report showed that water companies achieved water savings of 65M litres per day in the year to March 2007.

WORK STARTS ON THE UK'S FIRST HIGH OCCUPANCY LANE

Work has begun on the first dedicated high occupancy vehicle lane on a UK motorway. The 2.75km lane will link the M606 near Bradford to the M62 towards Leeds, allowing vehicles with more than one occupant to bypass busy traffic. The £4M pilot could reduce peak time journeys for sharers by around eight minutes.

DELHI METRO PROJECT WILL USE 13 BORING MACHINES

Thirteen Tunnel Boring Machines (see picture below) will be used to complete 14.45km of the 29.83km Delhi Metro phase two. The first two of these TBMs have been refurbished, following their work on phase one, and final testing has been carried out this week. They will be lowered into the ground at Malviya Nagar, where a 18m-deep shaft is being sunk, and will start tunnelling to Hauz Khas in south Delhi, India, by the end of the month.



AWARDS

Awards shortlist down to 15

Fifteen schemes have been shortlisted by judges from a bumper crop of entries to this year's Historic Bridges and Infrastructure Awards, representing the cream of the industry's conservation works.

The awards celebrate its 10th anniversary this year and will be founding chairman and judge Roland Paxton's final stint in the chair before he steps down from the post.

Entries to this year's awards – open to historic or conservation projects in England – covered a range of work from bridge repairs and reconstruction to retaining wall strengthening and canal refurbishment.

The awards are organised by the Panel for Historical Engineering works and supported by English Heritage, British Waterways, Network Rail and the ICE.

The winners and highly commended projects will be

THE SHORTLIST

- Lord Leicester Hospital retaining wall, Warwick
- West Park Bridge, Wolverhampton
- Westport Canal Bridge, Somerset
- Weetwood Bridge, Wooler
- Wellington Street swing bridge, Kingston upon Hull
- Foxton Heritage Lottery Fund, Leicestershire
- Hengoed/Maesycwmmwr Viaduct, Caerphilly
- Bridge 391, Rockingham St, Elephant and Castle

- Kingsland Viaduct, Hackney
- High Level Bridge, Newcastle
- Victoria footbridge, Hereford
- Blisworth Tunnel, Northants
- Battersea Bridge, London
- Treliver Bridge, Bodmin
- Shaken Bridge, Helmsley

Judges

Roland Paxton chairman
David Greenfield awards secretary
Terry Girdler chief engineer, English Heritage
Andrew Leadbeater CSS bridges group
Antony Oliver Editor, NCE

announced at a celebratory lunch at the ICE on 21 November.

For details, and to reserve your place at the lunch, con-

tact David Greenfield, awards secretary, on 01823 277155, or email: david_greenfield@talk21.com.