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Worcestershire Company Revolutionises Building Industry

A Worcestershire company is set to revolutionise the building industry after developing environmentally-friendly floorboards and panels that are made solely from recycled wood – and outperform standard building materials.

EcoBoard Ltd, based at Wildmoor, Bromsgrove, plans to manufacture the superior strength High Density Particle Board (HDPB) out of recycled urban waste wood to supply the building industry.

Using an innovative production method, wood chips are pressed together to create the board, which has outperformed a range of sample materials in initial tests. The HDPB also benefits from not containing formaldehyde, a recognised carcinogen.

At present, the UK produces between 1.5 million and 4 million tonnes of waste wood, with 85 per cent going to landfill. The product, which is being created with funding support from the Central Technology Belt (CTB), would not only reduce the amount going to landfill, but is also expected to create around 35 jobs in Worcestershire.

The CTB is backing the scheme with a £25,000 grant to help fund further testing and start-up costs.

Alan White, head of the CTB, said: "Until now it has not been economically viable to produce commercial boarding in the UK using recycled wood. However, the rise in cost of wood disposal and the increasing cost of virgin wood have changed that.

“It is fantastic to see companies that are part of the CTB really taking a lead role in protecting the environment, and this product could be a very exciting step forward for the building industry.”

The CTB’s role is to promote science and innovation in the corridor from Malvern to Birmingham, and following the £25,000 grant, EcoBoard Ltd hopes to start developing its plant, in the north of Worcestershire, in February or March. Production would then begin in September with 50,000 cubic metres made in the first year.

The CTB uses a Technology Transfer Fund as a ‘Dragon’s Den’-style group, which judges new business ideas and gives funding to those deemed viable.

- Ends -

Editors’ notes

Central Technology Belt

The Central Technology Belt aims to harness and build on the skilled workforce and intellectual creativity between Birmingham and Worcestershire

It comprises a wide range of partners and companies, all working together to help bring about the region's high technology renaissance

The CTB helps strengthen the economy by seeking to attract businesses which will provide real, high value jobs now and for the future through:

1. Providing purpose-built space in science parks for innovative companies
2. Supporting growing businesses by linking businesses with local research centres and universities
3. Providing access to suitable funding streams

More information can be found at www.centraltechnologybelt.com or by calling Alan White on 0121 414 7277

For further press information regarding the Central Technology Belt, please contact Sue Bown at Severn Communications on 01905 791996 or e-mail her at sue.bown@severncom.com