



In gear for motor career

New chances to train in the motor industry will be offered at the state-of-the-art East Midlands Centre for Automotive Training. Education Correspondent **Michael Greenwell** reports

THE motor industry was hit hard by the economic downturn – but the tide is set to turn.

That's the view of Sarah Sillars OBE, executive chairwoman of the Institute of the Motor Industry.

Speaking at the official opening of the East Midlands Centre for Automotive Training (EMCAT) – after it was taken over by South Nottingham College – her views will encourage those who want to train in the sector:

The college's acquisition of the centre will mean students can enrol on full-time motoring courses from September.

It builds on the support for Notts teenagers already studying the new diploma through schools.

Ms Sillars said: "Overall, car sales have taken a dip, but the industry is starting to pick up.

"Manufacturers are confident with their product ranges and new markets are being established with the evolution of new technologies.

"That is why centres with excellent facilities such as EMCAT are so important for young people, training, business and the sector.

"The development of electric vehicles and low-carbon cars, as well as new and digital technologies, mean we have to equip young people and ensure we have future provision to meet these demands.

"In any industry you need people trained at every level, both in new areas of technology and the 'bread and butter' areas which are essential parts of manufacture."

The learning opportunities EM-

CAT already provides have been relished by teenage pupils as part of their diplomas and vocational qualifications.

With the launch of full-time courses, they can continue their career path into further education after leaving school.

From September, full-time courses, ranging from vehicle maintenance to body painting, will be run by South Nottingham College.

Students will work alongside leading international car manufacturers who already occupy the site at Ruddington Fields Business Park, Mere Way, Ruddington.

College principal Mal Cowgill said: "Our vision is to run facilities to serve our communities locally, while working alongside national and international businesses which will give young people aspiration and the ability to aim high in the industry."

Mr Cowgill admits the college's acquisition of EMCAT might have raised eyebrows due to the global financial crisis, but he has a long-term vision and aims to be one of the region's best education providers in the motoring sector.

The college acquired the £9m site in 2008 and has developed its provision over the last two years.

There are already 250 apprentices at businesses at EMCAT and 40 pupils attend as part of their diplomas.

A further 60 pupils and 100 full-time post-16 further education students will be supported from September.

Pupils from south Notts schools – Dayncourt, Rushcliffe and South Wolds – have been attending, along with pupils from Bluecoat CofE School, which has sites in Wollaton and Aspley.

Children with special needs from Foxwood School in Bramcote have also learned at EMCAT.

South Nottingham College is recruiting now for full-time courses to start in September.

Manufacturers remain tenants at the site with the college as their landlord. They include BMW, General Motors, Honda, Jaguar, Kia, Land Rover, Mazda, Suzuki and Volkswagen, as well as private training providers Raytheon Professional Services, SPX Service Solutions and VT Training.

Mr Cowgill describes the dynamic as "interesting" – with the college being landlord to big names in the industry – but hopes all involved can work together.

It is hoped international companies could provide career opportunities for qualified trainees.

Courses at EMCAT have been accredited by the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), the professional association for individuals working in the motor industry.

It is also the Sector Skills Council for the automotive retail industry and the governing body for the Automotive Technician Accreditation scheme.

It means the courses EMCAT provides are the recognised industry standard.

EMCAT operations manager Eric Braham said: "These are first-class facilities for the people



of Nottingham and Notts, and we are excited about our new intake of full-time and part-time students from September.

“This centre of excellence is a major step forward and will be a platform in attracting more business within this area.”

For more details on the facilities and courses on offer, contact EM-CAT on 0115 945 7200.



Centre of excellence: Sarah Sillars and Mal Cowgill at the official opening of the new centre

PICTURE: ANDY LOWE C120510AJL3-3



Accredited courses: Dayncourt School pupils Ryan Shield, 15, and Macaulay Kilpatrick, 15, work on an engine rig at EMCAT in Ruddington.

PICTURE: DAN MATTHAMS C130510DM2-1