

Undergraduates make vital contribution to pump firm's expansion

A Suffolk pump company has won a massive new order to supply 10 specialised pumps to a petroleum refinery in Pakistan.

The contract – and the imminent launch of a new condensate recovery unit - underlines the growth of Rendlesham-based Amarith, whose continuing expansion has been accelerated by the valuable work of two undergraduates on eight-week summer work placements.

Amarith hosted local students Greg Aldam and Richard Morgan after they were placed with the firm by Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services as part of the Shell Technology Enterprise Programme (STEP).

Woodbridge-based Greg, who is studying Physics at the University of Nottingham, won last year's STEP awards for Suffolk after writing a 70-page pump testing guide.

Richard Morgan, from Henley, who is studying engineering at the University of Durham, was joint runner-up in Suffolk for his work to redesign the control logic for a condensate recovery unit which captures and recycles steam in industrial buildings to save energy.

Amarith managing director Oliver Brigginsaw said the work of both students had been important to the two-year-old company, which has around 15 full-time employees and up to another 10 self-employed workers.

"We have doubled our turnover in the last year, and we are now starting to export, The Pakistan order will account for 10 per cent of our total output this year and is due for despatch in June." said Mr Brigginsaw.

"Our growth since Greg was with us has made his pump testing manual all the more valuable.

"In the early days we only had one test engineer who was qualified to test the pumps, but the guide has been an important starting point in helping new employees learn how to test pumps in a potentially dangerous area of the operation.

"Richard did a lot of electrical work involving a smart control panel which automatically adjusts the speed of the condensate recovery unit according to its operating environment.

"He came back during the Christmas holidays to do a bit more work in refining what had started following prototype testing, and the project is now due for launch next month. The unit can save a lot of energy for our customers because it only operates when it's needed. It's been a long project, but Richard's contribution has been very important."

Greg said he would recommend any undergraduate to consider taking part in the STEP scheme: "It's valuable experience and it can only help when it comes to finding a job for real," he said. "It's a proper job with a sense of responsibility. You really feel you are doing something which will benefit the company, and it's good to get that kind of experience under your belt."

In total there were around 1500 STEP placements across the UK last year, while NWES has now placed more than 100 students with businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk over the last five years.

The scheme is designed to be mutually beneficial, with the student gaining valuable paid work experience, and the business getting the services of an intelligent undergraduate to undertake a specific project.

Amarinth also benefited from the STEP scheme 18 months ago when University of Nottingham student Jonathan Rouse designed a base plate component for the company.

For further information about this year's STEP programme contact Rosina Haskell at NWES on 01493 850204, or email rosina.haskell@nwes.org.uk

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EDITORS' NOTES:

NWES is a not-for-profit organisation working in partnership with other agencies and organisations to provide total business support, boost self-employment and encourage entrepreneurial skills throughout Norfolk and Waveney.

Established in 1982, NWES now has 10 offices across Norfolk and Waveney. It also manages Beacon Innovation Centre, Riverside Business Centre, North East Suffolk Business Centre and the Silkcutters House and Quayside Business Centre on the Lowestoft Enterprise Park.