



Forth Valley Resource Efficiency Forum



SUMMARY

The Forth Valley Resource Efficiency Forum (FVREF) has been raising awareness of key issues relating to resource efficiency since 2003. The Forum delivers an annual series of topical events aimed at the local business community which are organised by Wren & Bell. The key partners involved are: Falkirk Council, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Stirling Council. FVREF gathers feedback from the local business community to identify issues that are important to them, in order to deliver events that are focussed and relevant. Topics covered include 'usual suspects', such as legislation, waste management and energy, but the FVREF has also examined water & wastewater, transport, innovation, process improvements, Corporate Social Responsibility, ISO14001 and environmental marketing, to name a few. By raising awareness of these issues the public sector partners are contributing to their own objectives of enabling sustainable economic growth.

BACKGROUND

The FVREF has its roots in the Central Scotland Energy Management Group, which operated within the Forth Valley area for nearly 20 years. The Group was originally run and co-ordinated by a range of private sector partners who provided specialist energy efficiency advice and support to the business community with the assistance of the public sector. The Group organised an annual programme of events and seminars on key issues.

A variety of initiatives launched by Government saw changes in the support environment, with free advice and assistance being offered by organisations such as Envirowise, The Carbon Trust etc. As a consequence the private sector members of the Group felt that they could not continue. Recognising that the loss of this opportunity to encourage businesses to adopt resource efficient processes would be detrimental, key public sector partners came together to run the Group and established the FVREF. Those partners were Falkirk Council, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Stirling Council with the support and assistance of one of Scotland's key environmental consultancies Wren & Bell.

Since the outset major local businesses have supported and contributed to the success of the forum and the variety of SMEs attending has continued to increase.

KEY CONTACT

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Year	Delegates	Average Delegates per Event	Unique Organisations
2005 to 2006	122	30.5	64
2006 to 2007	184	36.8	79
2007 to 2008	207	41.4	102
2008 to 2009	194	38.8	97
Total 2005 to 2009	707	36.88	237

OUTCOMES

One of the first objectives achieved was the creation of a Resource Efficiency Directory which was launched in 2003.

The majority of businesses have reported that they have achieved business benefits or introduced new activities as a result of attending the events. Half of the participants reported having increased environmental awareness amongst staff and over 40% claimed that waste reduction had taken place at their organisation. Other benefits included energy efficiencies (36%), financial savings (32%) as well as increased recycling and introduction of new products and services (27%)

Other benefits and activities arising from the events include referral to free energy and waste audits, where experts identify potential efficiency cost savings and assist with implementation. Fifteen percent of the businesses also indicated that networking and introduction for new businesses was an additional business benefit: *"The networking is as important as the talks."*

LOOKING AHEAD

Despite the success of the **FVREF**, which is well received by the business community, the partners are determined to build on these successful foundations and broaden the potential to attract new delegates. To help address this issue the Business Gateway is being engaged to boost the number of business contacts available and to increase attendance at the events.

In these difficult times and in light of the new Green Jobs strategies emerging from the US, UK and indeed the Scottish Government, it is clear that more and more focus will be given to developing a low carbon economy. The business community needs to know what they can do to meet the expectations as well as what opportunities there may be to expand or diversify. Now more than ever forums, such as the **FVREF**, should continue to spread the good news and extend their networking capability to pave the way for future growth in our economy. The **FVREF** is a great example of what can be achieved by public sector partners in a relatively inexpensive way to promote sustainable economic growth.

