

# North firm's conference first

CAITHNESS Renewables, the Thurso-based renewable energy consultancy, was represented at this week's first Energy North annual conference in Eden Court Theatre, Inverness.

The event gave oil and gas companies the opportunity to share best practice with renewable energy businesses, notably for finding solutions to offshore installation challenges.

Speakers included Sidney Dantuma Johnston, of SPEX Group and SSE's Dave Mackay, while other far north delegates shared nuclear decommissioning expertise with other energy industry specialists. The business breakfast that started proceedings had speakers from BP and ABO Wind.

The conference was launched with a civic reception on Monday evening in Inverness Townhouse, hosted by Provost Alex Graham. This gave Caithness Renewables the chance to talk to Highland Council representatives about the positive contribution it receives for two staff members, Juvéanal Dufaur and Hanna Miedema, who are employed through the council-run graduate placement programme.

Nicky Marr, who compered the event, said the projected shortfall of staff in oil and gas is 95,000 by 2020.

Other speakers included MSP Mike Mackenzie, a member of Holyrood's economy, energy and tourism committee, who quoted requirements for up to 10,000 renewable energy



The Caithness Renewables team who attended the Energy North conference, from left: Hanna Miedema, Eilidh Gunn, Louise Smith and Juvéanal Dufaur.

jobs in Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles.

In a recent report from Scottish Renewables, 294 organisations (54 per cent) considered their employment would increase over the forthcoming year, with just nine (1.6 per cent) expected anticipating a reduction. SSE also explained how it is working with further and higher educational institutions, such as Inverness College UHI, to develop apprenticeship and trainee engineer schemes.

The Caithness Renewables team highlighted its participation with the north of Scotland STEM programme and its commitment to speaking to young people in schools.

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