

## **South East celebrates 1000 days to go to 2012 Olympic Games**

**2 November 2009**

Saturday, 31 October marked 1,000 days to go until the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games. The South East got into the 1,000 days spirit with a range of events.

The region will be an Olympic showcase for the next 1,000 days as it will host major events and training facilities for Olympic teams from across the globe. Also, already more than 1,000 South East companies are shortlisted as suppliers to the Games.

This milestone day recognised the millions of people all round the country who are inspired by, benefiting from or delivering the London 2012 Games. Events across the region celebrated the contribution people in South East are already making from Buckinghamshire to Kent to Southampton.

Keren Jones, Director for Culture and Communities at South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), said: "The 2012 Games will be a great time for everyone and will benefit our region not just in sporting opportunities, but will also help improve quality of life economically and culturally. We are very excited that so many people across the region are getting into the Olympic spirit and marked this important milestone with so many creative ideas."

One of the day's big events was at the Eton College Rowing Centre at Dorney Lake near Windsor which will host the Rowing and Canoe Sprint events during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. There, 1,000 Bucks County residents passed the 1,000 metre marker as they rowed, ran, cycled or walked to complete a minimum of 1,000 metres as part of the Reactivate Bucks Community Challenge.

Everyone who participated will be listed in a 1,000 day roll of honour to be included as part of the Bucks 2012 Archive record. The challenge was designed so regardless of their physical condition, everyone could participate.

Meanwhile over in Southampton, 1,000 people recently rose to the Olympic challenge when they participated in 30 different activities in six different venues in the 30 minute SPORTATHON, part of the ongoing 2012 initiative.

In Gravesham, 1,000 young people celebrated the 1,000 day countdown with an art competition. Their finished collection of paintings, drawings and designs will then be brought together to form a 1,000 image mural in time to celebrate the start of the 1,000 day countdown to the Paralympics on Thursday 3 December.

Elsewhere in Kent, 1,000 young people were involved in the launch of the 2010 Kent School Games on 1 October. The heats, trials and area competitions will run through to the finals in June and July 2010 and will involve 30,000 school children. Kent County Council has pledged that the Games will be organised every two years as a legacy from London 2012.

SEEDA is looking well beyond the 1,000 days to deliver a lasting legacy for the region from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The work of a wide range of partner organisations will result in ongoing economic, social and sporting benefits well beyond Games time in 2012.

SEEDA is the strategic lead for the South East Partnership for the 2012 Games, a group of regional agencies working together to create and promote new market opportunities in tourism, environmental technologies, digital technologies and cultural, creative and sporting industries, as well as the significant procurement opportunities in the run up to the Games through the online tendering system CompeteFor. A volunteering legacy is also planned with opportunities for people to gain new skills.

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#### **Notes to Editors**

- The 1,000 days to go event at Eton College Rowing Centre is part of the South East's Olympic Challenge, which is to get 300,000 more people participating in sport and physical activity. The Challenge was launched on 30 October at the Bucks New University Performance Centre.
- The 1000 day countdown for the London 2012 Paralympic Games will be marked on 3 December, 2009.
- **SEEDA, the South East England Development Agency**, is the Government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development of the South East of England – the driving force of the UK's economy. Through supporting businesses, encouraging innovation, developing skills and engaging with public and private partners, we aim to create a successful, sustainable future for the region.

**SEEDA's support helped deliver the following** over the period 2005-2008:

- 17,500 jobs created or safeguarded
  - 32,500 people helped to get work
  - 10,000 businesses created or attracted to region
  - 137,500 businesses assisted
  - £638m investment, 45% levered from private sector
  - 200ha Brownfield land remediated
  - 148,500 people assisted in skills development
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