

Coldest Journey team members to host CPA's Stars of the Future at Vertikal Days 2014

The Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA) is hosting its second 'Stars of the Future' plant mechanic apprenticeship awards at the Vertikal Days show at Haydock Park, Merseyside. The presentation on the 14th May at 11am is to the young engineers who took part in the competition from colleges nationwide. Presenting the awards are Finning engineers, Spencer Smirl and Richmond Dykes from the famed 'Coldest Journey' Antarctic expedition.

After 307 days in the Antarctic guiding Rover and Seeker - the two specially designed Antarctic Cat D6Ns - the two Finning engineers made a safe return to the UK. The CPA is delighted to announce that the pair from Finning will host the Stars of the Future Awards presentation. Smirl is flying back from his home country of Canada especially for the occasion.

Throughout their time in the Antarctic, the two engineers maintained and operated the two Cat D6Ns, manoeuvring across crevasse fields and blue ice, whilst towing science and accommodation cabooses in an ice train.

Breaking records for the operation of dozers in the world's harshest conditions, the two were faced with winds of up to 125 km per hour, delivering a wind chill of minus 88 degrees. Both plan to share their experiences with the Stars of the



Future audience.

Haydn Steele, CPA's training manager said: "Spencer and Richmond are the perfect candidates to present the Stars of the Future awards. Their experiences in the Antarctic in sub-zero temperatures keeping the Caterpillar machines working will be an inspiration to the students embarking on a career in plant mechanics! It's realising a dream and from little acorns grow mighty oak trees - if you put your mind to it there's no limit to what you can achieve. We are honoured that Spencer and Richmond accepted our invitation."

Richmond Dykes, is now a senior operator at Finning's headquarters in Cannock UK, said: "This industry is nothing without talent and people that are passionate about what they do. I am a great believer in recognising and supporting 'Stars of the Future' and know first-hand that with the right attitude and skills development, you can be well equipped for even the coldest of journeys. I hope that by being



Richmond Dykes and Spencer Smirl



involved in the awards, both Spencer and myself will help to raise their profile and inspire the next generation of engineering talent and who knows, perhaps one day they will be lucky enough to complete the coldest journey."

Why Stars of the Future?

There is a strategic need to promote the construction equipment industry to young adults and their parents. Leading this part of the equation is the Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA) with their 'Stars of the Future' scheme. This was intended to recognise the achievements of young adults training to become plant mechanics, but the PR value to the industry as a whole is equally significant.

The inaugural Stars of the Future programme ran during the 2012/13 academic year and attracted 489 entries from a dozen colleges throughout the UK. The first award ceremony took place during the Plantworx show in May 2013 and attracted hundreds of interested parties.

The entry criteria for Stars of the Future 2014 is the same; it is open to plant mechanic apprentices on courses at Level 2 and Level 3. The two national winners will receive a substantial amount of tool vouchers and the 20 regional winners will each receive vouchers - the amounts to be confirmed.

To date ten colleges have committed to the 2014 competition and, in addition to the Finning Academy and the National Construction College, they include Askham Bryan, Bridgend, Coleg Lysfasi, Myerscough, North Glasgow, Reaseheath, Wiltshire and Stafford.

To find out more about Stars of the Future call Haydn Steele CPA training manager on Tel: 020 7796 3366 or visit www.cpa.uk.net/stars. Don't forget to put 14th and 15th May in your diary and see you at Vertikal Days.



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