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### **Skegness and Mablethorpe lead the way in tourism skills**

**Tourism businesses on the East Coast of Lincolnshire are leading the way in working co-operatively to develop the skills needed to attract more visitors.**

In the first initiative of its kind, caravan parks in Skegness and Mablethorpe have banded together to jointly invest in the skills they need, by offering a nationally-recognised training course, delivered for the first time on the East Coast.

The ground-breaking approach has resulted in more highly trained staff, which should lead to a better offer for visitors looking for the right choice of caravan park on the English coast.

The training targeted the potentially hazardous work of static caravan-siting and led to a nationally recognised BTEC qualification. It's a hazardous job because as well as the safety aspects of siting the caravan itself, there is the gas, electricity and water to safely connect. On bigger sites there can be as many as 30 re-sitings of these large static caravans each week.

The three day, site-based, Safe Siting Award training was hosted by Coastfields Leisure at Grange Leisure Park in Mablethorpe, and all seven local employees taking part passed with flying colours.

The unique employer partnership approach to training was instigated by the East Lincolnshire Destination Management Organisation (ELDMO) that was set up to boost the local visitor experience, and which brings together a group of local businesses. The training programme was organised by SkillsReach, a Lincolnshire-based specialist skills development company, and supported by East Lindsey District Council as part of its local skills investment programme. The BTEC-standard training, which is accredited by Edexcel, was delivered by leisure industry health and safety specialists Leisuresafe.

David Honman of the Skills Sub Group of the East Lincolnshire DMO and Business Manager for the training hosts, Coastfields Leisure, said: "The holiday park industry is vital to our local economy and this has been a great example of DMO businesses working together to co-ordinate a high-quality training programme that 'raises the bar' for the visitor experience in Skegness and Mablethorpe."

"The course is an excellent practical example of how East Lindsey District Council support can help improve skills levels in the District through partnership working, targeting the skills that are really

vital to local businesses,” added James Makinson-Sanders of East Lindsey District Council’s Economy and Tourism team.

Roy Harper of SkillsReach, in partnership with East Lindsey District Council, worked with the DMO skills group to identify the need and provide this training solution. He explained: “Getting the right skills is one of the ways in which local businesses on Lincolnshire’s East Coast have a chance to grow and compete at a higher level. This is a great example of how everyone benefits through local business leadership and collaboration.”

The personnel taking part said the course would have a big impact on their future work performance, and that the training was highly relevant to their needs. Feedback from those taking part also endorsed the value of the shared training, with everyone benefiting from the huge amount of collective experience and the opportunity to share similar issues and find practical solutions.

Leisuresafe director John Biles who developed the three day Safe Siting course is currently acting as an expert witness in the case of a man killed whilst moving a caravan. He commented : “Caravan siting is hazardous but as long as the right controls are in place, risks can be minimised. Training, safe systems of work and the right equipment are key to preventing serious or even fatal accidents. It’s great to see businesses in East Lincolnshire investing in the skills of their caravan siting teams and taking safety seriously.”

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