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BITA Academy targets next generation of engineers at Big Bang Fair

Students can win a tablet computer by visiting BITA Academy stand between 15 to 17 March

The BITA Academy will be exhibiting at the 2012 Big Bang Fair in Birmingham's NEC, to highlight the immense career potential that awaits today's forklift engineering apprentices. BITA has secured a prime stand (GA6 in the 'Go Global' zone), alongside companies such as IBM, Rolls-Royce and Siemens.

Promotional water bottles, yo-yos and Frisbees will encourage young visitors to register their interest in an apprenticeship via the BITA Academy website (www.bitacademy.org). Plus on each day of the show, a tablet computer will be the prize for youngsters entering a lift-truck themed quiz based on information available at the stand. Each day's winners will be announced on the BITA Academy website.

In keeping with the event, which is often referred to as a cross between a science museum and theme park, the BITA Academy stand will be designed to engage and educate. Youngsters visiting the stand will be able to get a virtual insight into the materials handling industry by testing their skills on a Briggs 3D warehouse simulator. As in the real world, success will be down to optimising machine usage and hourly flow rates, avoiding disruptive bottlenecks in the process and keeping a close eye on manpower and machinery costs!

More than 45,000 young people are expected to attend the Big Bang Fair, which runs from 15 to 17 March and is designed to inspire and enthuse the next generation of engineers and scientists. With the forklift industry actively seeking new engineers and recruiting around 200 apprentices a year, the BITA Academy stand will also feature representatives from leading firms including Briggs, Barloworld, Doosan, Mitsubishi and Toyota.

Karl Baum, Programme Training Manager at the BITA Academy, said: "As the costs of a university education escalate at unprecedented speed, leaving graduates facing debts running into tens of thousands of pounds, we are keen to make schoolchildren aware that there are other options available when they consider their future. An engineering apprenticeship can be a fantastic path into a rewarding career and equip people to all the way to management and even company ownership."

Tim Waples, President of BITA, said: "There are 350,000 forklift trucks currently operating in the UK, playing a vital role in the supply chains that maintain our modern world. Unlike other business sectors, the forklift industry is actively looking out to recruit young people and we are keen to highlight the exciting and rewarding job opportunities available. There has never been a better time to join the industry."

The BITA Academy, which opened in November 2011, is a dedicated, branded apprenticeship training facility is operated in conjunction with City of Bristol College, one of the country's leading automotive training centres. The BITA Academy offers both a three-year Higher Apprenticeship qualification including an exclusive quality assured certificate, and an Advanced Level Apprenticeship qualification, achieved during a fourth year of study, which leads to a Diploma in FLT Maintenance & Repair (both awards are accredited by IMI Awards). Additionally, graduates are also accredited as Engineering Technicians by the Society of Operations Engineers.

##ENDS##

Issued on behalf of BITA

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Notes for Editors

- The British Industrial Truck Association, BITA, is a substantial and dynamic trade association representing a membership of 78 forklift truck manufacturers, suppliers, service providers and media operating in the UK.
- BITA is the voice of the industry in matters technical and legislative at the highest levels in Europe and internationally. It enjoys a close working relationship with bodies such as the UK Health and Safety Executive, the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the International Standards Organisation (ISO).
- As a member of the British Materials Handling Foundation (BMHF) BITA is allied with the Fédération Européenne de la Manutention (FEM), the European manufacturers' association of materials handling, lifting and storage equipment.
- BITA produces a wide range of specialist publications, encompassing best practice and health and safety assurance, as well as technical guidance notes and unique market insight. Its specialist committees include the Truck Suppliers Group (TSG), Technical Policy Committee (TPC), and the Component & Services Group (CSG) among many others.
- BITA members, including many international brands, manufacture and distribute over 90% of all new forklifts procured each year in the UK. They employ 7,000 people directly, and enjoy a combined annual turnover of £1.3bn. BITA members play an increasingly important role in the UK's overall economic health, supply chain effectiveness and environmental performance