



Cutting-fluids centre extended

Blaser Swisslube (www.blaser.com) has extended the ultra-modern Technology Centre at its headquarters in Hasle-Rüegsau, to 300m². With customers in about 60 countries, the company develops high-quality cutting and grinding fluids that are used in the production of everything from tiny components for watch-making to large structural elements for aircraft. Equipment that includes two five-axis machining centres, one turning and milling centre and a five-axis tool-grinding machine is used to re-create customers' machining operations;

specialists can then recommend the most appropriate fluids and offer advice on cost-effective ways to improve machining quality and productivity. One recent project resulted in a 30% increase in tool life, while another saw deep-hole drilling in tempered steel made 18-times faster.

CEO Marc Blaser says: "Both projects demonstrate that the three factors of productivity, economic efficiency and machining quality depend in large part on the choice and quality of metal-working fluid and on the expertise of the machining specialists."

Sunny side up for Libya

Libya could generate almost five-times the amount of energy from solar power than it currently produces in crude oil, according to research by Nottingham Trent University. A study led by the university's School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment found that the oil-rich nation could generate enough renewable power to meet its own demand and a "significant part of the world energy demand by exporting electricity".

Libya has an average daily solar radiation rate of about 7.1kWh/m² per day on a flat plane on the coast and 8.1kWh/m² per day in the southern region. By comparison, the UK's average solar radiation rate is about 2.95kWh/m² per day.

The research suggests that, if the North African country used just 0.1% of its land-mass to harness solar power, it could produce the equivalent of almost seven million barrels of crude oil per day (it currently produces about 1.41 million barrels of crude oil per day).

Amin Al-Habaibeh, who leads the Innovative and Sustainable Built Environment Technologies research group at the university, said: "Although Libya is rich in renewable-energy resources, it is in urgent need of a more comprehensive energy strategy. It is difficult to break the dependency on oil and natural gas, not just in terms of the country's demand for it, but also in terms of the revenues that it generates.

"Renewable-energy technology is still in its early days in Libya; a clear strategy and time-table are needed to take it forward. In particular, work needs to be done to develop the skills and knowledge required to install and maintain renewable-energy systems."

CAM company expands in India

Edgcam's Indian reseller, Kriatec, has moved into new 1,300ft² premises in Chennai that are almost three-times the size of its old premises. As well as accommodating an increase in staff numbers, the new facility houses training and conference rooms.

Kriatec director Ajitha Prabu.G says: "India is becoming a global 'hot spot' for manufacturing, and our new offices will help us provide Edgcam users with the software and support they need to grow their businesses."

Edgcam has always been Kriatec's major focus. The company has so far supplied the software — along with training, implementation and post-processor customisation — plus a range of cutting tools and electronic devices to about 1,000 businesses, universities and colleges. "Edgcam's popularity is growing because it's so easy to learn and use, through the specific training modules for novices and mature users, plus our on-line support tools."



Solid-state laser investment

Trumpf (www.trumpf.com) has expanded its main facility for developing solid-state lasers by erecting a new building at Schramberg-Sulgen. This project took 17 months and cost 13.5 million euros.

At the opening ceremony, vice-chairman Peter Leibinger said: "Schramberg is not only the cradle of the German laser industry; today, it is one of the world's leaders in laser tech-

nology development and production."

For the first time, all the development sections will be under one roof, and the space freed up in other buildings around the site will be used to boost laser production capacity. Moreover, the new development centre could be expanded at any time by the addition of a third floor. "The application options for laser technology are by no means exhausted."