

won a major contract which could be worth tens of millions of pounds to the region and lead to more jobs.

Chamblers is working with a Saudi Arabia-based client to source goods and materials from the UK and mainland Europe.

While unable to name the company, Chamblers said it is one of only a handful of trading houses approved by the Saudi government and specialises in engineering and maintenance, repair and operation equipment and materials.

"Until now it has been doing its shopping mainly in the US, but we have been able to demonstrate not only that we can source all of their clients' requirements in the North-east but we are more than a match in terms of being cost-competitive and responding rapidly to inquiries."

"It is impossible to predict the eventual value of the contract, but potentially, we are talking about tens of millions of pounds worth of goods and materials.

"The first order we sourced was for three high-specification industrial vehicles with loading capabilities, valued at about £150,000 each."

Mr Chamblers said the contract could see Chamblers' workforce of three growing to five but added that there could be a lot of spin-off jobs for other companies in the supply chain.

New chance for oil success

Companies operating in the oil and gas offshore sector have had a very difficult trading period over the recent past.

Their traditional market opportunities, known as the United Kingdom Continental Shelf (UKCS), had largely become a mature province, meaning in layman's terms that the larger reservoirs of hydro-carbon resources were being depleted in a planned manner, resulting in no new projects.

Drilling exploration was also at record low levels and without the discovery of

BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS

Certified Bookkeepers Come With A Guarantee

(NAPS)—To paraphrase Forrest Gump, hiring a bookkeeper is like a box of chocolates: You never know what you're going to get. That's because anyone can say, "I'm a bookkeeper."

You can, however, hire a bookkeeper certified by the American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers (AIPB), the national association for bookkeepers.

"You can sleep at night knowing that your business is in competent hands."
—AIPB co-president Steve Sahlein

To become certified, a bookkeeper must:

- pass three exams at Prometric (formerly Sylvan) test centers in adjusting entries, error correction, depreciation, payroll and inventory;
- have two years' on-the-job experience (same as CPAs);
- sign and perform according to a code of ethics; and
- maintain skills and knowledge with continuing professional education every year.

More than 30 colleges and universities offer courses to prepare students for the exam.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Handbook* predicts that certified bookkeepers "will have the best job prospects."

"Having a Certified Bookkeeper usually pays for itself in reduced bills from your CPA," says AIPB co-president Steve Sahlein. "And you can sleep at night knowing that your business is in competent hands."

A free booklet, *The Certified Bookkeeper Program*, can be downloaded at www.aipb.org.

new fields leading to physical projects, job creation hardly had a chance.

Witness the closure of both the Odebrecht SLP and Kvaerner Yards on the Tees, which once employed some 5,000 men between them. Add to this the supply chain within Tees Valley providing goods and services into the yards conservatively employed another 2,000.

However, currently there is much activity within the industry to reverse this decline and we are now seeing a rapid change in fortunes.

Under the leadership of the joint Government-Industry Task Force called PILOT, the Northern Offshore Federation (NOF) has been working within a framework to help address areas of skill transfers into other markets.

These diversifications fall under the headings of export management and renewable energy and are commented upon later.

Firstly however, within the UKCS there are already new opportunities driving through from major changes in the traditional routes of field development.

Marginal fields, usually smaller reservoirs previously thought too costly to develop, have benefited from new technologies such as sub-sea tie backs and floating production storage offloading vessels (FPSOs).

More recently however a new era of independent operators such as Burlington Resources and Apache have entered the market with new approaches to developments and project management, resulting in lower cost bases.

Already we are seeing some of the assets of the major operators (BP, Shell, British Gas) transferring to new independents who are determined to succeed with marginal developments and create job opportunities.

On a different scale the Canadian company Encana have already entered the UKCS and re-commenced exploration drilling, resulting in a substantial discovery Northeast of Aberdeen. This discovery has