MDC Power, an automotive manufacturer in Kölleda, Thuringia, has won Germany’s 2014 ‘Best Factory’ industrial excellence award. It has been awarded on the occasion of the 11th WirtschaftsWoche Conference in Weimar.

A wholly owned subsidiary of Daimler AG, MDC Power has been producing four-cylinder engines for Mercedes-Benz and its high-performance division, AMG, since 2003. Being the German winner means that MDC Power ranks with the best in the world in one of the top international competitions in the industrial and services sectors. “It’s very prestigious to be recognized in this way,” said Dr. Sven Breitschwerdt, the then Managing Director of MDC. “All 1,700 of us, from managers in their offices to assembly workers on the factory floor, work hard every day to keep our growing company efficient. Being singled out as the ‘best company’ is very encouraging and will make us even more motivated”. The panel of judges comprised experts from the business schools WHU Otto Beisheim, INSEAD and WirtschaftsWoche, a German business magazine. After visiting the MDC factory, the judges said they were particularly impressed with the consistent focus on core processes, the exemplary way in which responsibilities were divided between personnel and the high degree of flexibility.

Companies that enter the ‘Best Factory’ competition are evaluated according to criteria relating to performance that is above average and sustainable, with particular attention being paid to how they implement their corporate strategy in all areas. From key performance indicators to staff engagement to corporate culture, the ‘Best Factory’ recognizes the entire spectrum of factors that make a business successful. (td)
1 News

**Meiningen** – New machinery and a new production hall – **Weisskopf Werkzeuge GmbH** is expanding its production in Meiningen to the tune of EUR 6.5 million. The investment will create a further 18 permanent jobs and shows yet again how the innovative, quality products being produced by small- and medium-sized companies in Thuringia have won the state a reputation as a place where business and technology excel. International companies in the automotive, aviation, engineering and toolmaking sectors, such as Robert Bosch, Thyssen-Krupp, Continental, Brose, Sandvik and INA Schaeffler know and appreciate the value of Weisskopf’s carbide and diamond tools.

**Erfurt** – Latin America was the topic of the 8th Thuringian Foreign Trade Day (Außenwirtschaftstag). Particular focus was put on Brazil, Argentina and the Pacific Alliance with the economies of Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Costa Rica. Business people from Thuringia met experts from each sub-region to find out how to access their markets. Another expert panel informs about export financing and credit guarantees, being critical topics for companies when entering emerging markets.

1 Dates

› **26–29 JANUARY 2015**
Arab Health – The biggest trade fair for medical technology and hospital equipment and fit-outs in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Dubai

› **10–12 February 2015**
SPIE Photonics West – The biggest North American trade fair for laser, optics and optical electronics. Moscone Center, San Francisco

› **16–20 March 2015**
CeBIT – Business IT Show and Conference. Hanover Exhibition Grounds

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**Industrie 4.0 – Smart Manufacturing from ‘Down Under’ comes to Thuringia**

Industrial companies everywhere are being challenged on all fronts, but the German government’s INDUSTRIE 4.0, part of its 2020 High-Tech Strategy, offers a vision for the future.

Production is becoming increasingly digital – and also needs to be even more networked, to enable data acquisition and management and make it possible to control production processes. Networking production has many advantages, to name but two: production becomes more flexible and products can be individualized thanks to IT-based variant management and integrated quality control. **Delta Shelving Systems GmbH**, which recently commenced production in Gotha, combines these very things. Australian Stephen Eddowes was looking for the perfect location in which to expand his company, which was established in Sydney in 1984. He looked to Germany because of the size of the market and proximity to his customers and eventually chose the state of Thuringia because it is not only in the middle of Germany but also in the middle of Europe. And so the production of an innovative shelving and storage system is soon to begin in this state, entirely in the spirit of Industrie 4.0. The Smart Factory’s e-commerce platform will make products that are ‘Made in Germany’ even more individual by involving customers to an unprecedented extent. (maa)

**Thuringian companies explore Asian markets**

A business delegation from Thuringia visited Malaysia and Singapore from 3 to 7 November last year. Malaysia is playing an increasingly significant role in ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and together with its neighbor Singapore, offers Thuringian businesses good export opportunities.

The itinerary included briefings at the various sites visited as well as individualized visits to selected companies and interviews with their representatives, so that delegates not only gained an overview of the Malaysian and Singaporean markets but were also introduced to potential key contact people. Delegates also made the most of events at which they had the opportunity to talk to people from German companies already operating in both markets about opportunities and their experiences. Other important parts of the itinerary included the opening of an office in Malaysia that will represent Thuringia and support the ongoing work of making contacts and initiating new business. Members of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Erfurt and southern Thuringia and representatives of LEG, the State Development Corporation of Thuringia, accompanied the 16-member delegation. (maa)

With a height of 452m, the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur tower above the Malaysian metropolis. The construction of the twin towers took six years and today they are the ninth tallest building in the world.

Source: LEG Thüringen/private
More research and development: Glatt Ingenieurtechnik expands its premises

The positive economic climate has enabled Glatt Ingenieurtechnik in Weimar to expand its production capacity. The company is investing approximately EUR 4.2 million in building new laboratory and technical areas and employing more people. The expansion marks Glatt’s entry into a new field of activity.

The development was carried out in record time – only eight months elapsed between the making of the decision and the topping out ceremony. The company’s plans for the immediate future are equally ambitious, as the extension for production of, and research into, innovative powder technologies is slated to be ready by March this year.

“His investment provides very clear evidence of the way political leadership can stimulate the economy to promote innovation and ensure that the state of Thuringia continues to provide attractive jobs,” said Dr. Arnulf Wulf, Senior Vice President of LEG, the State Development Corporation of Thuringia, at the topping out ceremony.

Glatt Ingenieurtechnik, which designs and builds facilities for manufacturing granules and pellets from powders or liquids, has a staff of about 130 in Weimar. Worldwide, the Glatt Group has branches throughout Europe and in India, Russia and the United States, with more than 1,500 employees. (td)

Thuringian innovations up with the best in the world

Of the 79 companies that competed for the 2014 Thuringian Innovation Prize last year, six were honored for their prolific good ideas. With EUR 100,000 in prize money up for grabs, this state’s innovation prize is one of the most worthwhile in Germany.

The competition is organized by the Thuringian Ministry of the Economy, the ‘Foundation for Technology, Innovation and Research Thuringia’ (STIFT), TÜV Thüringen (an international service provider which focuses on consulting, testing, certification and training) and the Ernst Abbe Foundation. There were prizes in each of four categories, a special prize for start-ups and the Ernst Abbe Prize for Innovative Entrepreneurship. As well, Martin Schilling from 3D Schilling GmbH in Sondershausen was delighted to receive an award for his services to science and technology in Thuringia. The innovation prizes for 2014 went to Rennsteig-Werkzeuge GmbH from Viernau, Matesy GmbH from Jena, Kids Interactive GmbH from Erfurt and Carl Zeiss Microscopy GmbH from Jena. Another Jena company, oncgnostics GmbH, won the special prize for start-ups for the diagnostic test it developed for the early recognition of cervical cancer.

The judges used criteria including innovativeness, functionality, practical value and economic success. Entries had to be developed in Thuringia and be on the market already or about to be launched, with realistic prospects. (td)
Austrian invests in Oberhof

In Germany, Oberhof is well-known as a winter sports and holiday region. With the new hotel complex the Thuringian winter sports center aims to become an internationally renowned tourist destination. Source: Thüringer Tourismus GmbH/Andreas Weise

Thuringia now has two teams of investigators hot on the trail of criminals in Germany’s long-running, hugely popular television series Tatort (Scene of the Crime). The series is filmed in some of the nation’s largest cities, including Hamburg, Munich, Leipzig, Cologne, Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Dortmund – and now also in Erfurt and Weimar. The first two Thuringia episodes, which screened in November and December 2013 on the ARD channel, were filmed in places like Petersberg, Erfurt and the former central police station in Weimar. Sequels were screened at the end of last year and beginning of this year and watched by millions. The third Tatort from Weimar is already in the planning and will be filmed later this year. (td)

Thuringian detectives ‘on the job’ in cult television series

Germany’s top managers love Weimar

Weimar and Erfurt are on the list of cities whose residents enjoy a pleasant, attractive and cultural environment, according to a national survey of 5,000 companies in 100 independent towns and cities conducted by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW).

Weimar is Number One on the list in terms of cultural leisure activities, which achieved a 100-percent satisfaction rate. The state capital of Erfurt is Number Two, followed by the major cities of Dresden, Hamburg and Munich.

As the survey also shows, an attractive environment as far as cultural, sporting and leisure activities are concerned is particularly important to managers and is increasingly influencing where they choose to reside. Young managers and their families are moving to cities that feature ‘soft’ location factors. LEG, the State Development Corporation of Thuringia, can confirm the reality of this trend, as it has always mentioned the state’s attractive lifestyle to investors and skilled workers who are deciding where to go. These days, people do not just consider the workplace and their contract; they also want a wide range of services and options for their families and leisure time. (td)

A new hotel is planned for Oberhof, a winter sport and holiday destination in the Thuringian Forest. The first DoIT Hotel & Resort will be built in the center of Oberhof, close to the H2Oberhof wellness pool and spa. Austrian hotel developer Manfred Lengauer and his team are planning a complex with 150 rooms and suites, to be opened in December 2016. The entire complex will reflect themes of nature and use products from the region, with timber as the main construction material. It is expected to attract active people who enjoy the outdoors and are looking for top-class accommodation. Lengauer says he chose Oberhof because it is an exciting challenge, and that the state of Thuringia provided an ideal situation for an investor. (td)

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