

# Thuringia Focus



New development center of Mubea Fahrwerk in Weißensee/Thuringia | Dr. Jörg Neubrand (Head of Chassis Division), Dr. Arnulf Wulff (LEG Thüringen), Dr. Thomas Muhr (Managing Director) and the Thuringian Minister-President, Bodo Ramelow (from left), at the 5th chassis colloquium 2016 in Weißensee/Thuringia. Photos: Mubea

## Mubea Opens Development Center in Thuringia

**New development and prototyping center in Weißensee/Thuringia opened during 5th chassis colloquium.**

More than 120 international automotive industry experts gathered at this year's Mubea colloquium in Weißensee in June to discuss innovations in axle springs and stabilizer systems, fiber composite applications and wheels. There was great interest in the new developments, which exemplify Mubea's innovative capacity.

The highlight of the event was the opening of the new development center by Dr. Thomas Muhr (Managing Director) and Dr. Jörg Neubrand (Head of Chassis Division), with Thuringia's Minister-President, Bodo Ramelow, also attending. The 8,900 m<sup>2</sup> center will become the workplace for 126 staff members wor-

king in prototype construction, technology testing, structural durability and metallography and surfaces technology. The center will develop suspension systems from idea to prototype through series production and be the mainstay of future chassis-related innovations that lead to sustainable mobility. Mubea, which employs more than 11,000 people at its 29 locations around the world to make leading-edge automotive components, celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. It has been present in Thuringia since 1991, and the 75,000 m<sup>2</sup> Weißensee plant has made a significant contribution to its development to a leading axle spring manufacturer, with its 900 staff producing 14 million axle springs, 4.5 million stabilizer systems and 100,000 tonnes of tailor rolled blanks annually. *(Mubea/maa)*

### **i** Investment News

#### **From start-up to technology leader**

The company **asphericon GmbH** from Jena, having celebrated its 15th anniversary this year, has plans to purchase more machinery and extend its production halls from 2,300 m<sup>2</sup> to 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>, adding clean rooms, production lines and offices. The project will cost approximately €15 m and is expected to be completed in 2018.

The foundation of the company goes back to a spin-off from Friedrich Schiller University Jena in 2001. Founders Sven R. Kiontke and Alexander W. Zschäbitz set up their first production line in Erfurt in 2003 and moved to the business incubator in Jena in 2005. In 2011, the company moved into its own premises. It now has a staff of 120 and a reputation as a top-flight manufacturer of aspheres, optical elements with non-spherical surface profiles, which are used to correct image defects and enable optics systems to become smaller and more efficient. Thanks to its state-of-the-art production technologies, continuously improved control software and highly skilled workforce, asphericon provides more than 600 customers with innovative solutions from the design, manufacture and coating of optics products to surface metrology, documentation and the assembly and optical characterization of optics modules. *(maa)*

## **i** Investment News

### **New investment incentives**

Thuringia's Ministry of Economic Affairs has increased core funding, provided again subsidy for wages and made patents eligible for funding under the 'Joint Task for Improving Regional Economic Structures' scheme. The wages subsidy applies to new positions with an annual gross salary of at least €35,000. Another new subsidy covers intangible economic assets such as patents, licenses and usufructuary rights, which are increasingly important in this 'Industrie 4.0' era. Last year, €73 mio of funding was granted to 92 investment projects being planned by businesses. The total investment of €351 mio will produce more than 730 new jobs. Further funding applications are in the pipeline. *(maa)*

### **Video clips on website**

The [www.invest-in-thuringia.de](http://www.invest-in-thuringia.de) website will soon feature short video clips from companies that have set up in Thuringia, e.g. MDC Power (Daimler), Fujitsu etc. They all are prospering, thanks in large part to the advantages of doing business from Thuringia. Do have a look at their high praise for Thuringia as a business base! *(maa)*

## **i** Dates

› **September 21 – 23, 2016**

**Laser World of Photonics India,**  
Bangalore

› **September 22 – 29, 2016**

**IAA Nutzfahrzeuge – International Motor Show,** Hanover

› **October 4 – 6, 2016**

**Expo Real,** International Trade Fair for Property and Investment, Munich

› **October 16 – 18, 2016**

**German-Brazilian Business Forum (Deutsch-Brasilianische Wirtschaftstage),** Weimar

## 'Luther meets Wasa' – delegation to Sweden

**Thuringia is strengthening its contacts to Scandinavia: The Thuringian Minister-President Bodo Ramelow went to Sweden in June on a 'Luther meets Wasa' tour that involved sharing about Thuringia and the forthcoming 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017, as well as talks with Swedish business people.**

Thuringia and Sweden were both central to the Reformation, and Minister-President Bodo Ramelow picked up on this shared heritage during his trip to Sweden to promote Thuringia as an appealing cultural destination. Besides political issues he attended a business lunch organized by the State Development Corporation of Thuringia (LEG Thüringen) and the



Bodo Ramelow, Thuringian Minister-President, welcomes the guests of the business lunch. Photo: German-Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Stockholm

German-Swedish Chamber of Commerce. The lunch event attracted 24 representatives from Swedish companies wanting to learn more about investing in Thuringia. More interesting details could be heard from Swedish investors such as AB Sandvik Coromant, Uponor AB, Bodafors Trä AB and Börjes Logistik&Spedition AB that have made the move in recent years. *(gro)*

## Thuringia's international representatives come to town

**Insider knowledge and good contacts 'on the ground' are absolutely essential for any business that wants to enter international markets, so LEG Thüringen works with experienced specialists around the world to save Thuringian companies spending too much time in search of contacts.**

On June 22, the second day of the international representatives' forum in Erfurt, business people took the opportunity to discuss their company's chances of success in each particular target mar-

ket with experts who had come especially for the purpose from Russia, Vietnam, China, Brazil and India. These representatives have in-depth knowledge of the cultural norms and business practices in their home countries and are familiar with the latest trends there as well as any bureaucratic obstacles that might have to be dealt with in order to be successful in that market. On the next day, the international experts attended the Thuringian automotive sector day to hear about the latest trends and developments in Thuringia. *(gro)*

## Transatlantic cluster initiative begins

**Representatives of the Transatlantic Cluster Initiative, including the State Development Corporation of Thuringia and the Thuringian Metal Cluster (FerMeTh), met for the first time in July, in the United States, to promote internationalization and the transfer of knowledge between leading German and American industry clusters.**

The first meetings, convened in Chicago, Pittsburgh and Cleveland, considered the work of the clusters in the metals sector in Germany and the United States. Germans and Americans gave presentations and participated in panel discussions on best practice strategies for technological development, technology transfer, internationalization, cluster policy and the recruitment of skilled workers. As early as November, Thuringia will host cluster members from the US, introducing them to the local cluster's successful work and exploring possibilities for cooperation. *(gro)*

## Abbe Center of Photonics opens

In Jena, optics and photonics have been like peas in a pod. The latest chapter in this story of partnership, enabling researchers from different disciplines to work together on new technologies, was the opening on July 5 of the state-of-the-art Abbe Center of Photonics on the Beutenberg Campus of Friedrich Schiller University.



The new Abbe Center of Photonics in Jena.  
Photo: Jan-Peter Kasper/FSU Jena

“The opening of this new building will further improve facilities for interdisciplinary research on photonic technologies in Jena,” says the President of the university, Professor Walter Rosenthal. Construction took less than three years. The building cost €26.1 million and provides 2,500 m<sup>2</sup> of space for offices and laboratories specifically for optical, chemical and biological research, as well as seminar rooms and an auditorium. The Abbe Center itself was established in 2010 and now has 46 scientists in working groups for various disciplines including new laser technologies that can be used to visualize cells or other micro-particles. In the new building, they will be able to work side by side instead of occupying different buildings in various parts of the city of Jena. (gro)

@ [www.acp.uni-jena.de](http://www.acp.uni-jena.de)

### **i** Technology News

#### Industry network doubles membership

ITnet Thüringen e.V. is growing: the industry association has more than doubled its membership since it was formed at the beginning of the year, rapidly becoming an influential voice for Thuringia’s IT industry on matters such as the implementation of strategies for digitalization in business and administration. The network brings together and represents parties from across the IT sector, including software developers, infrastructure providers, consultants, trainers and web design agencies. (gro)

#### Rosy future for Jena

Jena has again ranked well in the ‘Future Atlas’ produced by Prognos, which investigates 402 independent towns and administrative districts every three years to find out how they are likely to fare in the future. In the latest rankings, Jena was again considered to have ‘very good prospects’, the second-best category. In terms of digitalization and demography, the city’s prospects were described as particularly good: it is in seventh place for demography, which makes it the third-best city in eastern Germany in that category. (gro)

#### Iranian university opens office in Erfurt

Iran’s Islamic Azad University (I.A.U.), founded in 1982, opened a liaison office in Erfurt in July to coordinate academic connections with Thuringia and the rest of Germany. The choice of Erfurt is a result of the visit to Iran by Minister of Economic Affairs Wolfgang Tiefensee in May. As early as June, the university signed a memorandum of understanding with the universities of applied sciences in Erfurt and Nordhausen. The universities plan to exchange students and teaching staff, set up joint structures and organize joint research projects. To develop connections with Ilmenau University of Technology is also planned. (gro)

## Outstanding ideas from Thuringia



Prize winner Kumatec GmbH with the donors: Dr. Thomas Hofmann (IHK Leipzig), Dietmar Flessa, Uwe Eckardt, Dr. Joachim Löffler (all Kumatec), Almut Weinert (IHK Ostthüringen), Bas Groenen (Kumatec), Reinhard Schröter (IHK Halle-Dessau) (from left). Photo: Guido Werner

**QUNDIS GmbH from Erfurt and Kumatec Sondermaschinenbau & Kunststoffverarbeitung GmbH from Neuhaus-Schierschnitz are the latest Thuringian companies to come up with ideas that are acknowledged as exceptional far beyond the borders of their home state – and be given awards to confirm it.**

This year’s TOP 100 awards showed how outstanding **QUNDIS** is in the field of consumption measurement. Its many innovations in wireless data transfer and textbook inclusion and integration of staff and partners earned it the title of ‘Innovator of the Year’. The judges said

QUNDIS was making a significant contribution to digitalizing the transformation of the energy system.

Kumatec, which specializes in cost-effective ways of making hydrogen, was recently awarded the IQ Innovation Prize – Central Germany Metropolitan Region for its use of a new ‘high-pressure elektrolyzer’ to make the gas even more quickly and cheaply. The new technology will be applied, among other things, to refueling fuel-cell vehicles. The high-pressure electrolyzer will already be put to use this year in a new hydrogen filling station. (gro)

## Erfurt's cathedral goes Italian

It's going to be a dramatic summer in Erfurt – the Cathedral Steps Festival is staging Puccini's opera *Tosca*, a tragic story about the love between Floria Tosca and Mario Cavaradossi.

Every summer, the renowned open-air festival in the Thuringian capital city attracts throngs of visitors. The impressive backdrop of the Erfurt Cathedral and St. Severi Church make the festival performances an unforgettable experience. The story of the young singer, Tosca, who with her beloved (Cavaradossi), helps Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, but falls into the clutches of Scarpia, the notorious chief of police, is as compelling in the 21st century as when it was first performed. From now until August 28, Jakob Peters-Messer's production of *Tosca* will add a touch of Italy to the 70 steps outside the cathedral. *(gro)*



Scene from 'Der Freischütz', Cathedral Steps Festival 2015. Photo: Lutz Edelhoff

@ [www.domstufen.de](http://www.domstufen.de)

### **i** Dates

> **Until August 28, 2016**

#### **Ekhof Festival**

Opera, theater, concerts and readings in the oldest baroque theater in the world.

> **Until September 4, 2016**

#### **Summer in Weimar**

Music, dance, theater, audio-visual installations, street festival.

> **Until September 4, 2016**

#### **Summer Hiking in Thuringia**

Hit the trail – 23 certified hiking trails take you through the summer.

## Certification for Hainich National Park

Hainich National Park is a place where you can experience nature at its best, surrounded by centuries-old beech trees, gazing out over the treetops at the beautiful vistas. And now there is official confirmation that the hospitality in Hainich is as excellent as the opportunities to experience nature: the 'Service-QualitätsGemeinschaft' certificate was awarded in June.

UNESCO World Heritage region Wartburg Hainich has become the first region in Germany to gain 'ServiceQualitätsGemeinschaft' certification. Visitors can be assured that their accommodation

and the restaurants they visit don't just look good, they also boast top-class service. The quality seal is reserved for establishments that go the extra mile and perform consistently well in terms of service and customer satisfaction. Introduced in Thuringia in 2003, it is particularly helpful for small- and medium-sized hospitality businesses that do not have an in-house quality management system, as it provides a way for them to continually optimize the quality of their operations and increase customer satisfaction. *(gro)*

@ [www.nationalpark-hainich.de](http://www.nationalpark-hainich.de)

## Tabarz recognized as Kneipp spa

Tabarz in the Thuringian Forest becomes the state's first Kneipp spa.

Staying in Tabarz just became even more restorative. Not only are there stunning views and dozens of sporting and leisure options to enjoy in the famous fresh forest air, but those seeking a restful break can now benefit from a range of Kneipp and spa treatments. From stepping into hot and cold water to the classic Kneipp

fango mud pack – it's all there. Having been awarded the certificate by State Secretary for Economic Affairs Georg Maier in June, Tabarz becomes one of only three Kneipp spa towns in eastern Germany. Certification entails high standards for facilities and services, which means visitors are guaranteed top-quality recreation and spa experiences. *(gro)*

@ [www.tabarz.de](http://www.tabarz.de)



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