

Thuringia Focus.



Kick-off for a multi-million-euro investment in Zeulenroda - Thuringian Economics Minister Colette Boos-John, 2nd from right, and Rainer Berthan, CEO of Bauerfeind, 3rd from left, and further project participants. Photo: Bauerfeind

Groundbreaking at Bauerfeind: investment in the future of the Zeulenroda location

In mid-November, Bauerfeind AG kicked off the expansion of its core logistics center in Zeulenroda with a ceremonial groundbreaking. The storied company is investing approximately 30 million euros in modern facilities, smart conveyor systems, and highly automated storage solutions in order to secure its ability to supply medical devices around the globe for decades to come.

The ceremony was attended by CEO Rainer Berthan, CTO Katharina Dietrich and Logistics Director Julian Musiol as well as Thuringia's Economics Minister Colette Boos-John, the District Administrator of Greiz, and the mayors of Zeulenroda and Weißendorf. "Our investments here are a clear sign of confidence – not just in this location, but particularly in our employees," Berthan said. The expansion will take place in two construction phases: First, a new two-part facility will be erected behind the existing warehouse. Next, the old and new structures will be connected and the existing logistics operations reorganized. The centerpiece of the expansion

is a new shuttle warehouse with space for over 45,000 containers that are handled by more than 100 automated vehicles. It will be complemented by a buffer warehouse with 1,200 square meters of floor space.

Completion is scheduled for early summer 2029 – all during ongoing operations. With around 2,500 employees worldwide, including 1,500 at the Zeulenroda site, this project highlights Bauerfeind's role as a dependable partner for customers in over 70 countries as well as its strong commitment to Thuringia as a business hub.

Bauerfeind's product portfolio includes high-quality medical aids and health products primarily used in orthopedics, phlebology, and physical rehabilitation – including supports, braces, insoles, compression stockings, and specialized sports products for professional athletes to prevent injuries and enhance performance. Bauerfeind is renowned for combining medical expertise, innovative technology, and premium German-engineered quality.

A note on our own behalf



News digital.
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An LEG update: "Thuringia Focus" newsletter goes digital

For years, our "Thuringia Focus" newsletter has been a reliable source of information about Thuringia as a business location, covering wide-ranging stories on investing, researching, living, and working in the region. Today, we are excited to announce an important step in our evolution, one that reflects the growing importance of digitalization and resource efficiency. In the future, we will discontinue the print edition of our newsletter and focus exclusively on digitally distributing relevant information about Thuringia and its strengths. To better inform you about business opportunities in Thuringia, we will prepare a concise quarterly summary offering insights into business, research, innovation, and culture in the region. The newsletter, renamed Thuringia.Business, will cover a wide range of topics, from success stories in Thuringia's corporate landscape and news from research institutions to strategic and lifestyle advantages that make Thuringia an attractive place to do business. We thank you for your longstanding trust in us and look forward to continuing our journey together.

News

Thuringia opens US office in Chicago – a bridge for transatlantic business

The State Development Corporation of Thuringia (LEG) opened a new international office in Chicago in October 2025. The office is established in cooperation with a consulting firm. Its objective is to promote Thuringia as an investment destination for US companies and also to support Thuringian companies entering the US market by providing services such as market analysis, partner identification, certification, and soft-landing solutions.

The US is Thuringia's most important export market, representing over 10 percent of export volume. The choice of location was influenced by the delegation visit of Minister-President Mario Voigt and Economics Minister Colette Boos-John in May 2025. The new office strengthens Thuringia's presence in a key region and underscores the state's commitment to growth and internationalization.

Attractive trade fairs on offer for 2026

Trade fairs in Germany and abroad remain essential platforms for companies to showcase products and solutions to a broad industry audience and establish valuable business contacts. The "Simply.TradeShow" ("Einfach. Messe") service provided by the State Development Corporation of Thuringia (LEG) gives Thuringian companies an efficient and cost-effective way to participate in various industry events this year.

The all-inclusive service covers the complete preparation and organization of attention-grabbing joint booths, allowing exhibitors to concentrate fully on presenting their products and services. In addition, participating companies may generally be eligible for reimbursement of up to 50 percent of booth construction and rental costs through incentive programs.

The 2026 trade fair program includes established events such as Hannover Messe (April) and the Fakuma plastics trade fair (October). A new addition this year is the Smart Country Convention (October), which focuses on digitalization in public administration.

Debut for the Thuringia Supplier and Information Forum Defense

Last fall, more than 300 representatives from Thuringian industry, research institutes, and chambers of industry and commerce as well as stakeholders from the German Armed Forces and the security and defense sector gathered in Erfurt for the first Thuringia Supplier and Information Forum Defense. Organized by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the State Development Corporation of Thuringia (LEG), and the three Thuringian Chambers of Industry and Commerce, the forum carried the theme "Shaping security together – reliable procurement, strong partnerships, and regional value chains."

The event aimed to introduce Thuringian companies – both within and outside the automotive and mechanical engineering sectors – to new opportunities in defense and security technology. Many firms see this as an opportunity to tap into additio-

nal markets amid the ongoing automotive industry crisis. Prof. Michael Eßig from the Bundeswehr University Munich explained defense procurement processes and stressed the importance of resilient, innovation-driven supply chain management in his presentation. Thuringian Minister-President Mario Voigt underscored Thuringia's central location as well as its scientific and industrial strengths in fields such as optics, photonics, and aerospace, highlighting significant potential for dual-use products. As a result, interest in further formats of this kind was confirmed. Platforms for personal discussions, exchanges on Bundeswehr procurement processes, and possible collaborations are planned for the future. The message is clear: Thuringia strongly supports the positioning of its SMEs in the forward-looking segment of defense and security technology.



The Thuringia Supplier and Information Forum Defense sparked tremendous interest. Photo: IHK Erfurt

Thuringia's delegation trips strengthen international business ties

Thuringian companies advanced their internationalization strategy in 2025 with two high-profile delegation trips to dynamic growth markets: China and Vietnam.

In October, under the leadership of Economics Minister Colette Boos-John, around 40 representatives from business, research, and chambers of commerce visited Beijing, Ningde, Shanghai, Changzhou. The trip aimed to deepen economic ties, position Thuringia as an innovation hub, and unlock new sales and cooperation opportunities – particularly in optics, sensor technology, mechanical engineering, and energy. Highlights included site visits to CATL in Ningde and Baolong Automotive in Shanghai, along

with collaboration agreements with centers for innovation, technology and training programs.

In November, an also 40-member delegation led by State Secretary Marcus Malsch visited Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. This trip focused on building business contacts in agriculture and food industry, mechanical and plant engineering, as well as recruiting skilled talent for the industry and social economy. A Career Day at the German House in HCMC and participation in the VIETFOOD trade fair provided platforms for new partnerships and recruitment of trainees and healthcare professionals.

Major investment in Greiz County

Ratiodata SE, headquartered in Münster, has built a state-of-the-art digitalization center in the city of Weida, located in Greiz County. The one-hectare site will feature a production and office building of approximately 4,000 square meters. The total investment amounts to around 12 million euros. Developed in cooperation with Niedermaier Invest as the investor and GOLDBECK as the construction partner, the new facility marks a strategic milestone and will create up to 150 local jobs over the medium term.

It will handle the scanning and digital processing of up to 600 million sheets of paper under a major contract. The facility is designed for maximum efficiency with eight high-performance scanners, state-

of-the-art workstations, and a dedicated administrative wing.

Minister-President Mario Voigt hailed the project as a key investment that strengthens the economic vitality of Weida and Greiz, calling it the largest siting project in the county's recent history. Weida and Greiz County also supported the project.

A long-standing IT service provider and managed service provider, Ratiodata emphasizes its regional roots and sponsorships: the company supports FC Thüringen Weida and THC Erfurt Bad Langensalza in youth sports. This makes the new site in Weida a win for Thuringia – economically and socially.

Innovations in Thuringia honored

Thuringia showcased its innovative strength at this year's Thuringia Innovation Prize 2025 ceremony, held at the Weimarlhalle on November 26. From more than 183 submissions across four categories, along with special and individual prizes, the jury selected four outstanding projects, with support from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, STIFT, TÜV Thuringia, and the Ernst Abbe Foundation.

Prize winners 2025:

- Light & Life:** Carl Zeiss Microscopy GmbH received the prize for "Lightfield 4D," a cutting edge light field laser scanning microscope providing real time 3D imaging of living structures.
- Tradition & Future:** WERT GmbH (Fambach) for the Multifix Shredder "Phantom," which uses a quick change shaft system to efficiently shred various materials.
- Industry & Material:** Vacom Vakuum Komponenten & Messtechnik GmbH for the miniaturized vacuum sensor "Cassini," which integrates three physical mea-

surement principles in a thumbnail sized device and delivers exact readings over nine pressure decades.

Digital & Media: Spleenlab GmbH impressed the jury with its AI powered software platform "Visionary," which supports autonomous systems in agriculture and other sectors with precise environmental perception.

Additionally, the Ernst Abbe Prize for Innovative Entrepreneurship was awarded to Martin H. Kühn, CEO of NT Neue Technologie AG, Erfurt.

With prize money totaling around 100,000 euros, the Thuringia Innovation Prize reaffirms its position as one of Germany's most highly endowed awards. Minister Colette Boos-John and Head of the State Chancellery Stefan Gruhner praised Thuringia's inventive spirit and long-term competitiveness, emphasizing the importance of such innovations in driving Thuringia's economic and technological development.



The happy winners. Photo: STIFT, Thomas Müller

News

Thuringian medtech showcases innovation at MEDICA 2025

From November 17 to 20, 31 Thuringian companies exhibited at MEDICA in Düsseldorf – the world's leading trade fair for medical technology – including 14 exhibitors at two joint stands organized by LEG under the Thuringian banner.

The joint stands were located in Hall 15 (MedTech & Devices) and Hall 3 (Laboratory & Diagnostics). Visitors explored cutting-edge innovations developed in Thuringia, from advanced diagnostic devices to next-generation laboratory technologies. Highlights included the AVATAR project for the anonymized use of sensitive health data. Other partners such as BLINK AG, Applyo Jena, and Analytik Jena presented innovations in photonics, diagnostics, and digital medical technology. State Secretary for Economics Mario Suckert visited both joint stands to learn firsthand about industry trends and developments.

Groundbreaking for industrial district at the Hermsdorf highway interchange

On November 6, work began on developing the new "Hermsdorf Ost III" industrial park in the Saale-Holzland district. Located directly at the Hermsdorf interchange, the site offers 56 hectares of attractive space for companies with large-scale requirements. The project is part of Thuringia's statewide large-site initiative and is supported with approximately 20.1 million euros in state funding; total costs amount to 22.8 million euros. The State Development Corporation of Thuringia (LEG) is responsible for development and marketing. Strategically located along the A4 and A9 highways, the site offers an optimal environment for investors and is slated for completion by 2028. The groundbreaking marks an industrial policy milestone for the region and creates new prospects for growth and jobs.

"Thanks to its prime location and excellent transport links, the site is set to become a magnet for investors and will provide a significant boost to the Hermsdorf region, which is already home to strong entrepreneurial and technological expertise," LEG Managing Director Andreas Krey said.

New “Hohe Sonne” forest hotel – LEG as a strong partner for investors

Finally, the time has come: The “Hohe Sonne Forest Hotel & Restaurant” has officially opened its doors this January. Featuring 34 cozy rooms, a sauna, rooftop terrace, as well as a restaurant and beer garden, it offers guests a unique experience in the heart of nature.

This marks the creation of a tourism project of regional and national significance, located directly on the Rennsteig and the legendary Dragon's Gorge, between the UNESCO World Heritage Site Wartburg/Eisenach and Hainich National Park.

The iconic building known as “Hohe Sonne” on the Rennsteig succeeds a baroque hunting lodge dating back to the 18th century. In 2018, regional investor Dirk Bodes with rebo consult ingenieurgesellschaft mbH acquired the 1.2-hectare property with the vision of restoring its use as a hotel. Following several expert assessments, the remaining building structures were cleared for demolition in May 2025.

LEG Thüringen has supported the project since 2019, providing the investor with access to the expertise of its Economic Development, Urban and Regional Development, and Real Estate Management divisions. Thanks to LEG Thüringen's unique

positioning as a one-stop agency – unmatched in Germany – tourism projects like this can often be successfully realized.

The challenges for the investor were considerable, and LEG played a key role in finding solutions for complex infrastructure requirements, organizing scoping meetings with relevant authorities, coordinating essential interministerial and municipal consultations, and assisting in the search for funding opportunities.

A second construction phase is already planned: additional rooms, an event space, and a wellness area will be built on the site of the former hunting lodge.



From old to new: Hotel Hohe Sonne shines in a new look.
Photo: LEG Thüringen

Calendar

February 9-12
WHX, Dubai
(Thuringian joint booth; S11 A91)

February 23-25
Enforce Tac, Nuremberg
(Thuringian joint booth; hall 6, booth 251)

April 20-24
Hannover Messe
(Thuringian joint booth; hall 13, booth E24)



March 27 - April 19
Thuringian Bach Weeks, venues throughout the state

April 23 - October 11
State Horticultural Show (Landesgartenschau), Leinefelde-Worbis

Stay up to date:



Green meets the future: State Garten Show 2026 in Leinefelde-Worbis

From April 23 to October 11, Leinefelde-Worbis will host the Thuringia State Garden Show 2026 with the theme “Bringing city and nature together” (“Aussöhnung zwischen Stadt und Landschaft”).

The move is part of a strategic realignment. Spanning approximately 15 hectares in the green spaces named “Augarten”, “Tüffers Garten”, and “Lunapark”, the show is

a green urban redevelopment project featuring 1,500 events, show gardens, playgrounds, sports facilities, and a “green classroom.” The frequently photographed “Ohne” river will be renatured, new residential structures in the “Garden City” will be created, and 800 garage spaces have been cleared – visible signs of sustainable urban development.

One highlight is the multimedia experience world centered around the archaeological site of Kirrode, funded by EU LEADER resources. In addition, a church pavilion themed “Close to Earth – wide as heaven” (“Erdnah – Himmelweit”) will offer a place of peace and community in nature.

The State Garden Show 2026 will not only provide cultural and outdoor experiences but also promote sustainable urban development and strengthen regional identity.



View during construction work on the core site.
Photo: www.lgs-leinefelde-worbis.de

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