

# Thuringia Focus



Thuringia looks forward to a new high-tech investment. The German automotive supplier Marquardt will start production in the “Erfurter Kreuz” industrial area. Photo: Marquardt Service GmbH

## Automotive Supplier Marquardt Arrives In Thuringia

**Thuringia once again proves its attractiveness: The Baden-Württemberg automotive supplier Marquardt will manufacture innovative mechatronic products for the interior of premium vehicles and battery-operated cars in the “Erfurter Kreuz” Thuringian industrial area in Ichtershausen: Up to 180 jobs will be created in the coming years; the first 50 positions are to be filled within the next few months.**

“It is a great signal that Marquardt, an innovative, traditional Swabian company, is investing in Thuringia and creating a large number of new, high-quality jobs”, said Economics Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee. As a strong automotive supplier location with more than 600 supplier companies today, Thuringia offers the company the best conditions for its entrepreneurial activities and growth. “Ichtershausen is a very attractive place for us. Thanks to the convenient location, the high industry competence and the many qualified employees in the

region, we have the best prerequisites here to produce at the highest quality for our customers, to continue to grow and to create jobs”, explained Marquardt Managing Director Jochen Becker.

Marquardt will manufacture its products in the future in a 10,000 square meter factory hall in the “Erfurter Kreuz“ industrial area. The Chinese CATL Group will also be building its first European production facility for battery cells here. Marquardt was founded in 1925; the family-owned company headquartered about 100 km south of Stuttgart is one of the world’s leading manufacturers of electromechanical and electronic switches and switching systems. The company’s products are used by many well-known customers in the automotive industry and are also found in household appliances, industrial applications, power tools and e-bikes. The company has over 11,000 employees worldwide at 20 locations on four continents. (hw)

### **i** Investment News

#### **Automotive Supplier Relocates Headquarters from Heidelberg to Thuringia**

Thuringia is an innovative investment location with great appeal. The **ICSI Group**, which is relocating its headquarters from Heidelberg to Ichtershausen in Thuringia, only reinforces this fact.

**IHI Charging Systems International GmbH (ICSI Group)** has been operating a turbocharger plant at LEG’s “Erfurter Kreuz” site for ten years. In addition to the 400 or so employees to date, there will be a further 40 coming from the head office. At a press conference in Erfurt, Dr. Daniel Bader, ICSI Managing Director in Ichtershausen, gave reasons for the decision in favor of Thuringia: the proximity to OEMs and research institutes, the excellent transport infrastructure at the central motorway junction, and the good support from the Ministry for Economic Affairs and LEG. The entrepreneur also mentioned the short distances to the universities in Ilmenau and Schmalkalden. ICSI expects further synergies from the relocation of the headquarters to the site of an efficient production facility belonging to the company group.

The ICSI Group was founded in 2001 as a joint venture between the Japanese IHI Group and Daimler AG and has been a wholly owned subsidiary of IHI Corporation (Tokyo) since February 2013. The second production site in addition to Ichtershausen is located in the Italian city of Cernusco. The ICSI Group sells turbochargers to customers worldwide, including many of the world’s leading automobile manufacturers. (hw)

**i** *Investment News*

**Laser Specialist Creates Jobs for Growing Workforce**

Thuringian **Asclepion Laser Technologies GmbH** – subsidiary of the Italian **El.En. Group** from Florence – celebrated the ground-breaking ceremony for a new production and office building at the end of last year. The existing company headquarters in Jena are bursting at the seams, so that the company acquired an adjacent area to construct a new three-story building with 3,800 sqm of usable space. The investment in the building amounts to 6.5 million euros. In addition to storage areas and workshops, modern training rooms are planned in which customers are trained in the use of laser technology. A fitness room will be set up for the employees on the upper floor. The workforce has grown rapidly in the last year; the 100th employee was hired in 2017. The number of employees at the end of 2018 was 150.

According to the production manager, the advantage of the location is that they can unite everything at the Jena-Lobeda site, from development to production to sales. Asclepion Laser Technologies plays a leading role in the scientific optics industry, within which the city of Jena is an international hotspot. Asclepion's laser devices are designed for aesthetic and surgical applications. Their clients are located all over the globe.

Completion of the new building is scheduled for the end of May 2019. (*maa*)

## Joint Success in the Search for Skilled Workers

Investors and entrepreneurs in Thuringia can rely on dependable partners at their side in the competition for skilled workers. The Thuringian Agency for Skilled Personnel Marketing (ThAFF), which is based at LEG Thüringen, has established itself as an effective tool for marketing Thuringia as a location for skilled workers and as a reliable (network) partner for politics and business.

The ThAFF is funded by the State of Thuringia and the European Social Fund (ESF). As a nationwide institution and welcome center, it is the central point of contact for all those who would like to work and live (again) in Thuringia, as well as for companies that need support in securing skilled workers. The ThAFF specifically addresses specialists, advises commuters and those wishing to return, and acculturates and informs companies. With the “comeback” job fair and the “academix” company contact fair, it brings together specialists and Thuringian employers at two major events every year. At present, around 3,900 jobs are listed in its Thuringia job exchange. It is a free platform for companies in Thuringia to recruit new employees.

Close cooperation with the 12 universities and technical colleges in Thuringia

is an important building block. With one of the most efficient education systems in Germany, Thuringia trains qualified young skilled workers and thus contributes to securing skilled workers and a steady economy. (*cdo*)



ThAFF offers companies a comprehensive range of services when it comes to recruiting skilled personnel. Photo: © Adobe Stocknd3000

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## Trip to Vietnam and Singapore Strengthens Thuringia's Foreign Trade

**Delegation trips with political support help Thuringian companies to open up foreign markets and recruit skilled workers. The Thuringian delegation trip to Vietnam and Singapore at the beginning of April is an example of this.**

The aim of the trip is to make it easier for companies in Thuringia to access markets in the dynamic ASEAN region and to continue to promote close cooperation in the field of training between Vietnam and Thuringia. Under the leadership of Thuringia's Minister President Bodo Ramelow, Thuringia's Minister of Labor Heike Werner and Thuringia's Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Valentina Kerst, the tour will include the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, the South Vietnamese economic metropolis Ho Chi Minh City and the city state of Singapore. The participants of the trip will be in contact with political representatives

and companies from both countries. Relations between Thuringia and Vietnam have developed over time. With current economic growth of 6.8 percent, the emerging market is the growth driver of the ASEAN region. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the European Union (EU) and Vietnam, which is in preparation, could further boost trade with the Asian country. The highly developed city state of Singapore invests extensively in high-tech industries and is increasingly demanding both industrial high-tech solutions and consumer goods internationally. (*cdo/hw*)

## Thuringian Company Strengthens Joint Project in Bolivia

Thuringia is pleased about another success in the worldwide competition: The company K-UTEC AG from Sondershausen is part of a consortium which is now entering into a strategic partnership with the Bolivian state-owned company Yacimientos de Litio Bolivianos (YLB). The partners in the alliance centering around the Baden-Württemberg company ACI Systems Alemania GmbH will cooperate closely in the future in the extraction, use and marketing of the valuable raw material lithium from Salar de Uyuni – the largest known deposit of the rare light metal in South America.

K-UTEC is specialized in the exploration and development of salt deposits and the material processing of dissolved salts from salt lakes. Lithium is an elementary component of rechargeable batteries,

storage systems and especially battery cells for electric vehicles. The partnership is regarded as an important contribution to meeting the lithium demand in Europe and to expanding e-mobility in Germany. The plans now include the establishment of a joint venture between YLB and ACI, the construction of a factory and a comprehensive knowledge transfer so that the extraction and marketing of the raw material also benefits the Bolivian population.

The Thuringian Ministry for Economic Affairs and LEG have supported the partnership from the outset and promoted it at the political level. In October 2018, the joint venture agreement was signed in La Paz in the presence of Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee. (hw)

## In Namibia: Thuringian Know-How for Cost-Effective Houses



PolyCare opens pilot factory in Namibia.  
Photo: Shawn van Eeden | TMWWDG

Building material technology from Thuringia has a good reputation in Namibia: Not far from the capital of Windhoek, Minister of Economics Wolfgang Tiefensee together with the Namibian Vice President Dr. Nangolo Mbumba recently opened a production facility of the company PolyCare Research Technology Namibia (Pty) Ltd. The company is a joint venture with Namibian and southern Thuringian participation; it will produce components for prefabricated houses here in the future.

PolyCare Namibia employs about 30 Namibians who produce enough stones

per day for a complete house. The high productivity is made possible by a technology developed by PolyCare Research Technology GmbH (Gehlberg, southern Thuringia) together with the Bauhaus University Weimar.

With the help of casting resin and desert sand available on-site, hard and environmentally friendly polymer concrete components are cast; the blocks are processed like Lego bricks, i.e., they are simply inserted into each other and screwed together. With its investment, the joint venture makes a significant contribution to the Namibian government's national Harambee Housing Development Plan for Poverty Reduction.

The Thuringian Ministry for Economic Affairs and LEG's Thuringia International division have been active in Namibia for some years – several business and science delegations have already visited the country in southern Africa. (hw)

### **i** Technology News

#### Growth Core VIPO Launches!

A new „innovative regional growth core“ in Thuringia is now being given a decisive boost: the **Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)** is funding the **VIPO – Virtual Product and Process Optimization** – network with an amount of around 7 million euros.

VIPO is an alliance of six Thuringian engineering service providers and IT companies as well as three research institutes. The network aims to optimize product and process development as well as predictive maintenance over the entire product life cycle in companies. One example of future VIPO solutions is the maintenance of stressed rotor blades in wind turbines: Sensors analyze the workpiece; a parallel comparison with a „digital twin“ provides information about the degree of wear, the load capacity and the possible service life. Other applications include the production of prostheses and orthoses precisely tailored to patient needs and the development and optimization of highly specialized laser processing systems. Future fields of application for these solutions include additive manufacturing (3D printing), optical systems and energy technology.

LEG has supported the network through its “Thuringian ClusterManagement“ team right from the start. The project volume totals around 11 million euros; the project partners will contribute almost 4 million euros. By the year 2030, VIPO is expected to achieve cumulative revenues of around 90 million euros with a world market share of 4 percent. (hw)

## International School Makes Thuringia More Attractive as a Business Location

Entrepreneurs and employees from all over the world live with their families in Thuringia and feel comfortable here – one reason for this is the Thuringia International School – Weimar (THIS), which offers its students lessons in English by international teachers. THIS is an important location factor for the State of Thuringia.

The International School in Weimar opened its doors almost twenty years ago. Around 320 pupils attend the facility and can complete all school levels from preschool to Abitur (IB diploma). The curriculum is adapted to a teaching system that is valid in more than 5,000 international schools worldwide. This enables smooth changing of schools across continents. The teaching staff brings together teachers from 15 countries, and THIS degrees are nationally and internationally recognized. The International School always maintains resources for children of professionals. Families from abroad who settle in Thu-

ringia can find free school placements even at short notice, and local companies can recruit foreign specialists at any time, boasting the offer of international education for their children. (hw)



Companies and international staff benefit from a special educational program at THIS. Photo: THIS

## Thuringian Winter Sports Resort to Host Biathlon World Championships

Top athletes from all over the world and biathlon enthusiasts from all over Germany visit the Oberhof winter sports resort in the heart of the Thuringian Forest every year. Oberhof is one of Thuringia's tourist flagships and has a permanent place in the annual sports calendar as a winter sports and world cup venue.

The proof of this are the almost 400,000 overnight stays that the city at the "Rennsteig" hiking trail records every year. To ensure that this remains the case in the future and against the background of the biathlon World Championships to be held in Oberhof in 2023, the municipality will receive almost 60 million euros in subsidies from the state of Thuringia for the expansion and modernization of its sports facilities. Through a series of construction measures and projects, Thuringia wants to further improve the framework conditions for sport and tourism in Oberhof. Its popularity far beyond Thuringia is an important factor for the state and radiates to the entire tourism region along the "Rennsteig" hiking trail. The media attention related to the annual Biathlon World Cup contributes a great deal to this. One of the construction projects is

a new "House of Sports", which is to be the new attraction in the town with its modern winter sports museum. A total of 58.4 million euros will flow into the biathlon arena, ski jumps and bobsled run by the end of 2022. LEG Thüringen supports the project as a development partner and assumes most of the coordination tasks. (cdo)



Oberhof – A paradise for winter sports enthusiasts. Photo: LEG Thüringen

### **i** Dates

› **Control**

May 07 - 10, 2019 | Stuttgart

› **ISRACHEM**

May 13 - 14, 2019 | Tel Aviv

› **ExpoMed**

June 05 - 07, 2019 | Mexico-City

› **GutsMuths Rennsteiglauf**

May 18, 2019 | Schmiedefeld am Rennsteig

› **Krämerbrückenfest**

June 14 - 16, 2019 | Erfurt

› **Thüringentag**

June 28 - 30, 2019 | Sömmerda



**Publisher:**

State Development Corporation of Thuringia (LEG Thüringen)

**Editorial Staff:** Dr. Holger Wiemers (V.i.S.d.P.),

Christoph Dolata, Christine Maas

**Copy Deadline:** March 08, 2019

**Layout:** RITTWEGGER + TEAM

Werbeagentur GmbH Erfurt, Suhl

**Printed by:** Druckerei Multicolor

**Contact:**

Dr. Arnulf Wulff – Senior Vice President  
Investment, International Business and Cluster  
Promotion

Mainzerhofstrasse 12

99084 Erfurt, Germany

Phone: +49 (0) 361 5603-450

invest@leg-thueringen.de

www.invest-in-thuringia.de