

Thuringia Focus.



Rapid progress on the construction site of the Amazon logistics center. Photo: Amazon

Amazon expansion shows: Thuringia is attractive

Conveniently located between Berlin and Munich, Frankfurt and Dresden, Thuringia has drawn in logistics providers for years. The region's appeal is underscored by Amazon's decision to set up a distribution center in Gera in eastern Thuringia. The multinational corporation is investing EUR 130 million in the new site, which will create more than 1,000 jobs initially and go into operation before the 2021 Christmas season.

"We are thrilled to continue our growth trajectory in Germany by setting up our first Amazon distribution center in Gera, Thuringia," said Armin Cossmann, Regional Director Operations Amazon Germany. "We are grateful for the support we have received here from local and regional partners and look forward to creating 1,000 new full-time jobs in Gera and the region and giving our customers even better service!" Amazon is setting

up business at a sprawling site that LEG Thüringen developed so that companies could easily build on it. "This expansion is a resounding success for the state's broad-based initiative to develop large industrial sites in order to offer companies suitable business locations," explained Thuringian Economics Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee. As Amazon noted, the new Gera location will meet cutting-edge environmental standards to assure energy efficiency and responsible resource use. "We help investors in and outside Germany to expand or relocate to Thuringia. They have expressed considerable interest in investing in Thuringia, even in these challenging times – Amazon's gratifying commitment to Gera is one example of this dynamic trend," said LEG Managing Director Andreas Krey. LEG will continue to provide full-service advice and assistance even after Amazon has opened its location. (hw)

Medical equipment specialist from the U.S. to start manufacturing in Sonneberg

Southern Thuringia will soon be producing innovative products for "keyhole technology": W.O.M. World of Medicine GmbH is investing EUR 10 million to build a production center in Sonneberg. It will be creating 14 jobs in short order but could eventually employ up to 100 people at the site. W.O.M. specializes in products for minimally invasive surgery. These kinds of operations – in which incisions are kept to a minimum – simplify treatment for medical personnel and speed up recovery for patients. Devices used in laparoscopic, or "keyhole", surgery include cameras, insufflators, medical pumps and sterile tubing systems. Sonneberg is conveniently located on the border between Thuringia and Bavaria and is near business centers in central Germany and the Bavarian region of Franconia. W.O.M. is a member of the Boston-based Novanta Group, which has global sales of USD 600 million and employs more than 2,000 people. (hw)

CATL also investing in Erfurt

The building structure is taking shape at the large construction site belonging to Contemporary Amperex Technology Thuringia (CATT) in the Erfurter Kreuz industrial park. The Chinese battery manufacturer plans to invest EUR 1.8 billion and employ around 2,000 people at the 24-ha site. The company has irons in the fire elsewhere in Thuringia, too. CATT recently rented a bankrupt online retailer's warehouse that has stood vacant since 2019. Located in the Erfurt Freight Hub (GVZ Erfurt), the 3-ha facility will become the central European warehouse for the battery factory at Erfurter Kreuz. The project is expected to create several hundred jobs. Using an existing warehouse, which was originally constructed for EUR 45 million, will be faster than building a new facility from scratch. The batteries manufactured in Erfurter Kreuz will be shipped from the warehouse to automobile factories all over Europe. (maa)



Building progress of CATL's battery factory at the industrial site "Erfurter Kreuz". Photo: CATL

THW logistics center being built in Altenburger Land

Technisches Hilfswerk (THW), a governmental civil protection organization, will be building four new logistics centers throughout Germany. The German parliament has appropriated EUR 40 million for this purpose. They will be going up in Lower Saxony, Baden-Württemberg – and Thuringia, in the county of Altenburger Land. Total investment in the eastern Thuringian site will reach around EUR 10 million. The site was chosen for its accessible location in central Germany and excellent transportation links to Leipzig, Chemnitz, Zwickau, Jena and Gera. The proverbial cherry on the logistics sundae: Altenburg-Nobitz Airport. The logistics centers should start operation by 2023 at the latest. (maa)

Jena still boosting Schott's success

Schott AG, a major multinational based in eastern Thuringia, has redoubled its commitment to Jena: It is investing another eight-digit sum here. The technology company, which markets innovative glass and glass ceramic products and solutions, recently announced that business is booming in the city on the Saale.

The corporation grew sales 2.2 percent in 2020 despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Its operating profit rose year-on-year to EUR 288 million, while its net profit of EUR 199 million came in just under the previous year's level.

Business was good in large part due to the success of the cell phone cover glass that Schott produces in Jena. The tough touchscreen glass was a big seller and helped to write another chapter in the company's success story. Schott also notched up big wins producing vials for active pharmaceutical ingredients: Its customers include COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers, who have already received 80 million vials. Schott's senior management team intends to continue its company's successful trajectory in Jena with extensive investments in the future. (hw)



Special glass manufacturing with the microfloat unit at SCHOTT in Jena. Photo: SCHOTT

Weidmüller opts for western Thuringia

Electronics specialist Weidmüller has made a major play near Eisenach: The company is building a distribution center here on a 72,000 m² site. The eight-digit investment is the largest single investment in the firm's history.

The geographic center of Germany lies in western Thuringia, which – together with the outstanding infrastructure – was and remains a powerful argument for many companies' site selection decisions. Weidmüller's chosen location

is only ten kilometers from Weidmüller's Thuringian production facility and boasts excellent access to the A4 highway and the Frankfurt and Leipzig cargo airports. Weidmüller operates other factories in Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic and intends for all the products made at these sites to be handled at the new central warehouse. The company decided to make the investment in order to keep up with fast-moving markets and optimize its supply chains. (hw)



Visualization of the logistics center in the industrial area "Kindel" in Hörselberg-Hainich. Photo: Weidmüller

Strong demand for effective drugs for COVID-19 patients

Effective medications for treating COVID-19 patients are almost as important as the coronavirus vaccine itself. Thuringian researchers and entrepreneurs have joined together in various research initiatives to develop these much-needed drugs.

Four start-ups recently joined forces as “BEAT-COV” to collectively develop suitable medicines for treating COVID-19 patients. One of the four young companies is Jena-based InflaRx N.V. This biopharmaceutical firm, which was established in 2007 and also maintains sites in Munich and Ann Arbor, Michigan, has developed a proprietary monoclonal antibody technology for effectively treating life-threatening inflammatory diseases that may develop in the course of a COVID-19 infection. This medicine is in a highly advanced and promising phase of clinical development, as are the drugs developed by AiCuris, Atriva and Immunic, the three other BEAT-COV co-founders. One part of the InfectControl network also focuses on the development of a therapeutic concept for treating patients infected with SARS-CoV-2. The current project has received EUR 4.5 million in funding from the Federal

Ministry of Education and Research. Involved in this project are the Leibniz Institute for Natural Product Research and Infection Biology (Hans Knöll Institute) in Jena (project coordination), the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena and other research institutions throughout Germany. (gro)



Thuringian scientists research for effective drugs to treat corona patients. Photo: AdobeStock

Frosty technology keeps vaccines fresh

Temperatures matter when transporting delicate vaccines such as the one against SARS-CoV-2. That has turbocharged demand for the thermal containers that Va-Q-tec makes in Thuringia.

Due to the good business development, the company from Würzburg is now investing EUR 10 million at its Thuringian site in Kölleda, among other things in the construction of two additional buildings with a total of 4,000 square meters. The workforce of 150 employees is also to grow by 10 percent. To ensure that the

Corona vaccines arrive at the respective site in good condition, a seamless cold chain is essential. The thermo containers from va-Q-tec – produced in Thuringia – ensure any desired transport temperature between -80 °C and +25 °C thanks to the very thin insulation with vacuum insulation panels and high-tech temperature accumulators; for example, the sensitive transport of vaccine doses from Biontech and Pfizer requires temperatures as low as -80 °C – no problem for the containers from Kölleda. (gro)



The thermal containers from va-Q-tec from Kölleda/Thuringia. Photo: va-Q-tec AG

Jena is a key start-up hub for eastern Germany

Jena is one of the most important start-up hubs in eastern Germany, according to a recent study by Passion4Business GmbH. It numbers Spaceoptix, Polytives and room AG – all Jena-based companies – among the top 15 start-ups of 2020 in Germany. These honors, along with top placements in previous years, makes the City of Lights one of the most important start-up hubs in eastern Germany, right after Berlin and its environs. Companies in Jena owe their high rankings to their ideas and expertise, but also to the city’s excellent start-up infrastructure: good universities, numerous research institutions, multiple start-up incubators, a broad network of experts as well as Jena’s towering reputation as an optics and photonics center.

Rapid test developed for antibiotics

Researchers at the Leibniz Institute of Photonic Technology (IPHT) and the Jena University Hospital have developed a highly promising rapid antibiotic test for identifying multi-resistant pathogens. The test can determine which bacteria caused an infection and which antibiotics can treat them best – all within just a few hours. The test, which relies on a laser-based diagnostic process, also shows which antibiotics the identified pathogens are already resistant to. The treatment can thus be highly focused without wasting precious time.

Mars mission: Thuringian high tech has landed

After traveling 146.3 million miles, the NASA Perseverance rover entered Mars’s atmosphere and successfully touched down in February 2021. The vehicle will be exploring the red planet with some help from advanced Thuringian technology: Jenoptik AG contributed three cutting-edge lenses that took the first pictures of Mars after the landing. Jena-Optronik GmbH, for its part, provided high-precision sensors that will help to bring the first samples of Martian soil back to Earth.

Erfurt aglow with national horticulture show

All over Thuringia's capital, people are planting, hammering and working away to get everything green and blooming in time for the official start of BUGA, Germany's national horticulture show.

Visitors can experience Erfurt as the flowery hotspot of Germany for 171 days starting on April 23, 2021. Five large exhibitions and 20 highly varied themed gardens will be ready to explore at the two main exhibition sites, egapark and Petersberg. These masterfully designed gardens are the perfect setting for a sea of roses, irises, lilies, begonias, dahlias and perennials. Opening at the same time as BUGA is the one-of-a-kind Danakil Desert and Jungle Center at egapark. Visitors can tour the center, look for water and learn how plants and animals in the Danakil desert region survive in the harsh climate. Closer to the

historic city center, Petersberg provides a way to travel back in time through various gardening eras: A brightly colored renaissance garden gives way to a baroque garden with its classical topiaries, followed by the flowing lines of a landscape garden. The monastery garden harks back to bygone days on the Petersberg hill. Recreation and relaxation are the name of the game at Geraaue, a roughly 60-hectare recreation park located in northern Erfurt – and the third major component of the BUGA. The national horticulture show's appeal extends beyond the Erfurt city limits, too – just consider the external BUGA sites. Twenty-five are scattered across Thuringia, including the castle gardens in Dornburg as well as the Park an der Ilm, which contains Goethe's garden in Weimar. (gro)

www.buga2021.de



View to the observation tower in the egapark. Photo: egapark Erfurt gGmbH, Ch. Fischer

What a gift!

Big smiles in Gera: A private collector in Berlin is giving the Gera art collection more than 500 high-quality works as a permanent loan. That means the extensive collection at the Orangerie will soon have numerous artworks that have never or only rarely been shown in recent decades. The collection includes oil paintings,

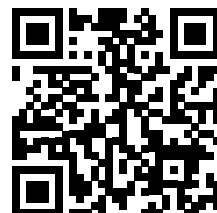
watercolors, drawings, sculptures and graphic prints from the classic modernist era, including works from Paul Gauguin, Auguste Rodin, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Paul Klee, Otto Dix and Lyonel Feininger. The museum plans to publicly display the pieces in several special exhibitions after studying them. (gro)

Digital formats

The Thuringia International Team has committed itself to providing market information worldwide and developing exciting opportunities for Thuringian companies, even during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Flying Fair: Virtual exhibition presenting Thuringian companies at trade fairs worldwide
- Café International: Regular online seminars with succinct foreign trade briefings
- Online Business Mission: Virtual delegation trips with interesting agenda items such as B2B meetings.

The Invest Team is also online and active in various forums to communicate Thuringia's locational advantages to businesses. Scan this QR code to access our website with all the planned events.



Publisher:
State Development Corporation of Thuringia
(LEG Thüringen)

Editorial Staff:
Dr. Holger Wiemers (V.i.S.d.P.),
Olivia Großmann, Christine Maas
Copy Deadline: 09/04/2021
Layout: Luise Marholdt
Printed by: Mehgro

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The printing paper used for this brochure comes from sustainable forestry.