

# Thuringia Focus.



With the symbolic cutting of the ribbon Dr. Harald Marquardt (center) opened the new plant at Erfurter Kreuz industrial area together with the Minister President of the Free State of Thuringia, Bodo Ramelow (3rd from right). Photo: © Marquardt

## Commitment to Thuringia: Marquardt expands e-mobility production

**A welcome expansion in the Erfurter Kreuz industrial district: mechatronics specialist Marquardt having been located in Thuringia since 2019, has inaugurated its second plant south of the Thuringian state capital. This 3-digit million euro investment expands the company's capacity for the production of battery management systems for electric vehicles. The products will be used in new premium vehicles from German manufacturers, among others.**

Marquardt already employs around 350 people in Thuringia. By the end of 2025, the company will create a further 200 jobs in its new 2-hectare building. "We are delighted by Marquardt's commitment," said Andreas Krey, Managing Director of LEG, which helped the company with the relocation and is providing space in the industrial district. "This investment will further strengthen Thuringia as a hub for the automotive and battery industry."

„This investment here in Thuringia is – despite the most adverse circumstan-

ces – a commitment to Germany as a business location. At the same time, the new plant is a symbol of new beginnings and confidence. In what are really very challenging economic times, more and more experts are working together here to shape the future of automotive history: the transition to electromobility," said Dr. Harald Marquardt, CEO of the Marquardt Group, at the opening ceremony.

The family-owned company is headquartered in Rietheim-Weilheim in the southern German state of Baden-Württemberg and claims to be the world's leading manufacturer of mechatronic switching and operating systems. The automotive product portfolio includes battery management systems, vehicle access and driver authorization systems. The company employs around 10,000 people worldwide at 22 locations on four continents. Sales in the 2023 fiscal year were just under 1.4 billion euros, with one tenth being invested in research and development. (hw)

### News

#### Inventors in Thuringia are number one in eastern Germany

Thuringia stands out as a region of successful inventors and innovators: last year, it ranked first among eastern German states in terms of patent applications per capita. As reported by the German Patent and Trademark Office in Munich, Thuringia outperformed some western German states as well.

Overall, Thuringia had 24 patent applications per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023. The state clearly came out ahead of its neighbor Saxony, which had 13 applications. The gap to other eastern German states was even greater, where patent applications remained in the single digits. Thuringia also led western German states such as Rhineland-Palatinate and Schleswig-Holstein, which recorded 15 and 13 applications per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively. Experts attribute Thuringia's remarkable performance to its decades-long track record of deep expertise and potential in the business and technology sectors of optics and medical technology. Regionally, a great deal of corporate and research knowledge is concentrated in Jena. All told, companies, research institutions, and individual inventors filed 38,469 patents nationwide in 2023, an increase of 3.4 percent on the previous year. (hw)

## Thuringia presents its strengths in South Korea

At the beginning of September, a group of companies from Thuringia traveled to South Korea, the fourth largest economy in Asia. Co-organized with our partners, Germany Trade and Invest, OptoNet e.V. and Automotive Thüringen e.V., the program included stops in the capital city of Seoul and the province of Gyeonggi-do. A highly innovative country with giants such as LG, Samsung, Kia, and Hyundai, South Korea is an attractive export market for Thuringia's economy and offers exciting opportunities for research partnerships. South Korea's innovative start-up culture and research priorities, which include autonomous vehicles, intelligent transportation systems, entertainment systems, battery technologies, and automated production, provide points of contact for cross-border collaborative projects with the Thuringian participants, who presented their strengths in sensor technology, electronics, and electromobility. However, the focus of the networking event and the investor seminar, which were also part of the program, was to present Thuringia as a business location and appeal to potential investors.

The trip was a follow-up to a visit by Carsten Schneider, Minister of State at the German Federal Chancellery, to the Ambassador in Seoul in early May 2024. On this occasion, Thuringia invited guests to a business breakfast, where promising contacts were made. (maa)

## Thuringian town leads city ranking

Swiss Prognos AG, a company known for publishing a wide range of studies, has once again compiled a nationwide ranking of German cities. This time, the study looked at 71 cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Its focus was on ecology, mobility, social affairs, work, and digitalization. The ranking reflected both the status quo and the dynamic trajectory, i.e., the trend over a certain period of time. And this is precisely where the Thuringian university town of Jena came out on top, ahead of Ulm, Chemnitz, and Osnabrück. Erfurt, the state capital, also made it into the top five in terms of dynamic growth, followed by Magdeburg, Dresden and Leipzig. (maa)

## Exclusive meeting of champions in Jena

**An extraordinary meeting of champions took place in Jena at the end of May. Entitled "ChampionsMEET Thuringia: Business meets Soccer", LEG organized the second meeting of global market and technology leaders from Thuringia. In the run-up to the European Championship, the event took place in the Jena soccer arena – in the presence of soccer world champion and DFB sports director Rudi Völler and with an opportunity for all guests to watch the national team's public training session in the Ernst Abbe sports field.**

LEG and the Thuringian Ministry of Economics launched the "Hidden Champions – Thuringia's global market and technology leaders" campaign in March 2023. Since then, LEG has honored almost 100 companies that deliver top performance and are at the forefront of their markets. ChampionsMEET brings policymakers, LEG, and

the hidden champions together and facilitates the exchange of views and ideas. Six new global market and technology leaders were honored at the event's second installment in late May. Rudy Völler was the headline guest; in addition, the team psychologist of the German national team, Prof. Hans-Dieter Hermann, gave an inspiring lecture. Afterwards, participants watched Manuel Neuer, Toni Kroos, Thomas Müller, and others in a public training session. This happened because, in the run-up to the European Championship, the German national soccer team spent a week at the Spa & Golf Resort Weimarer Land (Blankenhein), which LEG supported on behalf of the state with a number of infrastructure projects, including the construction and operation of the media center and the renovation of the municipal sports field and the Schlossplatz castle court. (hw)



Andreas Krey, Managing Director LEG Thüringen, opens the 2nd Thuringian ChampionsMEET in the ad hoc Arena in Jena. Photo: © LEG Thüringen / Paul-Philipp Braun

## Trip to North America yields fruitful contacts

**In mid-August, the Thuringian International team traveled to North America's Pacific Northwest, including the two hubs of Seattle and Vancouver. The region boasts a strong and diverse economy built on its outstanding high-tech potential, making it an extremely worthwhile destination for Thuringian companies and researchers.**

The delegation, which comprised 20 participants, visited Seattle, one of the world's top clusters for the aerospace industry. As the headquarters of Amazon and home to many other high-tech IT and digital companies, as well as promising start-ups, Seattle has also proven to be an extremely attractive location for this industry and technology sector. The trip also provided many opportunities to

explore Thuringia's strengths in quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, life sciences and biotechnology. With outstanding speakers, the investors' seminar with 40 participants perfectly showcased Thuringia as a business location. The same is true for Vancouver, which also has an advantage in information and communications technology. In addition, the Canadian metropolis boasts an innovative focus on sustainability and renewable energies, ranking among the top ten clean tech clusters worldwide. Here, too, visits to companies and research institutions, as well as exchanges with market players, opened up exciting and lucrative business and collaboration opportunities. (hw)



# Kick-off for new science campus in Jena

**Jena will soon be home to the largest biomedical university campus in Central Germany: A new building and the renovation of an existing building will provide extensive teaching and research facilities, particularly for pharmacy and nutrition. Students at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany, will be the main beneficiaries of the 90.6-million-euro investment.**

Construction work is expected to begin at the end of next year. The conversion phase recently began with initial studies of the structure of the former Women's Hospital, which is located in close proximity to the city and other university campuses. This building complex is under renovation and will be the future home of university departments such as pharmaceutical sci-

ences and parts of nutrition sciences. The 6,065-square-meter building will house laboratories, seminar rooms, and lecture halls. It will also include areas for student work and scientific communication. In addition, a new 2,511-square-meter building will house the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and its Institute of Data Science.

To finance the project, Thuringia is providing a total of 54.3 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and 27.2 million euros from state funds until 2029. As future users, the Friedrich Schiller University and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) will contribute ten percent of the planned total expenditure. (hw)

## Central point of contact for telehealth in Apolda

**In the future, the heart of telehealth in Thuringia will beat in Apolda: The Thuringian Center for Telehealth is being built on 600 square meters of the Eiermannbau building, an industrial landmark. The WeCare agency is in charge of the project, and its partners are the AOK plus health insurance company and LEG Thüringen.**

The center is expected to become operational early next year and will serve as a focal point for medical research and practice. Doctors, for example, will be able to test telehealth applications, and there will be opportunities for continuing education in this area. In an era of health-care staff shortages and long distances to

doctors' offices in rural areas, telehealth offers the possibility of providing health-care digitally in certain cases using modern technical solutions. WeCare and its partners used the "Apolda Declaration on Telehealth in Thuringia" to emphasize the growing importance of telehealth for patient care, especially in rural areas. The goal of WeCare is to bring together all relevant stakeholders to develop practical telehealth applications. The activities are receiving eight million euros in funding from the German Federal Ministry of Research as part of the federal "WIR! - Change through Innovation in the Region" competition over six years until 2027. (hw)



Built by Bauhaus architect Egon Eiermann, today's industrial monument is home to the Thuringian Center for Telemedicine. Photo: © Thomas Müller

## News

### Promotion of innovation and research

For many years, LEG Thüringen's cluster management team (ThCM) has been organizing events that promote close collaboration between companies, research institutions, and intermediaries, and lay the foundation for joint innovation projects.

**InnoCON:** The most important innovation event of the year. Leading minds from industry and research come together here to share knowledge and experiences. At the same time, the event provides a valuable platform for entrepreneurs from different industries to learn about funding programs and connect with key partners.

**InnoMEET:** A combination of lectures and discussions on current issues and developments in specialty areas. Opportunity for strategic networking and knowledge sharing with industry peers.

**InnoLOG:** Renowned scientists from Thuringia present current research topics and results in a series of stimulating lectures and discussions. The aim of this event is to exploit synergies between Thuringia's research institutions, start-ups, and established companies, and create paths to sustainable collaboration networks and trailblazing transfer projects.

**InnoPRO:** Workshops for initiating and implementing strategic R&D projects for programs receiving federal and EU funding. (maa)

[www.cluster-thueringen.de/en](http://www.cluster-thueringen.de/en)

### Renewable electricity generation at record level

Thuringia is on track to meet the national goal of 80 percent renewable electricity by 2030. According to the Statistical Office of Thuringia, renewable energy accounted for 63.9 percent of total electricity consumed in the first quarter of 2024. This corresponds to 1,956.2 gigawatt hours (GWh) and represents an increase of 12.6 percent compared to the previous year. Most of this (66.5 percent) was wind power, but biomass and photovoltaic power also increased. In Germany, the share was 58 percent in the first half of 2024, according to projections by the Center for Solar Energy and Hydrogen Research Baden-Württemberg (ZSW) and the German Association of Energy and Water Industries (BDEW). (maa)

# New campaign combines relaxation with attractive destinations

**Singing in the brine mist, wine inhalation in the graduation house, singing bowl meditation in the mine, or yoga in the museum: As part of an ongoing campaign, Thuringia is offering visitors an opportunity to use the state's natural remedies at special and unforgettable locations for more relaxation and a healthier life.**

Styled "Auffallend ausgeglichen" ("Strikingly balanced"), the campaign offers more than 40 health-promoting programs in 17 health resorts and spas in Thuringia. All of the 40 programs were either newly developed or modernized. The project partners are Thüringer Tourismus GmbH (TTG) and Thüringer Heilbäderverband e. V. (THBV). Thuringia's

abundant natural remedies, such as brine, healing water, moor mud, and healing air, are combined with tourist attractions and landmarks, such as wine atomization at the Bad Sulza graduation house and dream trips in the brine mist at Bad Salzungen. Participants can relax from the stresses of everyday life and at the same time experience the diversity of Thuringia's tourism landscape – a proactive response by TTG and its partners to the increased demand for health-oriented services with a pronounced wellness factor. (hw)

[Discover more: www.thueringen-entdecken.de/en/relax.](http://www.thueringen-entdecken.de/en/relax)



Yoga in the Saalfeld Fairy Grottoes is a special experience. Photo: © TTG

## Magical: Thuringia builds the world's largest witches' broom

**Thuringia has a lot to offer as an attractive place to live and do business, and soon there will be another extraordinary highlight: In the northernmost tip of Thuringia, in the village of Rotherstüte, an observation tower in the shape of the world's largest witches' broom will rise into the sky by 2025.**

Fans of magic and sorcery have known about it for a long time, countless tourists have been lured there: The Harz, a charming region of natural beauty, is steeped in the mystery of witches who are said to gather regularly on the Brocken, the highest mountain in the Harz, to hold covens and practice dark arts. The new tower adds another attraction to the popular magic: Its gleaming white steel structure,

now taking shape as part of the ongoing construction, is reminiscent of a witch's broom. In the future, the tower will present a fantastically magical exhibition and a bewitched play world filled with forests and adventure 70 meters above ground. An elevator ride will take families with children to the top, and two slides will provide a high-speed descent. The tourist attraction is a project of "Harzer Hexenreich" (Harz Witches' Realm), a tourism project of the Nordhausen county, realized by Service Gesellschaft and Harzer Hexenreich GmbH, and funded by the Thuringian Ministry of Economics with 10.1 million euros from funds provided by the Joint Federal/Länder Task for the Improvement of Regional Economic Structures (GRW). (hw)

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## Dates

September 17-22  
IAA Transportation, Hanover  
Booth: Hall 13 / C44

September 25-26  
W3+ Fair, Jena

October 7-9  
EXPO REAL, Munich

October 15-19  
FAKUMA, Friedrichshafen  
Booth: B5-5110

October 16-20  
Frankfurt Book Fair  
Booth: 3.1 G29

September 19-22  
122nd German Hiking Day in Heilbad  
Heiligenstadt

2025 – a good year for rewarding trade shows!

Renowned industry fairs are key factors for an international business's success. They provide the perfect platform for Thuringian companies and researchers to present their products and reach out to (potential) customers. LEG's 2025 program includes 17 trade fairs covering a wide range of industries – and thanks to LEG's full range of services, exhibitors from Thuringia can fully focus on their trade fair presence with a minimum of organizational effort.

Already familiar formats are part of the trade fair program. New offers are e. g.: The entire world of embedded systems will be on display at Embedded World in Nuremberg (Germany) in March. The smarter E Europe 2025 in Munich (Germany) in May will provide Europe's largest platform for the energy industry. Also in May, there will be an opportunity to attend the Hospital medical technology trade show in Sao Paulo (Brazil). LEG will also have a joint Thüringen stand at it-sa 2025, the leading trade fair for IT security, for the first time. Special feature: The October 2024 iteration can be experienced by interested parties as part of a fact-finding visit, giving participants an opportunity to network and gather enough information to make a sound decision about their own fair presence in October 2025. (hw)

You will find the annual program here:

