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BIKAR-ALUMINIUM GmbH - A young company with growth spurt in Korbußen

Companies in Eastern Thuringia

It is not only the big names that shape and make up the entrepreneurial landscape in East Thuringia. Many tiny, small or medium-sized companies also do amazing things for the national economy. Sometimes they even include secret winners, so-called hidden champions. Every week, OTZ presents companies and service providers from Eastern Thuringia. **Today: Bikar-Aluminium GmbH.**

Korbußen. Somehow they simply belong in the picture, the silver-grey cuboids with blue nuances and the large company lettering, which always immediately catch the eye when driving on the A4 between Gera-Leumnitz and Ronneburg in the Korbußen industrial park. Yet the factory buildings of Bikar-Aluminium GmbH have only been a feature of the scenery for a surprisingly short time, and some of them have only been there for a few months.

Bikar in Korbußen is a thoroughly young company that has just experienced an enormous growth spurt. Founded in 2009 with five employees at its East Thuringia site, it now has over 100 employees. More than half of them were hired last year as part of a major investment in the site. At a cost of 25 million euros, two new production halls, each measuring 120 by 70 meters, were built between March 2014 and March 2015 alongside the two existing ones.

This will further expand the company's cut-to-size division in particular, which is dedicated to trading in non-ferrous (NF) metals, such as aluminum, but also copper, brass, bronze and more. The new cutting center and the additional production center for aluminum cast plates and face-milled precision plates enable the company to offer an even wider range of products. Aluminum ingots are cut and milled into all possible shapes and sizes in order to deliver them as precisely as possible for further processing to the industry - automotive, aerospace, machine, mold, tool and model making.

"In our cutting center, we mainly make straight cuts, but we also have special saws for circular blanks and rings," says Marketing Manager Jan Saßmannshausen, explaining the range of cuts. Since the self-produced boards now account for a large part of sales,

he describes the company with a twinkle in his eye as a "board producer". In addition, there is the "bar stock", i.e. rods, tubes and profiles in all possible dimensions.

Average age of 31 years

In addition to the new high-bay warehouse, which was built as part of the expansion, the company invested in around 20 new machines for cutting and processing non-ferrous metals. According to the company, this gives it the world's largest and most modern cutting center for cast aluminum. Even though not all work on the new production facilities has been completed yet, says Saßmannshausen, the order situation is currently so good that production is already underway in both halls.

More production, more employees - this correlation is logical and also true at Bikar-Aluminum. But for Pascal Bikar, who along with his sister Claudia Bikar is part of the management duo, it is only one side of the coin. "With such great employees, we had to invest, so the decision was not difficult," he says: "Everyone sees the company as their own, everyone pulls together." And brought in and continues to bring in his ideas for optimizing the production processes, so that the production lines, which were already developed in-house, could be further developed efficiently in the new halls. "Great cohesion," "trust," and an "optimal chemistry" are what characterize the employees, says Production Manager Christian Harzendorf, who himself has worked for the company from the beginning as a career changer.

And indeed, the positive attitude can be felt in the conversations, a startup atmosphere, a spirit of optimism. Perhaps it's because not only is the company itself quite young, but so is the workforce. The average age of the employees, 90 percent of whom come from the region, is just 31. This is not likely to change for the time being, as the company plans to take on eight additional apprentices in addition to the four trainees it already has in the summer - from the commercial sector to electronics technicians and plant operators to warehouse clerks and industrial mechanics.

In terms of growth, there is no end in sight for the time being, as evidenced on the one hand by the announcement that additional employees will be hired, and on the other hand by the fact that the company has already acquired another piece of land in the Korbußen industrial park as a precautionary measure.

First place at Thuringian Founder Award 2012

Even though the headquarters of the family-owned Bikar company is in Bad Berleburg, Bikar-Aluminium GmbH in Korbußen is an independent company - which, incidentally, bears the address "Bikarstraße 1". According to its own information, the group of companies employs a total of 314 people.

EVERYTHING

with tradition

In 2012, Bikar-Aluminium GmbH was awarded first place in the category "Successful Young Entrepreneurs" at the Gründerpreis Thüringen.



By Marcel Hilbert