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## Exciting year at Bikar

Marketing Manager Jan Saßmannshausen answered the questions of our local editorial team on behalf of Bikar Metalle GmbH.



**Wittgenstein.** How is the local economy doing? Probably no one can answer this question better than IHK chief executive Klaus Gräbener. "The global economic turmoil continues to cause uncertainty," is how he describes the situation when asked by our local editorial team. According to Gräbener, this turbulence had already prevented a more broadly supported upswing last year.

In the region, the local Chamber of Industry and Commerce has noticed, there is another factor of uncertainty for companies. Gräbener: "The broadband infrastructure has considerable deficits. Particularly in commercial and industrial areas, the connection is worse in many cases than is heard in politicians' Sunday speeches."

**"In the Altkreis Wittgenstein, we are recording almost Bavarian conditions in terms of employment." Klaus Gräbener, Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce.**

And what role do the refugees play? It is still unclear how the high numbers of refugees will affect the economy and society, says Gräbener, and continues: "The associated challenges are considerable. On the other hand, the increases in demand are having a positive impact on quite a few industries, such as housing and utilities."

For all the imponderables, however, no one need bury their head in the sand. Klaus Gräbener comments on the labor market figures: "In the old district of Wittgenstein, we are recording almost Bavarian conditions in terms of employment. Also the still halfway stable apprenticeship market shows that it goes to our enterprises altogether prima. For the most part, they are excellently positioned. It is also good that we have made some progress in the transportation infrastructure. The six-lane expansion of the Sauerland line is coming!"

And the traffic rolls past the Wittgensteiner Land? "As far as transport links to Wittgenstein are concerned, we will not let up," promises the chief executive. "Forty years have been discussed. Happened as good as nothing. It's clear that if we don't link this region and its industry in a sensible way, we'll be leaving the people who live there behind in the long run. Added value and jobs will then move to other regions. No one who bears responsibility in the region can seriously be interested in that. My wish for 2016 is that the decades of procrastination will finally be followed by concrete action. The region must fight for this together."



### **Exciting year at Bikar**

**Raumland. Marketing Manager Jan Saßmannshausen** answered the questions of our local editorial team on behalf of **Bikar Metalle GmbH**.

He reports "an exciting and positive year for 2015. Exciting above all due to the 30 million euro new construction of two production facilities at our site in Korbußen, Thuringia, and the associated innovations in the company. A further 17,000 square meter cutting center for nonferrous metals with fully automated connection to a 120 meter long high-bay warehouse and a production line for aluminum plates have been built. This step was necessary because in recent years we have always operated at and at times beyond the limits of our production capacity. With the new possibilities we can now work the market even more actively. Many new positions have been created in production as well as in administration and sales. We integrated 120 new employees into our existing team in 2015; this meant that there was one new employee for every two old employees. Everyone involved can be proud of this achievement.

The economic balance sheet was able to keep pace with these developments, allowing us to significantly increase our output volume in 2015 and further improve our market position.

### **New administration, new warehouse**

After investments in Thuringia were completed in 2015, the focus in 2016 will be on our site in Raumland. Here, construction work will soon begin on a new administration building and a 25-meter-high high-bay warehouse with a direct link to a sawing center. Loading, which has so far been divided between three plants, will be carried out centrally in the future in order to be able to load trucks more efficiently and to reduce downtimes and thus the costs of the forwarding companies. Parallel to the further expansion of production, we are strengthening our sales activities in Germany with the establishment of a sales office in Remscheid and additional employees in our Nuremberg and Bremen branches. In this way, we expect to consistently expand our market share throughout Germany. Exports are becoming an increasingly important driving force. Here, too, we are planning new sales offices in selected future markets for 2016.

A positive conclusion can already be drawn for January. Despite all reports of a deterioration in the economic outlook, we were able to start the year with good order intake and are looking forward to the rest of the year in a positive mood.

The economic balance sheet was able to keep pace with these developments, so that we were able to significantly increase our output volume in 2015 and further improve our market position.



### **Weather-dependent?**

As a supplier to various industries, delivery reliability plays a major role for our customers, so delays in the transport process are always very annoying. Our already poor transport connections often become a problem in snow and ice when freight forwarders can't get to Wittgenstein at all or only very slowly. Therefore, the mild winter suits us from the company's point of view. But even more than a mild winter, we would be pleased to have good transport connections all year round."

**380 employees** are currently employed in the companies of the Bikar Group. Of these, 240 are at Bikar-Metalle GmbH in Raumland and 140 at Bikar-Aluminium GmbH in Korbußen.

**21 young people** are currently being trained at Bikar in the professions of wholesale and foreign trade clerk, industrial clerk, machine and plant operator and industrial mechanic. With the start of the new training year in August, up to 15 apprentices will join the team, the majority of whom have already been selected and hired.

EVERYTHING  
with tradition  
**By Christoph Vetter**

