

Brose Hallstadt facility profits from the worldwide growth of the door systems business

Brose shareholder Maximilian Stoschek presented the two local politicians the product innovations of the Brose Group in a concept car. From left to right: Mayor Erwin Braun (Hallstadt), General Manager Matthias Drewniok, Brose shareholder Maximilian Stoschek, District Administrator Dr. Günther Denzler (Bamberg) and Executive Vice-President Kurt Sauernheimer.

Hallstadt/Bamberg (04. January 2008).

Bamberg district administrator Dr. Günther Denzler and Hallstadt's mayor Erwin Braun paid a call on the Brose facility in Hallstadt on the occasion of the completion of the facility's expansion. On a tour of the premises and in a discussion with Brose shareholder Maximilian Stoschek, Executive Vice-President Kurt Sauernheimer, responsible for the door systems business, and Matthias Drewniok, general manager of the Hallstadt plant and responsible for worldwide door systems manufacturing technology, the two local politicians informed themselves about the operative capabilities of this central Brose plant location in the Upper Franconia region.

The Hallstadt facility clearly has gained in importance owing to the concentration there of the know-how and engineering competence in the field of vehicle doors. Since the activities of the two biggest business segments, window regulators and door systems, were merged, around 70 percent of Brose's entire business is controlled from Hallstadt. This includes 23 plants and five development and sales offices in Europe and overseas. Currently, 1,150 persons are employed in Hallstadt.

"Through concentration in one location we can utilize important synergy effects and further improve the quality and functionality of our products. With that we increase our effectivity, flexibility and efficiency in a very vital way," said Executive Vice-President Kurt Sauernheimer.

As Sauernheimer further explained to the two politicians, the door business has grown at a higher than average rate in the past years: worldwide sales of window regulators and door systems have increased by more than 500 million euros since 2000 and reached 1.6 billion euros in 2006. Over the same period, the number of people employed in this business area increased by 1,000 to more than 5,000 worldwide.

Upper Franconian locations profit from growth of worldwide business

In 2007 alone, window regulators, door systems and electronic components for 30 vehicle models with an overall value of 300 million euros were manufactured in Hallstadt.

In 2007 Brose invested more than eight million euros in the expansion of the development capacities in Hallstadt: a new testing building was erected, a preproduction facility for plastic carriers for door systems was set up, the plant welfare facilities were enlarged, and the site infrastructure was adapted to the new requirements. Besides, additional parking space was created for the staff.

In this connection, managing director Matthias Drewniok praised the extraordinarily constructive and unbureaucratic cooperation with the authorities and the town administration, "without which expansion on this scale in six months would have been impossible."

The takeover of the electric motor business from Continental affords further potential for growth. Whereas in Coburg numerous central departments coordinate important corporate functions internationally, Hallstadt is among other things headquarters for the development and manufacture of electronic control units for window regulator and seat adjuster motors. "This gives rise to numerous points of contact," said managing director Matthias Drewniok.

Travel activities from Coburg and Hallstadt in connection with the expansion and coordination of business also will increase. From Coburg alone, Brose staff currently undertake more than 15,000 business trips in a year.

Since Brose Hallstadt went into operation, more than 150 million euros have gone into buildings, advanced production technology, testing and logistics facilities and information technology.

Due to the widening of the product portfolio and additional orders in Asia and North America the door systems business of the Brose Group will grow further in the years to come. Worldwide sales are expected to reach around 1.8 billion euros by 2009. Hallstadt also profits from this: in the coming year more than 70 vacant positions in Development and Sales in the Door Systems division have to be filled.

System competence being extended:
plastic carriers for door systems "made in Hallstadt"

To further improve vehicle door system competence, a few months ago Brose put an injection molding plant into operation in Hallstadt. The emphasis there is mainly on research in the area of plastics processing, performance of material tests, and improvements in product design. Moreover, in connection with a customer project, for the first time Brose will manufacture functional carriers made of plastic in-house in this plant, beginning in 2008.

Uniting product development, tool planning and production in one place brings definite benefits: the Brose engineers in Hallstadt can test their product ideas and first prototypes right in this plant and evaluate the results on the spot. The result is shorter development times, optimal product design, and manufacturing costs which can stand up to international competition.

Plant agreement improves competitiveness and secures jobs

As general plant manager Matthias Drewniok reported, the Hallstadt site's competitiveness was further improved by a plant agreement concluded in 2007, so that the Brose plant received a contract to produce the electric window regulators for the 7 series of BMW beginning in 2008 and for the 5 series beginning in 2009; in the same year, series production of sunblind drives for a Porsche model will start at the Hallstadt plant for the first time.

In addition, owing to the good traffic links in and beyond the region, the Upper Franconia center will be expanded to create the European parts center of the automotive supplier:

these production volumes are scheduled for gradual transfer from other European Brose plants in the next few years and will be concentrated in Hallstadt.

District administrator Dr. Günther Denzler was visibly impressed by the high standard in all parts of the enterprise: "I am extremely pleased with the decision to turn Hallstadt into the headquarters for the worldwide door business and thereby contribute to securing the plant location." Hallstadt's mayor Erwin Braun recalled the beginnings in the late 1980s, when Hallstadt, in competition against company headquarters Coburg and numerous other southern German communities, got the nod for the plant from Brose: "Brose's success is a big gain for the people in the region – from that point of view it was exactly right that we fought so hard back in those years to get the plant located here."