

Eiterfeld, 25 August 2017

## **With order books full and a new technology center, b+m surface systems is optimistic about the future**

**At b+m surface systems GmbH, there is a lot to celebrate these days. In addition to the 25-year company anniversary and the opening of the new technology center, a few weeks ago, the Eiterfeld-based paint line manufacturer also received the largest single order in company history. As a part of a summer celebration for employees and business partners, b+m therefore popped the champagne cork on August 25<sup>th</sup> in its Eiterfeld headquarters. Also among the guests were the District Administrator Bernd Woide and Mayor Hermann-Josef Scheich.**

What began in 1992 with two employees at an obsolete mom-and-pop store in Leimbach has in 25 years developed into a 400-employee strong, internationally active high-tech company. b+m is at home in surface technology and is one of the world's leading suppliers of fully automatic paint lines and coating application systems. The company, which already has won numerous state and business awards, has specialized in painting plastic automotive exterior parts, such as bumpers, side skirts, trim, and mirror housings. "Our systems are highly flexible painting systems with a very high level of automation. Mixing and dosing equipment, paint robots, transport systems, air and drying systems, a lot of sensor and control equipment – everything must be perfectly coordinated with each other," explains Sebastian Merz, Managing Partner of b+m. "The quality standards are enormous, especially in the automotive sector. Here, high precision, fast colour changes, low paint and detergent waste, as well as consistently high quality surfaces are required," Merz says. "To achieve this, much knowledge and experience is required. Our employees are thus important guarantors for the success of our company."

b+m has grown significantly in recent years thanks to good order volume; revenue and staff have almost doubled since 2012. Of the current 400 employees, 300 are employed at the headquarters in Eiterfeld. There are also subsidiaries in Poland, Russia, India, United States, Great Britain, and Hungary. "We are committed to long-term and sustainable employee development," explains Samir Moalem, b+m's HR Director. The company is currently training 23 apprentices in six jobs and seven students in dual bachelor degrees in mechanical and electrical engineering. "Young employees are intensively supported by us through trainee and junior programs and made fit for their future tasks, for example as project managers or sales," continues Moalem.

However with the growth, the company also reached the limits of its spatial capacities. "Our new technology center creates the much-needed production and office space and is at the same time a clear commitment to the Eiterfeld location," emphasizes Bernd Käsmann,

Authorized Representative and Head of Application Engineering at b+m. "We invested around four million Euros in the construction measures and the acquisition of new machines and equipment." The new building covers an area of 1,900 m<sup>2</sup> (floor space 2,200 m<sup>2</sup>) and adjoins an existing office building. Offices and modern conference rooms occupy 700 m<sup>2</sup>. In addition to the new about 200 m<sup>2</sup> development workshop, a 1,300 m<sup>2</sup> assembly hall is now also available, in which large subsections and even complete plant areas can be assembled, tested, and accepted by the customer before delivery. In the coming years, an additional paint line for customer tests will be built in the facility in an area of approx. 360 m<sup>2</sup>.

A few weeks ago, b+m received a contract for the largest individual project in the company's history so far. The commercial vehicle manufacturer MAN Truck & Bus, which is part of the Volkswagen Group, commissioned the company to build a new robotic paint line at the Steyr site in Austria. In the state-of-the-art facility, equipped with the newest environmental technology and scheduled to start production in 2019, plastic components for the cabs of all of MAN's truck series will be painted. Both fillers and structured paint, as well as topcoats and clear coats will be processed. The data of the plant are considerable: in an area of approximately 16,000 m<sup>2</sup> distributed over three levels, approx. 80,000 vehicle sets consisting of bumpers, fenders, hoods, and side panels are to be painted per year. "When we received the confirmation from MAN, the joy was of course tremendous. A project of this scale also presents a new challenge for us, which we are now addressing with the combined knowledge of 25 years of experience," Authorized Representative Benjamin Gischler, Head of Sales and Service, is pleased to say.

So at this year's summer festival, which was preceded by the opening of the new technology center, there was much to celebrate. After greetings by District Administrator Woide and Mayor Scheich, followed the church blessing of the building by Pastor Gruber and the symbolic ribbon cutting. "b+m looks back on an eventful, but also a very successful past," summarized Sebastian Merz. "We are a great team that achieves great things with lots of passion and a strong culture."

**Pictures/captions:**

District Administrator of Fulda Bernd Woide, Eiterfeld's Mayor Hermann-Josef Scheich and Sebastian Merz, Managing Partner of b+m, during the symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony. In his opening speech, Pastor Karl-Josef Gruber, pictured left, also sent best wishes from his Catholic colleague, Dean Markus Blümel.



The new technology center also houses a development workshop and a 1,300 m<sup>2</sup> assembly hall for pre-commissioning. The investment totals to around four million Euros.

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