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Sustainability certified right from the moving-in phase

Successful production startup at new Pierburg plant

Following a core construction period of only about 12 months Pierburg GmbH was able to move into its new Lower Rhine plant located on the harbor pier in downtown Neuss as early as the spring of this year. Altogether €50 million has been invested in the new facility. In line with a detailed agenda, since then and step by step production plant and equipment have been moved from the two previous sites in Neuss and Nettetal to be set up at the Lower Rhine plant. To begin with, this concerned the manufacture of solenoid valves and the assembly of exhaust-gas recirculation coolers. Concurrently, the ultramodern high-bay warehouse was commissioned. This was followed by the move into the finish-machining shop.

Parallel to this, the employees were familiarized with their jobs at the new plant. Meanwhile a workforce of 520 is employed and hence all of the employees at the previous Neuss and 100 from Nettetal are now working there. For the latter, a special shuttle service is organized.

With the relocation of the Nettetal foundry starting from November, the 180 employees right now still working at Nettetal, will also be switching to Neuss by mid 2015.

"Putting this general plan for the Lower Rhine plant into practice was only possible with a clearly defined goal on the part of company management and the dedicated participation of all Pierburg employees in Germany," says Peter Sebastian Krause, KSPG's Executive Board member for HR. Within this context a pivotal role was played by the pay agreements collectively negotiated with the Metalworkers' Union (IG Metall) and the respective employee representatives.

Right from the planning phase of the construction project Pierburg had assigned great importance to sustainable construction and stated its endeavor to achieve DGNB silver certification (German Sustainable Building Council). Says Pierburg CEO Olaf Hedden: "As auto-industry supplier we specialize in components for emission control and fuel reduction. So it's only natural that our new plant must comply with strict sustainability criteria. I'm delighted that we have succeeded in this with the Lower Rhine plant project." Hedden goes on to say: "Within the international organization of Pierburg locations, Lower Rhine will become a lead plant in its product areas."

It is a fact that the German Sustainable Building Council is setting ever stricter criteria when awarding its coveted certificates and the Pierburg plant in Neuss is very likely the first production plant with a foundry certified according to the very latest

standards. The measures aspired to by Pierburg in obtaining the certificate embrace, to begin with, increased flexibility in facility conversion and possible expansion, achieved among other things by largely column-free shop floors as well as statically and technically by office areas allowing potential extensions.

The building in its entirety also more than (by over 25 percent) complies with energy-conservation standards for new buildings.

Besides the countless additional measures, such factors as eco-friendly use of materials and efficient heat recovery in the pneumatic air system and in the waste heat from the foundry's smelting furnaces also play a major role in achieving the positive results.

The site of the new plant is an industrial terrain in the harbor of Neuss. The land has been lying waste since the nineties. Pierburg had commissioned the Kaarst-based engineering offices Diete + Siepmann to take charge of the overall construction work and the services and construction contractors Bilfinger with the execution of the project. This latter encompassed the shell construction, the façade, and the roof of the new production location. Pierburg's project management staff was also assisted in the control of the overall project by IQ Real Estate GmbH.

The area around the plant has undergone quite some change, too. The municipality of Neuss built a new access road leading to the pier and also the necessary drainage system on the northern banks of the pier. To this end, 250 twelve-meter long poles were driven into the soil to secure the sheet piling in the area of the banks. There is also a new pedestrian bridge leading to the bank park which will much shorten the way to the railway station and other means of public transport for the employees.

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