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PRESS RELEASE

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Investment in Hilchenbach-Dahlbruch location

SMS Siemag inaugurates training workshop

On June 25, 2010, SMS Siemag officially opened its new training workshop in Hilchenbach, Germany.

The inauguration ceremony of the 3,000 square-meter facility was a major affair – with more than 100 guests attending from the worlds of politics, business, and the trade union IG Metall as well as representatives of the Works' Council, the building contractors, plus family shareholders of Siemag Weiss KG.

Paramount here were the apprentices who had, over the previous months, played an active part in constructing their new training center. Their hands-on approach included filming a video of their training program that was one of the highlights of the ceremony.

Wide-scale investment plan

Dr. Heinrich Weiss, Chairman of the SMS group, pointed out that this workshop for highly effective, work-related training, built at a cost of some EUR 4 million, marked another crucial step toward an ambitious investment program due to be completed by 2012. That ensures to strengthen the competitiveness of the Hilchenbach location, he added.

“The know-how of our employees and firm commitment to training young career-starters are success factors that help secure our leading market position. This applies even more in tough times such as the current financial and economic crisis that is also affecting our industry”, said Dr. Heinrich Weiss.

For many years, the SMS group has championed high-quality vocational and on-the-job training, often beyond its own demand. In 2009, the company trained over 350 young people in Germany – 243 of them at SMS Siemag in ten professions. Its apprentice quota of seven percent is far higher than the average in German machine and plant construction.

Dr. Kay Mayland, Chairman of the Board of SMS Siemag AG, talked about how much the approach to training had changed over the past few decades. What used to be at the forefront were “learning professional knowledge” and “training professional skills”. Today’s training relies on holistic thinking and action, in other words the development has gone from top-down teaching to self-determined learning. Ultimately, it’s about apprentices attaining not only professional skills, but also a solid sense of responsibility for themselves, their work, the process, and the team.

Strong practical orientation

This is also reflected in the term coined for the new training workshop – “LernWERK” – a name that says it all. It was chosen from a pool of suggestions submitted by the apprentices themselves. A fusion of the ideas of learning and work, it symbolizes a close connection to practical “workshop production” in Hilchenbach.

Typical here is that the apprentices spend two years of their three-and-a-half year training course in the “LernWERK”. The first year is devoted to the basic and specialist qualifications required by the official Training Directives for various professions such as cutting machine operator, industrial mechanic, plant mechanic, electronics technician for industrial engineering, and mechatronics technician.

Then, in the second year, the apprentices are integrated in processing orders, and in the third and fourth years they work in various areas of the neighboring production workshop.

(55 lines with max. 55 letters)