

SECURITY AND SAFETY

School buses are technically in top shape (27 Jan.2012) A routine check at the school center, Geschwister-Scholl-Strasse in Schweinfurt where police officers checked 40 school buses for traffic safety showed that none of the buses had deficiencies that would affect traffic safety. Also the driving behavior of the school bus drivers, obtained from the speed recordings, gave no cause for complaints. The only findings were that the emergency hammers were missing in two buses; in one the inspection date of the fire extinguishers was expired.

22-year old woman died from fatal injuries she suffered during an accident on an icy road on Wednesday. (27 Jan, 2012) On Monday (Jan 23) morning at 5:30 a.m. a traffic accident occurred between Sennfeld and Schwebheim resulting in a death and serious injuries. The accident occurred in a curve on an icy road – the car skidded and was hurled into a water ditch. While the 27-year old driver and the front seat passenger got away with a shock, the two back seat passengers had to be rescued by the fire department and sustained serious injuries. One of them, a 22-year old girl died from injuries she suffered in the accident

ECONOMICS

Chief customs office raids “Netto” and “Kaufland” stores – Schweinfurt customs authorities performs searches at the retail chains – suspicion of illegal employment contracts (26 Jan, 2012) The retail chains “Netto” and “Kaufland” are under suspicion of having negotiated illegal employment contracts. On Tuesday more than 450 customs investigators searched several warehouses, apartments and offices as ordered by the state prosecutions of Bamberg, Regensburg and Stuttgart. Also in the Kaufland logistic center in Donnersdorf (near Schweinfurt) investigators were looking for evidence. There are special suspicious facts that payments were withheld and that sham contracts were made. The investigation also included the amounts that should have been paid into the employees’ social security accounts. Concrete results cannot be expected for several months.

E.ON employees get off easier than expected (26 Jan, 2012) The E.ON corporation will try to cut the 6,000 jobs in Germany largely without terminations but rather by offering early retirement procedures and buy-outs for employees ages 54 and older. It is not certain that all employees will be able to accept these offers. According to the trade unions all employees born before 1958 would be entitled to accept the offer. They should be receiving 60% of their net-pay until the age 63 and then retire with reductions. Furthermore buy-outs of 1.5 monthly salaries per each year of employment will be offered to encourage employees to terminate their positions. In Lower Franconia E.On corporation has approximately 1,250 employees, 250 of whom are working for E.ON Bayern AG.

Energy supplier E.ON cuts 11,000 jobs worldwide (25 Jan, 2012) Germany’s largest energy supplier E.ON has reached an agreement with the labor union Ver.di to cut 11,000 jobs worldwide. Approximately 6,000 of those jobs are in Germany. Goal of the agreements are to reduce the costs to 9.5 billion Euros by 2015 to make leeway for investments. The company is dealing with the consequences of the energy turnaround.

The atmosphere in the metal industry is dampening (25 Jan, 2012) Branch in Lower Franconia faces difficult times. The electrical and metal industry in Lower Franconia has exceeded its peak. This is the bottom line of the survey that employers of the metal and electrical industry conduct twice a year. The numbers for the second half of 2011 show, that the economical slow down already started and will continue in 2012. According to Manfred Neubert, Chairman of the Association for the Main-Rhön region, the local industry is still well off, however; the perspectives are overcast and uncertainty is increasing. There is no threat of an imminent recession but the expectations have changed for the worse.

LEADERS AND POLITICS

Americans will probably withdraw from Bamberg (26 Jan, 2012)

U.S. Army garrisons – the new strategy of the U.S. Forces fuels speculations concerning the future of the garrisons in Franconia. The withdrawal from Bamberg and Schweinfurt seems to be decided.

Lord Mayor Andreas Starke of Bamberg expects anything: Together with his colleagues Lord Mayor Sebastian Remele of Schweinfurt and Lord Mayor Carda Seidel of Ansbach he has been invited to the United States Army Garrison in Ansbach on 2 February.

There a meeting will be held with LTG Mark Hertling, Commander of the U.S. Forces in Europe and the three garrison commanders of the USAG Bamberg, Schweinfurt and Ansbach. What the Commander of the American Forces in Europe will tell the representatives of the three Franconian cities – the Americans keep absolutely silent about.

Especially this causes concern in the town hall in Bamberg, they fear that it could be information concerning the final drawdown of the Americans, which the Lord Mayor in Ansbach expects. The closing of the garrison in Bamberg in 2013 had been decided for a long time; but so far there has not been any confirmation that the closure of the garrison with a long tradition is imminent.

Every week 30 additional asylum seekers – considerable more refugees are looking for protection in Lower Franconia – accommodations are overcrowded (25 Jan, 2012)

The number of asylum seekers in Germany has drastically increased. Almost 46,000 refugees, about 11 % more than in 2010 arrived in Germany. More than 40% of the refugees that came to Germany last year are from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Also in Lower Franconia the number increased and has more than doubled in the past two years. It is becoming more and more difficult to find accommodations according to Johannes Hardenacke, spokesman for the government of Lower Franconia. Presently there are 14 communal accommodations in Lower Franconia in Würzburg, Aschaffenburg and Schweinfurt, all of which are full to the last place. If there is no space in the government-owned accommodations the county is responsible to find living space.

Four-digit amount in fines for cutting trees (24 Jan, 2012) The lessee of the “climbing forest” in the recreational area Schweinfurt “Baggersee” (lake) has to pay a four-digit amount in fines for cutting down several trees without the city’s approval. According to Jürgen Montag, office for public order and environmental matters, this interference with nature must receive severe punishment.

U.S. Army's New Year's Reception (23 Jan, 2012) 150 high ranking guests, including representatives from the Bavarian parliament, representatives of city and county authorities, mayors of surrounding communities, banks, associations, industries and businesses as well as Battalion Commanders, Command Sergeants Major and directors of the USAG Schweinfurt attended the traditional New Year's Reception of the U.S. Army at Conn Barracks. In his welcome remarks Garrison Commander Michael D. Runey praised the good cooperation and partnership with the host nation and thanked everyone for their support and their friendship. He also mentioned the units who returned from deployments and was grateful for their safe return as well as the ones that are still deployed but who will return, soon. As a military tradition, toasts were made to the year 2012, to the Soldiers to Germany and the USA.

The city of Schweinfurt will put more emphasis on bicycles – Schweinfurt decided to join community of “bicycle friendly” cities (21 Jan, 2012) City council agrees to join the community of “bicycle friendly” cities. Next to the Bavarian Association of Cities and Towns numerous other cities such as Bayreuth, Coburg, Erlangen, Herzogenaurach and Nürnberg will take part. Goal is the promotion of bicycle traffic, bicycle paths and mutual exchange on how to make it possible.

SPORTS/ATHLETICS

A pre-taste of the play-offs (24 Jan, 2012) Not only the coach of the Mighty Dogs stated that this was a real pre-taste of the play-offs after the hard achieved victory against ESV Bochloe in penalty shooting. Both teams fought for each inch of the ice. One could see that both sides were determined to win. The tie after 60 minutes was fair according to Mighty Dogs' coach Proskuryakov. His counterpart Ibelherr added: “Both sides showed order and discipline. Of course Schweinfurt could have scored one or another goal but we also had four or five good chances in “breaks”, unfortunately we were not able to bring them to a good end.”

Mighty Dogs once more on top (of league) (23 Jan, 2012) Coach Victor Proskuryakov praised his team for their great performance in the game against EV Weiden last weekend in Weiden which they won 7:0.