

Early Bird 7 – 13 April

SAFETY/SECURITY

Attack with irritant gases in downtown Würzburg (April 13)

Twenty-four people were injured in the Dom-Passage Thursday night when an unidentified man sprayed irritant gases at approximately 7:30 p.m. in downtown Würzburg in a closed off passage of a business building. The 24 people suffered injuries, irritations of the eyes and respiratory passages. Two of them had to be admitted to a hospital. The others received treatment by the rescue services on the scene. According to a spokesman of the rescue services the majority of the passers-by were hit by the attack unexpectedly. Only a few people were guests of an “Imbiss” during the incident. Five guests of an Asia restaurant had to remain there until the fire department had cleared the escape route via Dom and Augustiner Strasse.

German soldier runs into guard rail while intoxicated (April 12)

He is charged with DWI, fleeing the scene of an accident and endangering traffic. For a professional soldier a training course at Hammelburg ends at the police station. His comrades had left him sitting in a pub by himself so the 23-year old Soldier decided he had to make it back to the barracks on his own and drove his car with a blood-alcohol level of more than 2 per mille. After 1,500 meters he lost control of the car and ran into a guard rail. Even though one of his tires came off the rims he continued to drive until he was stopped by the police a short time after. In a trial he was sentenced to pay 95 daily rates of 55 Euro and loss of his driver's license for 12 months including an entry into the police records – which will show up in the good conduct records. In an appeal his sentence was reduced to 90 daily rates of 55 Euros and no entry into the good conduct records. In addition the German Army barred him from promotion and he will not be able to work in his position any longer.

German railroad to begin care of Schweinfurt main station – (April 11)

The annex of the train station building was demolished and will be replaced by a new building which will host a bakery and a book store. The new construction should be completed by July 1, 2012, said the spokesperson of the railroad office. The railroad is negotiating with the state of Bavaria to have Schweinfurt included in the project for the period 2013 – 2018 for accessible gates. For now the gates are only accessible by stairs which pose a great impediment for the disabled, senior citizens and mothers with baby strollers. Furthermore, the roofed bicycle stand at the east entrance has been removed. In the future the bikes can be parked in an area inside the train station building.

LEADERS/POLITICS

Central emergency number 116-117 in effect Germany wide (April 11)

Anybody urgently needing a physician during the night or on the weekend will be able to call 116-117 anywhere in Germany. The new toll free hotline of the emergency service should be

available by April 16, according to the Central Research Institute of Ambulatory Health Care in Germany. The caller will automatically be connected with the closest emergency service. With this new number the emergency number 112 should be freed for life threatening emergencies. In the future, the number should be in effect in all European states.

Easter Marches – against War and Nuclear Power (April 10) Thousands of people all over Germany demonstrated against war and nuclear power, and for peace and disarmament during this year's Easter marches. Larger demonstrations took place in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Munich. In Würzburg approximately 100 people demonstrated. The Easter Marches had the motto "Campaign Outcry – Stop the arms deals."

County Commissioner talks future of the county of Schweinfurt (April 10)

County Commissioner Harald Leitherer talked during the annual general assembly of the CSU seniors about future perspectives in the face of the demographic changes, the drawdown of the U.S. Army, the closure of the nuclear power plant and the energy turnaround. Leitherer said: "So far everything was great, 2011 was a 'dream year' with an unemployment rate of 2.4 percent." The ranking also provided positive results – three of the four best placed companies of Lower Franconia are located in the county of Schweinfurt. Regarding a demographic change, he said there would be "An enormous population loss by 2030. According to a prognosis the population of the county of Schweinfurt will shrink from 113,000 to 102,000 by more than 9.9 percent. The portion of the people age 65 and older could increase to more than 36 percent." Leitherer also stated that the county has to maintain the infrastructure, but with a population loss of 10 percent, the burden will lie on fewer shoulders. Thinking about the effects on the economy the Chief of the County of Schweinfurt is very concerned—one day there will be a decreased workforce which means also less taxes. In regard to the drawdown of the U.S. Army, the city has the more attractive areas. The county—where the vacated areas were used for military purposes only—will be affected by the move of renters and customers, the loss of income in the millions and the loss of jobs. A manager hired for this purpose only will develop a new use concept.

ECONOMY

Lufthansa group transports more passengers but less freight (April 13)

In spite of the strike at the Frankfurt airport in the first quarter of 2012, more passengers flew with airplanes of the Lufthansa group than last year. According to a report published last Thursday, the airline transported 21.9 million passengers, an increase of 4.8 percent compared to 2011. The airlines Lufthansa, Germanwings, Swiss Air and Austrian Air also increased the average percentage of seats sold from 72.9 percent last year to 74.2 in 2012. The freight transported decreased by 9.3 percent. Lufthansa Cargo transported 426,000 tons of goods and mail in the first quarter of 2012. According to an earlier statement Lufthansa had to cancel 1,460 flights due to a two-week long strike of the air traffic control personnel. Approximately 110,000 passengers were affected.