

Early Bird 7 – 11 May 2012

## **SAFETY/SECURITY**

### **Fire Departments busy in 2011, but decrease in missions (May 8)**

In the past year the fire departments in Lower Franconia had to perform less missions than the year before. In 2011 the fire departments, 991 volunteer fire departments, 36 company owned fire departments as well as the professional fire departments in Würzburg were called to 26,005 missions. In 2010, there were 30,117 missions, according to a release published by the government of Lower Franconia on Monday. The fire departments rescued 616 people in traffic accidents. 118 people could not be rescued and died, 9 of who died in fires.

## **LEADERS/POLITICS**

### **City of Schweinfurt annoyed by plant thieves (May 11)**

Lord Mayor Remele is upset. “The respect and consideration for someone’s property decreases more and more. This is no trivial offense, this is criminal,” Remele said. In the past few days thieves have stolen plants from flower beds that the city had planted along Gutermann-Promenade. Beginning in April the city began to design and plant new flower beds along Gutermann-Promenade. Next year the state exhibition “Main and Ocean” will take place in Schweinfurt. Therefore the flower beds were designed in the shape of waves and the gardeners planted mainly blue flowers – 27 different types, some of them very expensive. The problem now is that it will be difficult to re-order some of the plants. Some types cannot be replaced according to Jürgen Müller, a member of the city’s environmental committee. Plant theft has been going on for years – but this year it has increased. An average of 300 plants and bushes valued at about €6,000 are stolen from the city’s green areas every year. Alone the plants stolen at Gutermann-Promenade are worth €1,500, not counting the labor cost for the gardeners. The security guards and the local security service of the city will control the areas frequently. In addition Lord Mayor Remele asks the citizens to watch out for thieves also.

### **Secretary of Labor Union Ver.di, Jürgen Dietz retires (May 9)**

Jürgen Dietz chose a special day for stepping down from his position as secretary of the labor union Ver.di. – the first of May – Labor Day. He retires after 44 years of work. After his odyssey through Germany Dietz returned to Schweinfurt in 2004 for private reasons. Since then he was responsible for caring for the union members in the areas health care, churches and social institutions in the communities and when dealing with the health insurance and retirement insurance institutes as well as the employment agency. Dietz was also known for not backing away from confrontations in the interests of his union members. Mr. Dietz’ successor will be Steffi Wedde. Dietz stated that he will still be working for his union voluntarily.

### **Schweinfurt County Commissioner on economy in Schweinfurt (May 8)**

In various rankings the county of Schweinfurt achieved good results. Leitherer: “In a ranking by Focus Money in 2009 we were in 187<sup>th</sup> place, in 2010 in 87<sup>th</sup> place and now we are in 47<sup>th</sup> place. This is convincing enough - mainly because the areas of economic power and job increase is where we are strong,” said Schweinfurt County Commissioner, Herald Leitherer. Another problem is the shutting down of the nuclear power plant Grafenrheinfeld. Leitherer said, “The

county commissioners of Lower Franconia have unanimously decided to have a gas-fired power station built in Grafenrheinfeld to secure jobs. Lord Mayor Rosenthal of Würzburg went to the Bavarian prime minister and it looks good.” Another problem is the departure of the U.S. Army, which will affect the county harder than the city. Leitherer: “It’s difficult. Who thinks that young families will move into apartments that will become vacant for example in Geldersheim, is probably wrong. The families will rather move to Schweinfurt. This is the most difficult part. We cannot subsidize private landlords. The problems continue. The small craft/construction businesses will also be affected. The house owners and the U.S. Army spent several millions every year for maintenance and renovations of their buildings. Also affected will be the gastronomy and the taxi drivers and especially the German employees of the U.S. Army who are losing their jobs.” Another issue is the giant area near Geldersheim that will become vacant. Is there already a vision? Leitherer said, “No. So far we have no concept yet. The county will hire a conversion consultant. The state of Bavaria will support us with that. Together with the city we want to establish a concept on how the areas of the two casernes and the giant training area can be used. The federal government will probably charge considerable sums for the large areas in Conn Barracks. The city will probably be able to come up with several millions for Ledward Barracks. This is much more difficult for Conn Barracks – since it is so much larger. A solution could be so called debtor warrants where the sale price is kept low and if the property is sold again for a higher price, the profit would have to be paid back to the government. This would eliminate an additional financial burden for the communities. A good solution which the Bavarian government still has to clear with Berlin.”

#### **Bavarian Universities are popular as ever (May 8)**

Bavarian universities are filled due in part to the increase in many “Abitur” (High School) graduates and the elimination of conscription. In spite of the enormous rush none of the predicted horror scenarios occurred, according to Bavarian Minister of Science, Wolfgang Heubisch. It did not come to chaotic conditions in the lecture halls nor did applicants have to be denied a place. This can be attributed to the early preparations made by the Bavarian government. With 38,000 additional study places and 3,000 new positions the offers for all studies (subjects) have been extended in all Bavarian regions. In addition, the Bavarian State spent €224 million since 2008 for expansion of universities.

#### **40<sup>th</sup> Mass for motorcycle riders held at St. Michael’s Church on Sunday (May 7)**

Even after 40 years the motor cycle mass held by catholic priest Roland Breitenbach is still a big success and brought about 3,000 motorcycle riders to Schweinfurt. The event was initially started to pray for a safe travel through the season but in the meantime has become an event for everyone. This year’s motto was: “Free vision of the whole picture.” This was meant in regard to the thought, “When closeness becomes tightness, when demands become a prison, then a step back is needed, a distance to get free vision of the whole picture once more.”

#### **Honoring an American Citizen, (May 4)**

American and former U.S. Army Garrison Public Affairs Officer, George Ohl, was awarded the citizen’s medal by the city of Bad Kissingen. The city of Bad Kissingen usually awards the citizen’s medal to citizens who have rendered outstanding services to the public in a special way and for many years. Next to the honorary citizenship it is the greatest honor the city of Bad Kissingen bestows. So far the medal has been awarded to 200 people – 100 of whom are still

living. The city council decides who will receive the award. The presentation is done during a city council meeting once a year. George Ohl is a special case in two ways: He is not living in Bad Kissingen and he is an American citizen. From 1977 – 2010 he managed the Public Affairs Office of the United States Army Garrison Schweinfurt/Bad Kissingen. In his position he was the most important link to the German authorities, counties and communities. He organized a variety of initiatives and actions which positively affected the relations between the U.S. Army and the German residents. Lord Mayor Kay Blankenburg of Bad Kissingen named him a symbol for German-American friendship and a friend of Bad Kissingen.

## **ECONOMY**

### **The third “Night shopping” was again a great success. (May 7)**

20,000 shoppers took advantage of the extended shopping hours between 8 p.m. and midnight last Friday. The ice cream parlors and restaurants as well were well visited. The city is planning on continuing this annual shopping night.

### **German exports – record high. (May 10)**

The German exporting industry is on record high, even during the European debt crisis. Mainly the strong demands from non-European enterprises resulted in new records in March. The exports as well as the imports climbed to the highest monthly level ever recorded, according to an announcement made by the Federal Agency for Statistics on Wednesday. According to the numbers goods worth €98.9 billion were exported in March the imports amounted to €81.5 billion. Within one year the exports increased by 0.7 percent and the imports by 2.6 percent. For the entire year 2012 the exports should stay well above 3 percent.

## **HEALTH/WELLNESS**

### **150 years of drinking water supply in Schweinfurt (May 9)**

The drinking water consumption in Schweinfurt is decreasing. The consumers save water. In 2006 the city utility works delivered 5.3 million cubic meters of water to households, industry and businesses in Schweinfurt, Niederwerrn, Dittelbrunn and Sennfeld. Now the consumption is 4.7 million cubic meters. A review: Living near the Main river for centuries water was taken for granted. A chronicle from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is probably the first exact evidence of a public drinking water supply consisting of 30 draw wells, four duct and three pump wells. Documents exist from the 17<sup>th</sup> century naming 30 public water wells. Today 80 percent of the drinking water still comes from the sand and gravel from the Main river, purified in more than 50 wells. The water reservoir located behind Willi-Sachs-Stadium was built in the 1960s. The largest construction after WWII was the new water work with treatment plant, cascade ventilation, reaction pool, and pure water container built from 1964-1966. In the connected pump station are the centrifugal pumps. The monitoring is performed from the control center. Beginning in 2000 the six water reservoirs were renovated for several million euros and the water works were modernized.

## **SPORTS**

**Soccer**

FC 05 Schweinfurt won its game against the TSV Gersthofen 5:0 – the highest score in this season.

FC 05 Schweinfurt wins game against VfB Stuttgart 1:3.