

Early Bird 29 Jun – 5 Jul 2012

SECURITY/SAFETY

So far eight fatalities this year – motorcycle accidents in “Mainfranken” (6 July, 2012)

The series of serious motorcycle accidents in Lower Franconia continues. From Wednesday night to Thursday morning alone, three people were seriously injured, one of them died.

According to a police report this is the eighth biker who lost his life in an accident on the roads of Lower Franconia this year. A motor scooter driver got killed on A3 near Schlüsselfeld last Sunday.

Streets will be closed in downtown Schweinfurt (4 July, 2012) Streets downtown Schweinfurt will be closed for traffic on Saturday, 7 July, from 1 p.m. till Sunday morning (8 July) for the Honky-Tonk Festival.

Three accidents – one fatality (2 July, 2012) Three serious accidents occurred in Franconia between Sunday evening and Monday morning. Several people suffered injuries and one died according to a police report.

Brawl – from the disco to the cell (2 July, 2012) On Saturday morning the police arrested three patrons of disco “Mad” after a brawl and took them to the police station. In the disco more than a dozen individuals were fighting – first on the dance floor and then, after they were kicked out of the disco, they continued on the street outside. When the police officers and security guards tried to separate the rival groups, some of them were very aggressive, shouted insults and kicked the police officers and the security personnel. The police officers used pepper-spray and called in reinforcements. Preliminary proceedings for obstructing an officer in the performance of his duties, assault and other offenses have been initiated.

Severe thunderstorms cause havoc in Bavaria – one person died, many injured – hailstones the size of golf balls in Würzburg (2 July, 2012) Saturday night severe thunderstorms with hurricane force winds caused a lot of damage in wide areas of Bavaria. Hit hardest were Swabia and Franconia. According to the police the rescue workers were on mission all night long. Approximately 50 people were injured, some of them severely. In Swabia a woman died when an uprooted tree fell on her car. In an accident on A7 near Würzburg another woman suffered severe injuries when she got off the road and hit several trees, because her vision was blurred due to the heavy rain and hail. At approximately 8 p.m. a hail shower with hailstones the size of golf balls went down in Würzburg. Within two hours the Würzburg operations center received 480 emergency calls. Basements and streets were flooded; trees uprooted and roof tiles blown off. Site fences flew through the air and man-hole covers were pushed up by the water masses. In some areas there were also power outages. The storm “Lisa” reached its peak strength between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. in the county of Hassberge where roof tiles were blown off, trees were uprooted and an electricity line was hit by lightning. The railroad line from Bad Kissingen to Hammelburg had to be closed because uprooted trees were blocking the tracks. On Friday three women were hit by lightning on a golf course in North Hesse and died, a fourth woman is still in critical condition.

LEADERS/POLITICS

“Nature Challenge” Young Federal Police Cadets gain experience in reaching ones limit the county of Schweinfurt (5 July, 2012) 42 cadets of the Federal Police training center are currently training in the city and the county of Schweinfurt. The training program includes a 70km long march, and tasks that include, for example inflating rubber rafts crossing the Main river to retrieve a lamp paddling back across the river, getting a generator working to have electricity for the lamp. Such and similar tasks have to be mastered. Also part of the program is camping out for two nights. In the U.S. training area Brönnhof the trainees had to rappel from a 20 meter high tower – according to Hilmar Heppt, spokesperson of the Federal Police this requires trusting in technology and the team. Also part of the training was searching for a drowned person at the Ellertshausen Lake and a fire drill with protective breathing masks. After the adventure week the cadets return to everyday life. They already completed their written exams now the verbal and practical exams follow.

Schweinfurt native awarded prestigious U.S. Army award (3 July, 2012)

Schweinfurt native and U.S. Army employee, Gert Saar, has been selected by Installation Management Command as the Fiscal Year 2011 Directorate of Public Works Business Management Executive of the Year. Born and raised in Schweinfurt, Saar is the chief of management engineering systems at U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt. He works for the Directorate of Public Works, or DPW, which provides the installations basic utilities at the Army garrison here. Saar and his team oversee all automation systems, software and hardware related to public works at the garrison. Installation Management Command, or IMCOM, is headquartered out of San Antonio, Texas and oversees the management of the Army’s 184 installations worldwide. Saar was the only local nation to have received one of the eight prestigious IMCOM DPW awards this year. The IMCOM award recognizes managerial excellence in the DPW Business Management function at the installation level and recognizes the complex activities and responsibilities involved in successfully integrating requirements, plans, and programs into effective execution efforts. Saar met the eligibility standards which required that he provide his services for a minimum of 24 months. “I just represent the DPW at Schweinfurt, and without good co-workers it would never have been possible to get the award,” Saar said.

My house is your house – 60th anniversary of AFS host family program has many hosts in the city and county (2 July, 2012) The host family program of the non-profit youth exchange organization American Field Service (AFS) – intercultural encounters is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Being curious to meet people from other cultures, fresh wind for their homes, and to prepare their own children for a stay abroad; the reasons for taking in a child/youth from a foreign country have hardly changed in all those years – the same as the often life-long gratitude for their hospitality. In the summer of 1952, 54 students from the USA came to Germany. Now more than 800 youths from more than 50 countries come to Germany through AFS to get to know German culture. Marita Helferich, who invited three guest-daughters, Annika from Finnland, Jelena and Amy from the USA stated that she enjoyed it very much when not only her two sons’ friends but also the friends of her guest daughters sat around the table for dinner. “Often there were five, six or more nationalities gathered – this helps to reduce prejudices.”

Ecological maneuver – In Hohenfels sheep are grazing by request of the U.S. Army (30 June, 2012) Paul Panko is one of the few nomadic shepherds in Bavaria and handles his herd of 2,000 sheep, with the aid of his dogs, very well. Discipline is called for in Hohenfels where his sheep graze in the U.S. Army training area. “The grass in the area has to be kept short, so that the laser equipment of the small arms and main guns are not disturbed” explained Albert Böhm of the U.S. Army environmental department. For 23 years the landscape ecologist of the U.S. Army guarantees that the balance between animals, plants and Soldiers is maintained. In consultation with the shepherds Böhm controls the movements of the seven herds with approximately 14,000 animals on the 160 square meter large area. He stated: “It can happen that the herds are part of a military training”. If the Army trains in a simulated Afghan village, the animals are part of the rural life in the village. Panko says: “My sheep graze next to military vehicles and helicopters and even shooting does not disturb them much.” The 54-year old shepherd was grateful to get the contract in 2009. “Here we can move around in peace – there are no streets and no traffic.” He accepts the few disturbances caused by military training. The seclusion of the area has many advantages – there have never been any animal epidemics in Hohenfels and for the ecological system the natural training area is ideal. Boehm states: “No pesticides are used in this area therefore the condition of nature here is still the same as in the 1930s. Approximately 300 plants and 600 animal species which are on the red list of endangered species in Bavaria grow and live here.” In spite of military training there have never been any major accidents involving the sheep. Only once there was a misunderstanding with Afghan Soldiers according to Böhm: “The Soldiers felt too much at home so they grabbed a sheep and roasted it over an open fire.” The shepherd received compensation for the sheep.

Increasing immigration numbers in Bavaria - in 2011 many people from East and Southern Europe moved to Bavaria (30 June, 2012) The continuing debt and economical crisis in parts of Europe leads to an increase of immigrations to Bavaria. At the end of 2011, 46,000 more foreigners were living in Bavaria than in the previous year, raising the total number of immigrants to 1.13 million and to nine percent of the population. The crisis leaves clear traces in the immigration statistics according to secretary of the interior, Joachim Herrmann. In 2010 only 22,000 immigrants came to Bavaria – less than half as many as in 2011. Most of the immigrants come from European countries – mostly East and Southern Europe. The largest number of immigrants – 23,000 came from Poland but also more Italian, Spanish and Greek immigrants moved to Bavaria in 2011 – more than doubling the number from 3,200 to 6,800. Herrmann criticized the calls from the opposition in the economy and the FDP party to simplify the immigration laws and stated that even Bavaria’s U.S. citizen immigration rate is higher than the USA’s immigration rate for Germans – in 2011 more U.S. citizens moved to Bavaria than vice-versa.

ECONOMY

Fusion of VW and Porsche (6 July, 2012) Where there is a will there is a way. Europe's largest car maker VW found a solution for the acquisition of the Porsche sports car business. The deal is a master piece, which will write economic history from VW's point of view. Initially it should have been a fusion, a complete merger to a new corporation. However, billions-worth lawsuits from the financial world defeated the initial plan. Therefore plan B came into the picture – only taking over the missing half of the Porsche AG. In simplified terms, the interlacing of VW and Porsche combine all parties to one large scale enterprise with enormous tax savings. VW can classify the acquisition of the remaining half of Porsche as restructuring – which is tax free. According to Bernd Osterloh, head of the VW works council: "If nothing else new jobs will be created through the cooperation between VW, Audi and Porsche AG. For example, our plant in Osnabrück will be working to capacity due to the production of the Boxster." His colleague at the Porsche AG stated: "The advantages of a combined company are a great basis for a successful future for Porsche. We are very glad to have decided on a solution that benefits everyone."

Birthrate reaches historic low – decrease by 2.2 %. Never before were the numbers of births in Germany as low as last year. (3 July, 2012) According to an announcement by the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden 663,000 children were born in 2011 – 15,000 less than in 2010 which equals a decrease of the birth rate of 2.2%. The so far lowest number was 665,000 in 2009. In 2011, 852,000 people died, 0.7 % less than the year before. Every year since 1972, more people died than children were born in Germany.

SPORT

European Soccer Cup 2012

Final game: Spain – Italy 4:0