

Groundbreaking ceremony for one of the most modern production facilities for innovative heating systems in Europe

Windhager is building a 27,000 square metre production and development centre for sustainable energy in Pinsdorf near the Gmunden district in Austria. Starting in 2024, up to 20,000 heat pumps per year will be manufactured there together with the heat pump specialists at M-TEC.

The moment had come in September 2022. After a comprehensive planning phase, the go-ahead was given for the additional location. Over the next 1.5 years, a state-of-the-art factory will be built for the purpose of developing and manufacturing products that will make Europe less dependent on fossil fuels. "The energy transition has gained even more momentum as a result of the developments over the last several months. Now we need smart partnerships – responsible entrepreneurs with a clear vision – in order to meet the increasing demands of our customers amid the changing conditions. Our owner is also very much an entrepreneur," says Windhager Managing Director Stefan Gubi. In the future, products and solutions for the energy transition will be developed together with the specialists in high-performance heat pumps M-TEC. "The M-TEC headquarters with production and development are only a few minutes away from the new location. Firstly, we are united by our common vision and uncompromising quality standards. And secondly, we are also in close physical proximity," says M-TEC Managing Director Peter Huemer.

The shared vision is already a reality

Although the groundwork has only just begun at the construction site in Pinsdorf, the cooperation between the two companies has already been standing on a solid foundation since the beginning of the year. "Regardless of whether it concerns employees in technology, in sales and production or at the current factory in the

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sample production facilities in Zaisberg, the entire team is working full force on this milestone in the company's hundred-year history!", Windhager Managing Director Stefan Gubi is pleased to say. "We are already well on our way, but there is still a long to-do list to get through before the start of production in 2024, both at the construction site and in all other areas," adds M-TEC Managing Director Peter Huemer.

Current challenges with raw materials and skilled labour

In addition to the tense situation with raw materials and component factories, an additional challenge lies in recruiting suitable skilled workers. Up to 300 new employees will be hired. "The renewable energy market is a rapidly growing economic sector. But as a heating manufacturer, we are among many partner companies who are urgently looking for employees. At the present, the installers can hardly keep up with demand. We therefore urgently need young, ambitious women and men in our industry," both Managing Directors agree.

"Upper Austria aims to be a pioneer in implementing the energy transition. More than ever before, phasing out fossil fuels is the order of the day. The conditions are ideal for this: Upper Austria is home to a number of innovative energy technology companies, some of which are even global market leaders. A lot of companies started building up tremendous know-how in the areas of sustainability as well as environmental and energy technology at a very early stage. As a result, they are now global innovation leaders in several different areas. This opens up fantastic opportunities for us

The new Windhager factory is a symbol of continued growth in the energy technology competence in our province, and the unique cooperation with M-TEC is creating additional advantages and strengths. Upper Austria is already the number 1 province for heat pumps among home builders, and Windhager's new factory in

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Pinsdorf is creating additional momentum that proves once again that: Economy and ecology are twin turbos,” said Markus Achleitner, Regional Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, at the groundbreaking ceremony.

Heat pumps as a game changer for climate change and the energy crisis

Around a quarter of the energy in Europe is consumed by private households. Unfortunately, fossil fuels still play a significant role in Austria. 22.7% of the gross domestic energy consumption is currently still covered by gas. When combined with oil (34.1%) and coal (7.6%), the share of fossil fuels is around 64%. Although the use of ambient heat from the air, earth or groundwater via heat pumps for heating and hot water has increased almost fivefold since 2005, there is still a lot of work to be done throughout the decade ahead. In Austria, approximately 30,000 heat pumps are currently being installed per year. 2021 alone saw an increase of 23%. The energy crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine has once again noticeably increased the pressure on demand. There are currently around 325,000 heat pumps in operation in Austria. This does not even amount to 10% of the 4 million households in total.

Figures and data:

https://greenpeace.at/uploads/2022/07/20220524_fs_mutter-erde_-gas-in-osterreich-factsheet.pdf

About M-TEC: The specialist in high-efficiency heat pumps

The companies of the M-TEC Group have been developing and producing highly efficient heat pumps and energy systems in Upper Austria for more than 40 years for customers throughout Europe. In the process, the pioneer for holistic energy solutions has combined the highest possible quality and reliability in production with the knowledge and experience gathered from more than 14,000 installations. Around 2,500 heat pumps with integrated total energy solutions leave the factory in Upper Austria every year. The company's own installation company puts around 350 of these systems into operation itself. The experience gained here flows directly back into further development of the products. In addition to innovative strength and continuous further development, M-TEC attaches great importance to customer proximity. The company accompanies its partners to market success and conducts individual training and webinars.

About Windhager: The specialist in renewable energy

The company was founded in 1921 in Seekirchen, near Salzburg. With a workforce numbering over 600 employees, three foreign subsidiaries and an international network of partners, it is now one of Austria's leading boiler manufacturers. The company's own research and development department of the leading regional company is devoted above all to developing highly efficient heating solutions for renewable energies. Windhager places an important focus on heat pumps and the fuel pellets, wood chips and logs. This is why the Windhager range extends from heat pumps and high-quality log gasifiers to convenient pellet heating solutions and the innovative wood chip gasifier with suction system. Hybrid solutions as well as gas condensing boilers and a wide range of heating accessories round off the boiler range. Currently, production takes place exclusively at the company's headquarters in Seekirchen near Salzburg, and from 2024, also at Pinsdorf near Gmunden. Exports

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represent around 60% of sales. The most important export countries include France, Italy, Slovenia, Poland, Belgium as well as Spain and England.

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(Image caption: Gernot Windhager, Stefan Gubi, Peter Huemer)

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(Image caption: Stefan Gubi, Peter Huemer, Markus Achleitner, Gernot Windhager)

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