



SACHSEN-ANHALT

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The Newsletter Team
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Our early riser

"Farmers these days don't always have to get up right at first cockcrow, but for us as for any other business, the old saying still holds: 'The early bird gets the worm!' Saxony-Anhalt has an extremely well structured agricultural industry with many enterprises of all scales. Due to their curiosity, active communication and creative thinking, these early risers take up innovative practices in crop and livestock production. They're out and out optimists, able to look at a problem unconventionally and attack it pragmatically, because they're secure in their qualifications and professionalism. Agriculture in Saxony-Anhalt is a success story, from the break of dawn until late in the floodlit night."

Carl-Albrecht Bartmer
President of the German Agricultural Society (DLG)



Company in Zerbst to Light Up the Streets



Zerbst. Towns will soon be lighting their streets all night and cutting energy costs at the same time if two Central German companies have their way. KD Elektroniksysteme of Zerbst in Saxony-Anhalt and ISLE Steuerungstechnik und Leistungselektronik of Ilmenau in neighbouring Thuringia have jointly developed an electronic regulator for dimming the gas discharge lamps commonly used in street lighting. The device holds out new hope to cities and towns where switched-off streetlights have compromised traffic safety. With this new technology, municipalities can fully re-illuminate their streets even while making significant savings. Mass production is set to begin in Zerbst within a few weeks. The undertaking was funded by Germany's economics ministry as part of PRO INNO, a programme to foster innovative competence in middle-sized companies.

In times of rising energy prices, the promise of cutting electricity costs while illuminating streets round the clock sounds almost too good to be true. Ralf Kleinodt, Director at KD Elektroniksysteme GmbH says of the unusual scheme: "The notion of developing energy-saving dimmers for street lamps goes back several years. When we took a close look at the electrotechnical principle involved, we hit on the idea of a special controlling technology capable, on the one hand, of providing sufficient light to whole stretches of street while, on the other, cutting energy use in half." The developers at the Zerbst-based company had come up with a sure winner. Funding from the PRO INNO programme has helped make the idea reality. With the project's great potential for success, a suitable partner was soon found in ISLE GmbH of Ilmenau.

Gas discharge lamps, unlike standard light bulbs, cannot be dimmed effectively just by reducing the voltage. Rather than diminishing in brightness, the lamp suddenly goes out when the minimum burning voltage is reached. Simple in principle, the new technology includes an electronic regulator with amplitude and frequency controls, allowing a gradual reduction in brightness. This also makes possible energy savings of up to 67 percent. Using a microcomputer-controlled time switch, an individual 'dimming profile' with three reduction phases can be programmed. "The advantage of this development is its compatibility with existing systems," says Kleinodt. "The costs of installing and maintaining the device are recouped within a year or two, because, in addition to saving energy, dimming the street lights extends the life of the lamps."

The technology was first tested in two pilot installations in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Further test installations have since been added. Large-scale production is to begin during the second quarter of this year. A number of parties have already expressed interest. "Most of these are of course municipalities, but there are also two energy suppliers among them," reports Kleinodt. "To our astonishment, the response from Austria has been even greater than that from within Germany." The enterprise clearly holds great potential for city administrations looking to save electricity without leaving their citizens fumbling in the dark.

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Akti Skal and Folsami - Patent Utilisation Agency Connects Business and Academic Research

Magdeburg. Germans come up with new inventions every day and, often enough, these are patented. Annually Germany has the third-highest number of patent applications worldwide. Among German states, Saxony-Anhalt ranks twelfth - but statistics can be deceptive. Numerous research institutes are based in Bavaria or Baden-Württemberg. New developments, even if they take place in Saxony-Anhalt, frequently are registered in other states. But a patent only becomes a commercial success when there is a company that takes the product, process or service and readies it for the market. In order to better market inventions created at colleges and universities, the ESA Patentverwertungsagentur Sachsen-Anhalt GmbH was founded in 2002. Since then, thanks to the company's support, a large number of patents, utility models and brands have found their way to the consumer public. The most recent example debuted at the 2006 Internationale Grüne Woche in Berlin this month and the news is now spreading by word-of-mouth. Folsami, the world's first vitamin B-enriched salami, was developed at the Hochschule Anhalt (FH) and is now being produced by the Magdeburg company DELIKATA.



In 2001 Germany's education and research ministry launched a utilisation offensive for patents generated by research at institutions of higher education. The idea was to make better economic use of scientific work done at technical colleges and universities. A network of patent and utilisation agencies was created, giving rise to the TechnologieAllianz. The clear demand for inventions from Saxony-Anhalt is reflected in specialist journals. Klaus Zurdel, director of the ESA says, "That alone shows that the patents derived from research in Saxony-Anhalt put the state on a competitive footing. If you consider the number of scientists active in research at our educational institutions, it's clear that Saxony-Anhalt holds a firm position within Eastern Germany, on par with Thuringia and Saxony."

Because the road from idea to market-ready product is often long, the agency places its central emphasis on assisting inventors and facilitating the utilisation of their inventions. Along with general consultation, the long road begins with the testing of the ideas for their "patentability" and market potential. Around 60 percent of the ideas presented fulfil the criteria. It usually takes at least two years before a patent is given. "When the patent application has been made," says Zurdel, "we begin a search for companies in Saxony-Anhalt that can develop a new technology or product on the basis of the solution for which the patent is pending. Only if we don't find companies in Saxony-Anhalt that are willing to take on the development of the idea do we offer the patent, utility model or brand to institutions in Saxony or Thuringia. Our primary goal is clearly to strengthen Saxony-Anhalt and the Central German region and of course create jobs."

The state's two universities and the technical colleges of Anhalt, Harz, Magdeburg-Stendal and Merseburg together form the Sachsen-Anhaltische Fördergemeinschaft für Erfindungsverwertung (SAFE), which since 2004 has worked closely with the ESA. The objective of their cooperation is the more effective utilisation of discoveries and inventions made at institutions of higher learning. "The real workhorses in terms of new inventions are the technical colleges, which have an advantage because of the practical nature of the training they do," the director explains. "Among the universities, the department of medicine at the University of Magdeburg stands out," he says. The range of patents is impressive. Around 125 inventions from the most diverse fields are currently being processed, several of which were award-winning projects from invention fairs. Last year, of 22 registered patents, five went into production. One of these is a multivalent welding machine, the MVR 200, built by H&B OMEGA Europa GmbH of Osterweddingen, a sophisticated piece of technology that can weld different materials together with the highest precision. Another is an active scalpel for microsurgical use, Akti Skal, made by Mechanische Werkstätten Stendal Gerhard Zorn, whose movable blade largely eliminates the problem of ruptures at the point of incision. A third is Folsami, a functional food product made by DELIKATA Magdeburger Fleisch- und Wurstwaren GmbH, that was recently introduced at the 2006 Grüne Woche in Berlin.

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'Land of Ideas' to Return to Halle in February



Halle. 'Land of Ideas', Germany's nationwide image campaign in the run-up to the football World Cup, will be making another stop next month in Saxony-Anhalt. On 22 February the famous Meckel Anatomical Collections will take the stage of the travelling showcase of Germany's unique places. The venerable collection is the pride of the Institute of Anatomy and Cell Biology of Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg. Founded in the 18th century by Johann Friedrich Meckel the Elder, the medical-historical collection was expanded to more than 12,000 specimens by Meckel's descendants. It is a superb source of knowledge about the teaching and research of anatomy in the 18th and early 19th centuries. It numbers among the most important anatomical collections in Germany and Europe, and is prized by both scientists and the lay public, drawing thousands of visitors annually.

"When we received the news that the Meckel Collections were nominated for the Land of Ideas, we were naturally very proud," says Prof. Rüdiger Schultka, scientific overseer of the collection for over twenty years. "At the same time, applying to take part in the campaign was a good opportunity to test the status of our collection. There are of course other prominent anatomical collections in Germany and Europe, but each one has its own particular characteristics." This collection is special partly due to the family history behind it. Founded in Berlin by Johann Friedrich Meckel the Elder, it was brought to Halle by his son, Philipp Friedrich Theodor Meckel, and continually enlarged. Philipp Meckel was not only an anatomist, but also an outstanding physician, above all in the area of obstetrics. And the Meckel syndrome, discovered by Philipp's son, Johann Friedrich Meckel the Younger, is still a recognised term in today's medicine.

The collection is divided into the three areas of normal human anatomy, pathological anatomy, and comparative anatomy, giving the interested visitor the opportunity not only to learn more about the human body, but also to study the abnormalities of nature. Rüdiger Schultka, who is actively tracking down the last secrets of the collection's history, explains: "Collections of this kind were extremely important in the teaching of anatomy during the 18th century, as the course of study was largely based on the use of human anatomical specimens. Philipp Meckel also set an example by volunteering to be posthumously dissected and skeletonised. In this way he himself became a scientific specimen." The Meckel private collection was bequeathed to the University in 1836. This proved an extraordinary stroke of luck. A visit to the Institute of Anatomy is a fixture on the schedule of every medical congress. The collection always receives a resounding response from high-ranking scholars from Germany and abroad. But it is also sought out by the lay public. Every year hundreds visit the 'Long Night of the Sciences'. Limited space and lack of sufficient personnel, however, allow admission of only a limited number of visitors to the unique collection.

Other institutes as well have problems of this kind to cope with. For this reason, the idea of a university museum was put forward years ago. Prof. Bernd Fischer, director of the Institute of Anatomy and dean of the university's medical faculty, makes the case for the future realisation of such a museum. "In total the university has 19 collections of unique and important exhibits that it can't put on public display, or can only partially show," he says. "Our vision is to bring parts of these treasures together under one roof. We intend to bring the public's attention to this project on 22 February, when the Meckel Collections are in the public spotlight. In my opinion, the Residence would be superbly suited as a university museum, for its significance in terms of cultural history alone. But other university buildings that aren't going to be used by Martin Luther University in future would also make good locations, for example the former physics building opposite the Moritzburg. The problem, though, is primarily a financial one. The funds provided by the state and the towns just aren't enough. That's why we're searching for wealthy private sponsors. Such an undertaking would, after all, be of immense value to the image of the university, city and state."

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Particulars - messages - deadlines

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IBA 2010: Good ideas sought for marketing concept

Magdeburg. In the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Urban Redevelopment Saxony-Anhalt 2010, the state aims to present exemplary urban redevelopment concepts to an international audience. The exhibition will include innovative planning, architectural, socio-cultural and infrastructure projects. It will additionally seek to foster a new intensity and quality in the cooperation between cities and in the participation of the citizenry. A competition is being held to develop the central ideas of, and a central marketing strategy for the exhibition, and for the integration of the individual marketing concepts of the 18 participating cities taking in 17 themes. The competition is aimed at advertising agencies, communications experts and publicity strategists. One central question of the competition is the approach to be taken in gaining parallel financing for communications projects through the involvement of strategic partners. Applications for participation must be submitted by 3 February 2006.

Further information at:

www.sachsen-anhalt.de/LPSA/index.php?id=pgb04kvzfucg

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Federal ministry funds Magdeburg brain research

Magdeburg. A Magdeburg joint project on the role of the brain's reward system in controlling action and in memory is one of six joint research projects that will receive financial support from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) over the next several years. A total of 6.2 million euros is being made available for the search for new diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in brain research. The BMBF funding brings together basic and patient-proximate research. The focuses are perception and attention, linguistic abilities, learning and memory, and thinking and problem solving. The researchers from the fields of psychology, psychiatry, neurology and neurophysiology aim to decode the complex processes of the human brain as well as pathological disturbances. Better understanding of brain functions allows the development of new diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

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Saxony-Anhalt holiday planner for the curious

Magdeburg. Leafing through the magazine 'Reiseträume Sachsen-Anhalt' (Dream Trips in Saxony-Anhalt) in search of ideas for this year's vacation season is certain to arouse your curiosity. Following a successful debut in 2005, Landesmarketing Sachsen-Anhalt GmbH (LMG) has published a new edition of the entertaining magazine that presents Saxony-Anhalt as a tourist destination for culture and city trips, garden tours, and active holidays in nature. The 60-page brochure tells fascinating stories about the state and its people and invites the public to the 1200-year anniversary of the founding of Halle. The magazine provides travel tips for "garden dreams" tours, which should unquestionably include a visit to the state garden show in Wernigerode. It also offers a view into the 29th exhibition of the Council of Europe, "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation", as well as information about the world's oldest solar observatory in Goseck near Weißenfels.

Information:

Tel. 0049 1805 / 37 2000 (0,12 €/Min.)

www.sachsen-anhalt-tourismus.de

Another mystery of the human immune system solved

Magdeburg. Magdeburg doctors working with Prof. Dr. Dr. Oliver Ullrich from the Institute of Immunology at Otto von Guericke University have discovered a brain mechanism that helps keep the immune system under control. This mechanism is influenced by so-called endocannabinoids and is probably also involved in inflammatory nerve cell diseases such as multiple sclerosis. Endocannabinoids were first discovered in the last decade. Produced within the body, they connect with cannabinoid receptors, which occur in the nervous and immune systems in various forms. In their most recent work, Prof. Ullrich and his team discovered how this control functions at the molecular level. Experiments on brain tissue additionally showed that by means of an intervention in the endocannabinoid system it is possible to protect nerve cells from inflammation-related damage.

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Dates

Training seminar on mechanical testing of plastics in Merseburg

Halle. On 22 and 23 February Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg will host a training seminar in Merseburg on the mechanical testing of plastics. In four talks and eight practical trials, the fundamentals and fine points of plastics testing will be presented in theory and practice. Emphases will include the carrying out of norm-conformant trials, the application of modern stretching measurement techniques, toughness evaluation of plastics and composites, and measurement techniques for the mechanical characterization of plastics. The two-day seminar is targeted primarily at technical workers, engineers, chemists and physicists from the area of plastics and materials testing and quality management.

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Preparations in progress for 5th Biotechnology Day at University of Leipzig

Leipzig. The University of Leipzig's 5th Biotechnology Day is taking place at the Biotechnological-Biomedical Centre on 18 and 19 May 2006. In preparation for the event, papers, abstracts and poster presentations can be submitted until 15 February. From these submissions, the programme committee will select additional speakers for the schedule of talks. After being approved by the programme committee, the scientific papers sent in will be published in a volume of abstracts.

The online abstract submission form with editorial guidelines for abstracts and posters is available at www.uni-leipzig.de/bbz/btt06.

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Magdeburg hosting IT experts from all over the world

Magdeburg. From 20 to 22 February IT experts will meet for the 3rd annual SECURITY conference in Magdeburg. The informatics department of Otto von Guericke University is hosting the event. The department of security, protection and reliability of the Society for Informatics has been putting on its expert conferences since 2003. Some 100 experts from Germany and abroad are expected to attend the two-day event. The programme is comprised of a core scientific programme and a practical part. In the talks, prominent experts will present the latest developments in the area of security. The conference is a platform for the results of scientific studies and represents the intensive exchange of thoughts and opinions between participants from the practical and academic sides of the field, as well as providing the opportunity to network.

Information:

<http://amsl-smb.cs.uni-magdeburg.de/sicherheit2006/> - www.sicherheit2006.de

Personality

High honour for Halle professor

Halle. Professor Rahul Peter Das of the Institute for Indology and South Asian Studies at Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg received the 'Jewel of India' on 25 January. The internationally renowned award was given to him for his contributions to South Asia-relevant studies in Germany, and particularly at Martin Luther University. The award ceremony took place in New Delhi on the eve of India's national holiday, as part of the long-standing annual International Congress of Non-Resident Indians. Every year the prize is awarded to around 30 Indians living and working outside their native country.

India is this year's theme at the Francke Foundation in Halle. A connection between Halle and India was established when August Hermann Francke sent theologians to the south of the subcontinent as missionaries. Artefacts and numerous reports on the culture of Southern India found their way to the foundation, where they were exhibited and publicized. Close contacts still exist between Halle and Christian churches and universities in the southern subcontinent. Visitors can experience a lively programme of international conferences, exhibitions and publications on the significance of this early cultural exchange between India and Europe.

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Last but not least

World's largest chocolate cuckoo clock planned

Gernrode. The Harzer Uhrenfabrik is always good for an unusual project. Along with the largest and smallest cuckoo clocks in the world and a weather shelter that is also a candidate for the record books, it is soon to offer a new attraction. Together with Halloren Schokoladenfabrik GmbH in Halle, the clock manufacturer intends to build the world's largest chocolate cuckoo clock on the occasion of the Harzfest at the beginning of July 2006. Details have not yet been released, but if you have a sweet tooth, mark your calendar.

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