



thyssenkrupp Steel invests in Germany's Siegerland region: Expansion of production capacities for zinc-magnesium products used by the solar industry, and further plant modernizations

- Modernization and expansion of the hot-dip galvanizing line (FBA) 6 in Ferndorf, including a new coil storage yard:
 - Construction of a new melt exchange facility for zinc-magnesium
 - Construction of a new double coating machine
 - Expansion of the coil storage yard into a newly added hall complex
- From now on, production of innovative zinc-magnesium coatings for the solar industry.
- Investment in the low double-digit million range

Siegerland/Kreuztal, June 18, 2024 – thyssenkrupp Steel has made further investments under its Strategy 20-30, and is optimizing its locations in Germany's Siegerland region. The company is strengthening its capabilities for hot-dip and coil-coated products at the plants in Ferndorf and Eichen. Target sectors include the solar, domestic appliance and agricultural machinery industries. The solar industry in particular will benefit from the investments made in Ferndorf: Corrosion-resistant and environmentally friendly zinc-magnesium products can now also be manufactured there; these are particularly suitable for the robust and durable supporting structures of photovoltaic systems. The total investment in the Siegerland region is in the low double-digit million range.

Innovative zinc-magnesium coatings for the solar industry

The expansion of the hot-dip galvanizing line (FBA) 6 at the Ferndorf facility in the Siegerland region with new melt pots will increase production capacities for corrosion-resistant and environmentally friendly zinc-magnesium products. This development will benefit the solar industry in particular, which is an industry that requires high-quality coated steels for robust and durable supporting structures. The growing number of photovoltaic surfaces in the open air means that robust and corrosion-resistant supporting structures are called for that are effectively able to withstand whatever the weather throws at them – over very long periods of time. The average service life of a solar installation today is between 20 and 25 years.

Dr. Heike Denecke-Arnold, Chief Operations Officer (COO) of thyssenkrupp Steel, on the importance of these investments for the Siegerland location: "Thanks to these new production technologies, we are able to offer our customers high-quality zinc-magnesium products for

the energy turnaround with the 'made in North Rhine-Westphalia' cachet. We are making targeted investments to strengthen this product segment, in order to effectively meet the rapidly growing market demands. We are also working to enhance the future of our location and secure well-paying jobs in the local economy."

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ZM Ecoprotect® Solar from thyssenkrupp Steel offers a number of different advantages over conventional galvanizing: "Adding more magnesium can significantly decrease the application thickness, while still providing the same level of corrosion protection, with even better protection at the cutting edges and drill holes," explains Ralf Wittkowski, Siegerland location manager. This makes the coating ideal for durable outdoor steel structures, he adds, pointing out that the material is in greater demand than ever before in the context of the energy turnaround. The product is also available as a CO₂-reduced version under the bluemint® brand.

Further investments at the Kreuztal site

In addition to the new melt exchange system, thyssenkrupp Steel has invested in a new double coating machine (Chemcoater) at the FBA 6 which will meet increased customer demands for the highest surface requirements: the new system can apply post-treatment coatings more precisely, and thus prevent spots or streaks from forming. Among other things, the aim is to use new media such as chromium-free passivation or additional transparent coatings to improve forming by applying them to the galvanized material which is up to four millimeters thick. A combination of induction and circulating air dryers is used to dry the coating.

The covex®T passivation as well as covex®S and covex®E transparent coatings play a decisive role in corrosion protection, as forming aids and the basis for painted and anti-fingerprint coatings. Telescopic rails, door frames and electrical cabinets in particular benefit from this, as do the solar supporting structures.

In addition, investments have been made in a new hall for optimizing the storage of coils that are ready for dispatch.

Strip stabilization on the hot-dip galvanizing line (FBA) 5

At the Kreuztal-Eichen location, thyssenkrupp Steel has invested in strip stabilization at the FBA 5 as part of its steel strategy. This facility with powerful switchable electromagnets helps to stabilize the steel sheet as it emerges from the pot of molten metal, allowing it to be kept straight and flutter-free in the air knife. In this way, a highly uniform coating layer thickness can be achieved across the strip width, helping to make production more effective in terms of saving resources and improving surface quality.

Coil coating lines in Eichen and Ferndorf

The low double-digit million package of investments at thyssenkrupp Steel in the Siegerland region is rounded off by state-of-the-art color shade and coating thickness measurements on the coil coating lines in Kreuztal-Eichen and Ferndorf. The coil coating lines coat the hot-dip coated steel strip with paints or decorative films for end-user applications such as roof and wall claddings, truck semi-trailers, garage doors or refrigerators, and washing machines.

Facts and figures for the location

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Employees

Around 1000 employees, including 80 apprentices

Production facilities

- 2 hot-dip galvanizing lines
- 2 coil coating lines
- 3 splitting and slitting lines

Production capacity

- 1 million metric tons of hot-dip coated sheet
- 300,000 metric tons of coil-coated sheet
- 350,000 metric tons of slit strip and sheet material

Melt pots:

Weight: 20 metric tons each

Height: 7 m each

Filling capacity: 170 metric tons of molten metal each

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