



## WEBER ROHLEITUNGSBAU IN MERSEBURG GROWING WITH THE CHEMICALS INDUSTRY IN EASTERN GERMANY



Today, the employees at Weber Rohrleitungsbau GmbH & Co. KG in Merseburg are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company's foundation. But the roots of the company at this location go back far longer.

Engineer Karl Weber, the grandfather of the current Managing Director, Dierk Weber, founded the company in 1922. After the Second World War, Dierk Weber's father, Hans, who had taken over the company, fled to West Germany where he set up a new industrial pipeline construction business in North Rhine-Westphalia. Dierk Weber, born in Merseburg in 1943 didn't delay after reunification and founded Weber Rohrleitungsbau GmbH & Co. KG in his birthplace in March 1991 and took on 130 employees from the main maintenance department of the Leuna chemicals factory. "Meanwhile, 130 has become 560", explains 67 year-old Herbert Misselwitz who came to Weber from Leuna 20 years ago and served the company as Managing Director until 2007. He is still employed as an advisor. In 1922, the company was founded following the construction of the Merseburg ammonia plant and the growth of Weber Rohrleitungsbau since 1991 has a lot do to with the modernisation of eastern German chemical plants, which are now amongst some of the most high-tech in the world. Weber has grown together with this.



The equipment manufacturers and maintenance technicians from Merseburg operate maintenance departments in all the large chemical plants in central Germany. "This includes chemical plants in Bitterfeld-Wolfen, Leuna, Piesteritz, Schkopau, Zeitz, Schwarzheide and the refinery in Schwedt and companies belonging to the Preiss-Daimler group such as Bayer, BASF, Wacker Chemie or Evonik", says Guido Kalfa, running through the list of important customers. The Naumburg-born 48 year-old with a degree in engineering economics points to the strengths of the company in the realisation and maintenance of plants and urgent repair work.

"Sometimes, there are only a few specialists on site", says Misselwitz, "such as at Florena Cosmetic, Beiersdorf. Since 1993, two Weber specialists have been ensuring that everything runs smoothly at probably the best-smelling site we are involved in, located in the town of Waldheim in Saxony". Weber Rohrleitungsbau has a wealth of experience and specialist expertise in the inspection of large-scale plants which are decommissioned in certain intervals so that they can be reconditioned. With the inspection of the Total Raffinerie Leuna this summer, not only did the Merseburg-based company have a large on-site presence with 300 employees, they also coordinated the interaction of the different plant services with several hundred other employees. "We have lots of experience in decommissioning large-scale plants", says Kalfa, citing the examples of PCK Schwedt, Dow Olefinverbund, Werk Böhlen, Total Raffinerie and SKW Piesteritz. "As an example, the inspection work at the Dow site required 18 months of painstaking preparation".

Kalfa considers the long-term relationships with over 50 large and small customers as confirmation of the trust which is put in the company. "The company also generates this trust by meeting the highest standards in quality and safety", says Misselwitz. "For example, Weber does not just operate in accordance with German standards, but also in accordance with American and Chinese standards. These standards are required if Weber works for a customer whose products are distributed on foreign markets.

The pipeline construction company has also gained specialist expertise by working together with the Fraunhofer Institute IFF in Magdeburg. The two partners have worked together on projects concerning the further development of plant engineering. According to Kalfa, these projects allow computer-supported planning, project management, prefabrication and assembly through to the creation of documentation. "This does not just increase safety, but also eliminates errors and increases efficiency", says Kalfa, explaining the partnership with the scientists. In order to safeguard this valuable knowledge and the considerable experience, the company is investing strongly in bringing through the next generation of employees. 50 apprentices are currently learning the trade. In partnership with other companies in the sector, Weber also funds bursaries for five budding engineers at a university in Dresden.

The Weber group, with its headquarters in Pulheim, North Rhine-Westphalia, comprises a total of twelve companies which employ 2,000 peoples. Merseburg is the family-owned company's second-largest site and Dierk Weber's 28 year-old son, Benjamin, is ready to continue the tradition.

"Our focus will remain on the chemicals industry, but we want to establish ourselves in niche markets such as the foodstuff, pharmaceutical, mining and paper sectors", say Kalfa and Misselwitz with a view to the future. And next year another celebration is on the cards: The 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company's foundation in Merseburg and 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the relationship with BASF.

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