

Media Information
18 September 2024

BMW Group Plant Steyr switches energy supply

- Green electricity, and district heating from locally sourced wood chips
- Announced for 2025, introduced ahead of schedule in September 2024
- Arnold Schwarzenegger and BMW Board Member for Production perform symbolic energy switch

Steyr. BMW Group Plant Steyr is switching entirely to district heating for warmth: in regular operations the Austrian engine facility now no longer uses natural gas, relying instead on heat from a nearby biomass powerplant. In a symbolic act, Milan Nedeljković, Board Member for Production at BMW AG, and Arnold Schwarzenegger turned on the new power supply. The change of energy source marks yet another step in the BMW Group's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.

Milan Nedeljković, member of the Board of Management of BMW AG responsible for Production: "We are optimising the carbon footprint of all our production facilities worldwide, using innovative technologies and the potential of the local area to generate energy from fossil fuel-free sources. Today, we are setting a new milestone here in Steyr."

Consistent reductions in energy consumption

BMW Group Plant Steyr uses around 250 gigawatt hours of energy a year – enough to power about 59,000 homes. Over the last few years, energy consumption has fallen steadily: "Since 2006 we have succeeded in almost halving the amount of energy we use per engine," explained Plant Director Klaus von Moltke.

Heat supplies play a particularly important role in all of this: "The plant was first connected to the district heating grid in 2012. Since then, there have been multiple expansions," Klaus von Moltke continued. The transition to purely district heating was expected to reach completion at the turn of the year 2024-2025 but has now been realised two and a half months earlier.

Where the heat comes from: regional district heating from wood chips

The switch would not have been possible without a strong partner in the region: BMW Group Plant Steyr now sources its heat from the biomass powerplant of Fernwärme Steyr, just under a kilometre away. This is operated by the state's two energy providers – Energie AG Oberösterreich Erzeugung GmbH and EVN Wärme GmbH – in their joint subsidiary, Bioenergie Steyr GmbH. To provide the heat energy that Plant Steyr needs, an additional heat generation plant with a 10-megawatt biomass boiler is being erected at the site. So, Plant Steyr will source its heat from renewable resources: wood chips from the surrounding forests.

Klaus von Moltke summarised the situation saying: "By switching to 100 percent heat from regenerative biomass, we are taking a major step today. Our plant now sources both its electricity and its heat for regular operations from renewables."

Today's symbolic energy switch took place on stage as more than a thousand employees looked on. In his keynote speech Arnold Schwarzenegger called on everyone present to act on climate change. He then shut down the plant's gas supply. Milan Nedeljković, Board Member for Production at BMW AG, then symbolically turned on the final expansion to the district heating supply.

Arnold Schwarzenegger then joined Klaus von Moltke and Milan Nedeljković for a tour of the training and education centre, engine assembly and BMW Group Plant Steyr's recently opened electric motor production line, chatting with employees as he went.

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The BMW Group

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In 2023, the BMW Group sold over 2.55 million passenger vehicles and more than 209,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2023 was € 17.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 155.5 billion. As of 31 December 2023, the BMW Group had a workforce of 154,950 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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