

Inauguration of the new innovation and production center in Biel/Bienne

13 September 2019

The spoken word applies.

Speech by Christoph Ammann, President of the Cantonal Government and Head Cantonal Department of Economic Affairs

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren;
Mesdames et Messieurs;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 8 March 2017 in this same spot we held the groundbreaking ceremony for Georg Fischer's new building.

Just 919 days, or two years, six months and five days later, we are here again to celebrate the opening of the new building.

That is a huge achievement! The management of Georg Fischer, and the firms involved in construction in particular, along with their employees, are deserving of great respect.

Through swift implementation, Georg Fischer is now able to put its new building into operation on schedule and to benefit as quickly as possible from the advantages of the building and its new facilities.

This new building from Georg Fischer Ltd represents another important milestone for the Canton of Berne, for the region and for the City of Biel. It is not the only one we've had recently. Only two weeks ago, UBS opened a new center for its banking activities in Biel. Today we cut the ribbon for Georg Fischer.

We can say with confidence that Canton of Berne and the City of Biel have a great deal to offer for high-tech firms:

- A proximity to other high-tech firms
- The existing pool of employees and customers
- A proximity to research and educational facilities such as Bern University of Applied Sciences and the Switzerland Innovation Park
- Excellent access by public transport and road

The benefits also include good, long-term planning for the development of a location, such as the Bözingenfeld site here. Biel's local government has done a very good job here and contributed significantly to making Biel the very sought-after location it is today. I am confident that the population at large will also benefit from the city's increased attractiveness.

For our local economy and for our mechanical and precision engineering industry, Georg Fischer's much-expanded presence is an extremely positive signal.

I expect this kind of capital investment and new development to lead to spillover effects—not at least because a great deal of investment in research and development is taking place in Biel right now. New buildings are currently being erected for the Switzerland Innovation Park and Bern University of Applied Sciences.

Georg Fischer has been a partner in establishing the Switzerland Innovation Park here in Biel right from the outset. The Switzerland Innovation Park is a major win for the mechanical and precision engineering sector – opportunities for future collaboration will abound. I hope that the Research & Development department at Georg Fischer, which will also be housed here in the new center, will work with the Switzerland Innovation Park to make successful use of the new opportunities.

I wish all employees and managers at Georg Fischer every success in putting their new building and facilities into use.

I wish the Georg Fischer staff plenty of success with the new infrastructure. I am confident that the investments made, in total 100 million Swiss Francs, will pay off. I am delighted that the approximately 450 employees, who will be working here by 2020, have a state-of-the-art infrastructure. Georg Fischer is well equipped for the future. I wish Georg Fischer all the best.

Christoph Ammann

President of the Cantonal Government and Head Cantonal Department of Economic Affairs