Altmühlfranken: A strong region
Live, work and stay
On the following pages, we will take you on a journey through the Altmühlfranken region and the powerful south of Franconia: a great place to live, work and stay. With a focus on the plastics and automotive sectors as well as the natural stone and Lyonese wares industries, healthcare management and tourism, Altmühlfranken offers numerous opportunities for those seeking to realise their professional potential or build up a business.

Here we strike the perfect balance between the world of work and those things that make life enjoyable and worthwhile. Thanks to the two tourist areas that extend across Altmühlfranken, the region promises great variety.

“Our central location in Bavaria provides a strong foundation for long-term business success. With two outstanding nature, recreation and leisure areas, we offer an excellent quality of life in Altmühlfranken. That’s the Franconian lifestyle.”

Gerhard Wägemann, District Administrator Weißenburg-Gunzenhausen
In the heart of Bavaria

Airlines and shipping connections:
Nuremberg International Airport, port of Nuremberg, port of Lände Roth

Main roads: B2, B13, B466
Motorways: approx. 30 km to A6 and A9
Altmühlfranken is part of the European Metropolitan Region of Nuremberg, one of the most powerful economic regions in Germany. Altmühlfranken benefits from this urban-rural partnership in many ways and takes the chance to develop through various committees in the Metropolitan Region, thereby combining the amenities of a city with a pastoral quality of life.

Advantages of the Metropolitan Region (selection)
- VGN transport network: 1 ticket for all modes of transport
- 150 global market leaders and ‘hidden champions’
- 20 universities and higher education institutions, 53 research facilities
- Innovative flair: Patents/innovation index twice as high as the German average
- 10 nature parks, the green treasures of the Metropolitan Region

Altmühlfranken unites the things that belong together. After all, Altmühlfranken is the name for the district of Weissenburg-Gunzenhausen, the powerful south of the European Metropolitan Region of Nuremberg. It is located in the southern part of Franconia, on the border with Swabia and Upper Bavaria and between the Bavarian conurbations of Nuremberg, Munich, Ingolstadt and Augsburg.

Altmühlfranken comprises the Altmühl valley from Muhr am See to Gunzenhausen, Treuchtlingen and Solnhofen, the Hahnenkamm mountain in the southwest, Mönchswald forest to the north, the cherry and hop-growing fields around Kalbensteinberg and Absberg, the valley of the Swabian Rezat river as far as Pleinfeld and the Jurassic plateau to the east. This southernmost district of Middle Franconia is a unique region made up of highly diverse natural habitats. Altmühlfranken is also intertwined with the neighbouring regions through numerous networks and cooperation projects.

The slogan ‘altmühlfranken – der starke Süden’ (the ‘powerful south’) was devised in 2010, the result of a district-wide competition forming part of a regional development process. This also marked the birth of ‘Zukunftsinitiative altmühlfranken’, the team responsible for regional development in the district.

It was not long before associations, initiatives and businesses were proudly indicating ‘Altmühlfranken’ on their publications. Many regional products also bear the Altmühlfranken label, which stands for the new self-confidence of the region.

Over the past few decades, the structures here have changed beyond recognition: where small agricultural holdings once dominated, Altmühlfranken is forging ahead thanks to the plastics and stone industries, tourism, healthcare and social management. From a purely administrative viewpoint, the district is still known as Weissenburg-Gunzenhausen – but Altmühlfranken is the true heart of the region.

www.altmuehlfranken.de
Fantastic plastic
The plastics industry
A bag of granules, a suitable mould and an injection moulding machine: after the Second World War, that’s all the plastics pioneers of Altmühlfranken needed to establish the most important industrial sector in the region. Today the plastics industry is the lynchpin of Altmühlfranken. It accommodates global players as well as small and midmarket companies making products for the automotive sector as well as the consumer goods industry. Altmühlfranken companies are known for the absolute precision of their output – and for bringing plastic splashes of colour to every office. All technologies of relevance to plastic are present in Altmühlfranken, with a concentration and infrastructure unique to Bavaria.

**Quantifiable expertise**

A wealth of plastics expertise is concentrated here – expertise that the region exploits through the k-messwerk. This regional plastics network constitutes a value chain for plastics processing, from machine construction and mould production to material production, injection moulding, extrusion and surface finishing. The ‘kunststoffcampus bayern’ opened in Weissenburg in 2015: the technology and study centre and the university of plastics engineering and fibre composite technology provide companies with access to top-performing partners for specific research and development topics as well as vocational and academic education and training for employees.

www.altmuehlfranken.de/kunststoff
www.kunststoffcampus-bayern.de
www.kunststofftechnikschule-weissenburg.bfz.de
What do big German car makers like Audi, BMW, Porsche, Mercedes and VW have in common? Their cars bear the hallmarks of Altmühlfranken!

Given the major role of the plastics sector in Altmühlfranken, it is clearly a short step to the automobile industry. After all, many automobile parts are made of plastic – and Altmühlfranken companies can supply them. From full underbody panelling and bumpers to axle boot kits, steering rack gaiters and lighting elements: these parts are not just produced and painted, but developed, designed and planned in Altmühlfranken.

www.altmuehlfranken.de/automotive
Solnhofen limestone is not only favoured by architects: academics are also inspired by the thought of Altmühlfranken stone. After all, the countless fossilised plants and animals preserved between the fine stone layers bring primordial times to the present day.

The undoubted star turn of fossils is archaeopteryx, the predatory birdlike dinosaur. It may not be a large creature, but its importance to the story of evolution is invaluable, forming as it does the link between animals that live in water and those that fly. Only 12 examples have ever been discovered around the world: four were found in Altmühlfranken, with the remainder unearthed in neighbouring districts.
People in Altmühlfranken leave no stone unturned – provided it is Solnhofen or Jurassic limestone (commonly known as Jurassic marble). The limestone, which is not found anywhere else in the world, is truly a cornerstone of prosperity in Altmühlfranken.

These materials date back to prehistoric times. Around 150 million years ago, Altmühlfranken was a tropical lagoon; the light natural stone was created from the deposits of the Jurassic Sea. Thanks to this prehistoric bounty, the region has the most famous limestone deposits in Germany as well as the country’s largest continuous mining area for natural stone. No wonder the stone industry is so important here. Businesses have established themselves around the many stone quarries, extracting and processing the stone to meet global demand. Jurassic marble in particular is the most commonly used German limestone, applied to facades, walls and floors as well as gardens and landscaping. The mining of Solnhofen limestone is somewhat trickier as it has to be manually carved out of quarries by specialists.

The NATURSTEIN Altmühlfranken network was launched in 2015 with a view to pooling existing expertise within the natural stone industry. The emphasis is on close cooperation between companies and local government partners.

www.altmuehlfranken.de/stein
Got your wires crossed? Not in Altmühlfranken – thanks to the Lyonese wares industry, which can point to more than 200 years of tradition. Mechanical wire pullers have evolved into modern, high-tech manufacturers of wire, spun yarn and braid.

Altmühlfranken owes the existence of the sector to a religious refugee from the Lyon district in France, who successfully worked with very fine wires in his Nuremberg workshop. This eventually gave rise to an entire economic sector that bears fruit to this day – not just in Nuremberg but nearby Altmühlfranken too.

The wire, spun yarn and braid produced by the Lyonese wares industry is used in cables and components, for embroidering flags, uniforms and festive garments, in arts and crafts and even in the food industry (for example, in sausage clippers).
Renewable energy

Green power with a future

In the old days, Altmühlfranken was dominated by agriculture and craftsmanship. Now these very areas are pointing the way to the long-term future: from these roots, innovative businesses have grown up around the idea of renewable energy.

The products of these companies are utilised around the world in biomass furnaces, hydroelectric power plants and so forth. Photovoltaic systems and solar thermal energy also play a role in the region, with many local companies specialising in applications for rural areas. The wealth of experience that Altmühlfranken commands in the field of renewable energy has also spurred the emergence of companies that support energy businesses with their systems technology, especially in the areas of planning, filter technology, metrology and project management.

www.energie-wmf.de

Quality craftsmanship and manufacturing

The HandwerkErLeben network is a coalition of businesses firmly rooted in the crafts and trades of Altmühlfranken.

In Franconia of all places, the tradition of craftsmanship and the authentic culture of handicrafts is a central part of the cultural heritage. The HandwerkErLeben network aims to restore the profile of regional handicraft businesses and raise awareness of the unmistakable services they provide while substantially increasing demand for their authentic products. Bringing this element of the region’s cultural heritage to the attention of tourists will also help to uphold such a valuable cultural asset. Many of the region’s handicraft businesses and workshops are therefore opening their doors and inviting visitors to watch master craftspeople at work.

www.handwerkerleben-altmuehlfranken.de
When it comes to renewable energy, Weissenburg is at the forefront. For more than a century, Ossberger GmbH + Co has been dedicated to producing environmentally friendly energy from hydroelectric power – with great success. Today, more than 10,000 Ossberger turbines are generating environmentally sound energy from water power in almost 100 countries. In fact, the company leads the world market in small-output hydroelectric power stations. Its main field of expertise is complete individual solutions comprising everything from trash rack cleaners and turbines to control units and generators.

Thanks to the internet, the whole world is just a click away – and with Hetzner Online GmbH, the worldwide web has a home in the heart of Altmühlfranken. The established web host and computer centre operator in Gunzenhausen is a genuine global player: Increasing demand for web hosting and the rapid development of the internet market have helped the company evolve into a professional web hosting provider. Over a period of years, company founder Martin Hetzner has expanded Hetzner Online from a one-man operation into an international business – not to mention one of the biggest hosting companies in Europe.
No desk would be complete without pens and highlighters bearing the swan symbol! Much of this colourful spectrum actually comes from Altmühlfranken: in the global Schwan-STABILO organisation, Weissenburg is the most important production facility for ink-based pens. Here the world-famous Stabilo Boss, with its neon marking colours, is produced. The barrels and caps are produced in an injection moulding process, but the heart of the operation is the manufacture of the vibrantly luminous inks. The company’s logistics centre is also located in Weissenburg. From here the writing implements with the swan are shipped to all corners of the globe – making the world a little more colourful.

Every year, more than 1,500 industrial boiler systems emerge from the factory of Bosch Industriekessel GmbH in Gunzenhausen. The industrial boilers, which tip the scales at transport weights up to 108 tons, are deployed around the world. Producing energy in the form of steam or hot water, they are required by hospitals, hotels, local communities and practically every branch of industry (for example, for cooking and cleaning processes in food production). Thanks to continual development and 150 years of experience, the systems not only operate in a highly efficient and environmentally sound manner, but can also be intelligently controlled and networked.
The best football goalkeepers in the world swear by Altmühlfranken quality. Hochmuth GmbH & Co. KG of Treuchtlingen is one of the largest suppliers of goalkeeper gloves. The company produces made-to-measure gloves for a discerning clientele, hand stitched to the nearest millimetre.
Around the world, uniforms owe their lustre to Albrecht Bender GmbH of Altmühlfranken. Since 1864, the Weissenburg-based firm has been making gold and silver embroidery along with uniform accessories. Insignia, ribbons, tassels, medals, badges of honour and pennants from Weissenburg adorn uniforms throughout the world. The company’s portfolio also includes all prevalent medals, both national and foreign.

For anyone who has the Order of Merit pinned to their chest, there is a high chance that part of the decoration will have originated in Altmühlfranken. The quality of products from Weissenburg is majestic: just ask King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands! At the coronation, the sash across his chest and the impressive golden epaulettes embellishing his uniform were made in Weissenburg.

A Weissenburg company also ensured the perfect fit of the King’s royal tailcoat, which was made to measure by Regent Handtailored. Regent – the only producer of fine custom-tailored suits in Germany – has been in business since 1946. Its client base includes businesspeople and politicians as well as actors and Olympic champions.
Altmühlfranken embraces a life-long process of higher education and research. It starts with the family, continues through kindergarten and school and carries on into advanced age thanks to extracurricular and after-school education and training facilities.

Schools of every type are represented in Altmühlfranken, including three grammar schools, a commercial college, a technical college, a vocational high school and a social education academy. Altmühlfranken does not abandon the younger generation when they finish school. One example of this commitment is the ‘bam’ vocational training fair. Naturally the event is also beneficial to businesspeople, who can find the talented individuals they are looking for within the region. The education of skilled youngsters and life-long learning is supported by two local higher education establishments as well as vocational and master schools.

The educational scene in Altmühlfranken is certainly vibrant. The district of Weissenburg-Gunzenhausen is also taking part in the ‘Bildungsregion’ initiative of the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, which aims to enhance the quality of education still further while linking and expanding existing courses.

www.altmuehlfranken.de/bildungsregion
The nearest higher education institution was never far away in Altmühlfranken. Now, though, there is no need to cross the borders of Altmühlfranken at all: three higher education institutions have established sites here, offering courses tailor made for the key sectors of Altmühlfranken.

Subjects relevant to the region’s tourist trade are taught at the Adventure Campus of the University of Applied Management in Treuchtlingen. Future managers in the tourism, hotel, music, cultural and sporting fields study here. The modern, flexible, semi-virtual study concept incorporating both classroom teaching and online learning allows people to combine study alongside their professional, family and leisure commitments.

However, it is plastics that remains the most important industry in Altmühlfranken – and the ‘kunststoffcampus bayern’, which opened in Weissenburg in 2015, is a flagship institution. It comprises a technology centre headed by the Deggendorf Institute of Technology and a study centre overseen by Ansbach University of Applied Sciences. In this way, companies within and outside of the plastics sector have access to powerful partners who can assist in inspections during production, problem solving in everyday business activity, the introduction of new processes, specific research and development issues and the further education of staff through part-time bachelor’s degree courses.

www.campus-treuchtlingen.de
www.kunststoffcampus-bayern.de
Altmühlfranken has a culture of welcoming visitors. The Welcome Service Center, located in the economic development agency, aims to ensure professionals arriving in Altmühlfranken feel right at home in the region – wherever they come from.

The economic development agency at the Weissenburg-Gunzenhausen district office supports businesses in the district and those seeking to relocate by guiding companies through the administrative hurdles and assisting with corporate issues such as staff recruitment.

www.welcome.altmuehlfranken.de
Altmühlfranken can accommodate fresh ideas – and plenty of commercial premises are available to make them a reality. The new ‘kunststoff campus bayern’ technology and study centre in Weissenburg actually reserves space for companies in the sector seeking to move here. A prime location in Bavaria and expertise in plastics are among the factors that make the Weissenburg-Gunzenhausen district so attractive to investors.

The economic development agencies of the Weissenburg-Gunzenhausen district and its key local authorities act as expert points of contact and partners to businesses. Companies based here and those looking to relocate, investors and start-ups will find all the assistance they need. Business developers provide support and assistance in finding business premises, the formalities of company founding, funding programmes and financing options. The numerous corporate and sectoral networks established in Altmühlfranken (and beyond) also present exciting opportunities.

Contact the economic development agency:
wifo.e.lra@landkreis-wug.de
www.altmuehlfranken.de/wirtschaftsfoerderung
Anyone who works in Altmühlfranken is only ever one step from relaxing leisure opportunities. After all, this is where not one but two tourist areas – the Franconian Lake District and the Altmühltal Nature Park – link together seamlessly.

A total of seven lakes make the Franconian Lake District a paradise for water lovers: the Altmühlsee, Rothsee, Grosser Brombachsee and Kleiner Brombachsee, Igelsbachsee, Hahnenkammsee and Dennenloher See lakes are extremely accessible and offer a wealth of leisure possibilities. Away from the lakes, an extensive network of cycling and hiking trails opens up access to the cultural heritage of the region. There is much to occupy even advanced sportspeople thanks to the major running events that take place regularly in the area.

At Gunzenhausen, the Franconian Lake District merges with the second holiday region: the Altmühltal Nature Park, at nearly 3,000 square metres the third largest nature preserve in Germany. The Altmühl Valley Cycle Route, the Altmühlal-Panoramaweg hiking trail and the Boots wanderstrecke down the Atmühl river are the best known activity routes criss-crossing the region. Along the way, visitors will encounter the treasures that make the Almühltal Nature Park so special: bizarre dolomite formations and fragrant juniper heaths, fortifications and castles, ancient fossils, Roman remains and splendid Baroque architecture.

www.naturpark-altmuehltal.de
www.fraenkisches-seenland.de
Imagine a region completely comfortably with itself ... that description certainly applies to Altmühlfranken. Life here is authentically good – mainly because Altmühlfranken is authentically Franconian.

Studies showing Altmühlfranken is one of the best regions in Germany to live confirm the high quality of life here. The culture of Altmühlfranken, with its strongly traditional customs and festivals, is a deep-rooted facet of the region; there are museums adeptly charting the history of the area. Altmühlfranken cuisine is based on local produce: fresh fish, Altmühltaler lamb, cherries from Brombachsee and, of course, Altmühlfränkische Bratwurst grace any menu.

However, no menu would be complete without the region’s breweries, some of which can point to traditions spanning centuries; their wide range of award-winning, craft brewed beers are truly excellent.

Altmühlfranken not only boasts culinary treasures, but also historical riches. The Roman era is particularly well represented, with the Upper Germanic-Rhaetian Limes, a UNESCO World Heritage site, running through Altmühlfranken. The full gamut of Roman life is laid bare around this ancient border system, including partially reconstructed forts, watchtowers and even thermal baths.
The Romans left behind a considerable legacy in Altmühlfranken, which includes uncovered thermal springs. For the Romans, using water and heat for healthcare purposes was part of life – and the same holds true today. Following in historic footsteps brings visitors to the Mogetissa spring in Weissenburg, where the atmosphere is evocative of Roman times. At the Altmühltherme spring in Treuchtlingen, meanwhile, the waters are officially recognised as having curative properties. At both springs, beautifully designed sauna complexes provide soothing warmth – as does the expansive sauna at the Juramare outdoor pool in Gunzenhausen.

www.mogetissa-therme.de
www.altmuehltherme.de
www.juramare.de
Best of health

Health is the most valuable asset we possess. That is certainly the case in Altmühlfranken, which has a dense network of hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and other healthcare providers. The social security and healthcare economy has also developed into one of the strongest engines of job creation in the region.

With sites in Weissenburg and Gunzenhausen and a health centre in Treuchtlingen, the Klinikum Altmühlfranken is a major player. The hospital offers a high degree of specialism across a broad spectrum of medical services together with personal, compassionate care. As a certified Gesundheitsregionplus (under a funding programme devised by the Bavarian State Ministry of Health and Care), Altmühlfranken performs extremely well in the field of prevention; inpatient and outpatient facilities in the rehab and nursing sectors are equally advanced.

Senior citizens are well cared for in Altmühlfranken. To give one example, a special directory for the elderly draws together sporting activities aimed at older citizens, while volunteer advisors provide a point of contact for OAPs in need of help and advice.

www.altmuehlfranken.de/gesundheit
www.altmuehlfranken.de/soziales/senioren
www.klinikum-altmuehlfranken.de
Location factors for the powerful south
The hard and soft factors for a good location

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