

March 10, 2014

Canadian Minister Jason Kenney learns about dual vocational training system at STIHL

Jason T. Kenney, Canada's Minister of Employment and Social Development, and Minister for Multiculturalism, visited STIHL in Waiblingen with a business delegation on March 10. The reason for the visit was the Canadian government's interest in the highly regarded German educational system. In the talks, Dr. Bertram Kandziora stressed the significance of a good apprenticeship and training for the success of the German economy: "We are proud of our dual vocational training system in Germany. It enables us to cover our requirements for skilled workers from within the company with our highly qualified young staff." The delegation was welcomed by STIHL advisory board member Dr. Rüdiger Stihl. It toured the engineering center and the chainsaw assembly line in STIHL Plant 2 in Waiblingen, Neustadt. STIHL is the biggest selling chainsaw brand in Canada. The sales subsidiary based in London, Ontario was founded in 1981. It is the fifth largest subsidiary in the STIHL Group outside Germany.

Vocational training is a special characteristic of German industry which is hardly provided for by the state and companies in any other country. STIHL takes on 60 new apprentices every year. More than 200 apprentices work at STIHL. This number includes 45 students of the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University in technical and commercial courses of study in the company. For several years STIHL has been exporting the dual vocational training system to its plants abroad. Young staff in Austria and Switzerland, but also the U.S.A., China and Brazil can enjoy an apprenticeship along the lines of the German model and thus considerably improve their career prospects. Moreover, the apprentices can broaden their international horizons: for example, there are apprentice exchanges between STIHL's European plants, and secondments to the American plant in Virginia Beach or China are also possible.

Minister Kenney has set himself the task of ensuring that young Canadians are optimally prepared for the labour market of the future. At the present time there is no equivalent to the German vocational training system in Canada. "The dual vocational training system offers young people and companies a great opportunity. It combines practical experience at the workplace with theory in the classroom. Young adults thus receive a form of training which is geared to the needs of the labour market", said Kenney. For more than 70 years STIHL has attached great importance to training young skilled workers. Thanks to innovative training concepts, the apprentices acquire not only technical knowhow, but also problem-solving expertise and social competence. The 38-strong Canadian delegation also included Saskatchewan's Minister of Advanced Education, Rob Norris, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of ESDC, Scott Armstrong, as well as Canada's Deputy Head of Mission Eric Walsh.

Company Portrait

The STIHL Group develops, manufactures and distributes power tools for professional forestry and agriculture as well as for garden and landscape maintenance, the construction sector and the demanding private user. The range of garden power tools from VIKING complements the product line. Products are distributed exclusively through authorized dealers, including 34 marketing subsidiaries, about 120 importers and more than 40,000 dealers in over 160 countries. STIHL has been the world's top-selling chain saw brand since 1971. The company was founded in 1926 and is based in Waiblingen near Stuttgart. In 2012, STIHL achieved a worldwide sales volume of 2.78 billion euros with a workforce of 12,338.

This press release and pictures are available for downloading from the STIHL website at <http://www.stihl.com/daily-pressbusiness-press.aspx>

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