

Waiblingen, November 9, 2016

### **120th Birthday of STIHL Company Founder Andreas Stihl**

He is considered to be the “Father of the Chainsaw”, revolutionized work in the woods and established a company that is now one of the world’s leading manufacturers of chainsaws and other outdoor power tools. On November 10, 2016, company founder Andreas Stihl would have been 120 years old. His achievements and visions continue to inspire the Waiblingen family-owned company to this very day. Dr. Nikolas Stihl, STIHL advisory board chairman, said of his grandfather: “His lifework has had an enduring influence. He not only left behind a sound company, but also certain values and a special mindset which are still ever-present in the company today.” He was awarded honorary citizenship of Waiblingen-Neustadt and Wiechs am Randen – both of which have STIHL production facilities – for his services to the communities. Recently, on October 26, he was honored with an art medal in the “Baden-Württemberg Inventors” series by the Finance Ministry and the Staatliche Münzen Baden-Württemberg (State Mint).

#### **Stihl’s pioneering idea: “The saw must go to the tree, not the tree to the saw”**

Andreas Stihl was born in Zurich on November 10, 1896 to haulage contractor Andreas Stihl and his wife Selina. After completing his degree course in mechanical engineering, he worked in a number of companies as a consultant for steam engines, which were employed in sawmills in those days. When Andreas Stihl saw that the workers had to transport logs laboriously to the stationary saws, he had an idea: “The saw must go to the tree, not the tree to the saw”. He imagined a gasoline-powered chainsaw, with which trees could be felled and bucked directly in the woods. However, Andreas Stihl’s chainsaw idea took a roundabout route: He initially set up, with a friend, the Stihl & Hohl company in 1923 and produced forehearth systems. It was not a great success. The company was dissolved three years later. This did not discourage Stihl from founding, on his own, the “A. Stihl Engineering Consultancy” in Stuttgart in 1926 – the beginning of the STIHL company. To start with, it produced forehearth systems for steam boilers to generate income and, later, also washing machines. Stihl soon turned his attention to his original idea: Building a chainsaw which would make people’s work in the woods easier.

**Andreas Stihl celebrated initial success with his two-man saws in the 1920s**

Andreas Stihl built his first saw in 1926 – a 4 HP two-man electric saw. The company soon grew to eight employees. His first gasoline chainsaw came in 1929: it was the two-man Type A with a two-stroke engine, a weight of 46 kilograms and a power output of 7.5 HP. Although the saw was still so heavy that it had to be operated by two men, it was the first time a saw could be carried directly to the tree – a revolution for work in the woods at that time. The demand for the saw was so high that Andreas Stihl could hardly keep up with production. The Stuttgart premises quickly became too small and the company moved to Bad Cannstatt, an industrial district of town, in 1930. The company, which had been renamed „A. Stihl Maschinenfabrik“, was then able to produce large quantities for the first time. Today, a commemorative plaque, which was unveiled on November 3, 2016, marks the site of the former headquarters of the „A. Stihl Maschinenfabrik“. In the years that followed, Andreas Stihl continuously improved quality and launched new models as the demand from Germany and other countries grew.

**Defying crises: Andreas Stihl fights back successfully**

But it was not only success that crowned the ensuing entrepreneurial years of Andreas Stihl. During the Second World War, an air raid in 1944 destroyed the Bad Cannstatt factory. A new factory was opened in Waiblingen-Neustadt in 1945, today's STIHL headquarters. The Allies interned Andreas Stihl temporarily in a labor camp in Bavaria. He was, however, exonerated in a civilian court case in 1948. After the war, the chainsaw business went through a crisis because people were not buying new machines, but repairing their old ones. Stihl, however, didn't let this get him down. Together with a motivated workforce and new products, the entrepreneur began to fight his way to the top again. In 1959, Andreas Stihl succeeded in producing a saw that was to be a significant milestone in the company's history: The legendary Contra was launched on the market, a gearless gasoline chainsaw with a weight of 12 kilograms and a power output of 6 horsepower, which was lighter and more efficient than any other on the market at that time. Logging firms were able to increase their productivity by 200 percent and STIHL recorded double-digit turnover growth.

**Andreas Stihl: A farsighted entrepreneur**

Andreas Stihl was not only a creative inventor, but an entrepreneur who ran his company with foresight. For example, he focused on the world market at an early stage and, in 1931, began exporting his products not only to neighboring European countries,

but also to Russia and America. He established a worldwide network of importers and thus laid the foundation stone for today's international group. Furthermore, Andreas Stihl changed the company's legal form to a limited partnership in 1960 and made his four children, Hans Peter Stihl, Eva Mayr-Stihl, Gerhild Schetter (née Stihl) and Dr. Rüdiger Stihl, limited partners with equal shares in the company. That was a crucial step for the company's development because it remained an independent family-owned company even after the passing of Andreas Stihl on January 14, 1973. Yet, it was not only his entrepreneurial foresight that left its mark on the company, but also his social responsibility vis-à-vis his employees. For example, Stihl set up a welfare fund and introduced a Christmas bonus early on. Even today, voluntary social benefits for STIHL employees, which go beyond those set down by collective agreement, are a constituent part of the company's corporate philosophy.

**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 36 sales and marketing subsidiaries, about 120 importers and more than 40,000 servicing 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 2015, STIHL achieved a worldwide sales volume of 3.25 billion euros with a workforce of 14,245.

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

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