



## Conversation

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Suzanne Thoma,  
CEO of BKW

## Business

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### Key locational advantage

Sylvac SA in Malleray

## Research & Development

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### Where the sun is at center stage

InnoCampus Biel and CSEM

## Living

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### Citizens of the world

An expat family in Bern



cutting through complexity

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Dear reader,

As Minister of Economic Affairs of the Canton of Bern I am committed to ensuring that the canton plays a driving and formative role in the region that is home to Switzerland's capital city. In doing so our priority is to implement key projects and represent our interests more rigorously at the national level.

A project that will benefit industry throughout Switzerland is our candidacy for a network location of the national Swiss Innovation Park in Biel, which we launched this spring. The theme of innovation will accompany us throughout the whole of the 2014–2018 legislative period. Economic development in the Canton of Bern depends on our nationally and internationally competitive companies. With its promotion of innovation, the canton provides the framework conditions that will keep our companies in their rightful position among the world's elite innovators going forward. For example, we are bolstering the transfer of knowledge through a range of projects. In doing so we are playing a role in ensuring that the results of the research that goes on here are implemented promptly in the Bernese economy. Boosting our region as a location for businesses, helping the economy in rural areas, and promoting innovation are cornerstones of the economic policy of the Canton of Bern and therefore important legislative goals.

In this edition of *bernecapitalarea* you will find out about the Canton of Bern's unique innovative strength and how it is driving us forward. I hope you enjoy reading our magazine!

Yours truly,

Andreas Rickenbacher, member of the Government of the Canton of Bern, Minister of Economic Affairs

# “BKW is reinventing itself”

An interview with Dr. Suzanne Thoma

BKW is a pioneer in the development of innovative technologies for a sustainable energy supply. CEO Dr. Suzanne Thoma explains how this Bern-based company is driving this innovation forward and why it is further expanding its services for both private and business customers.

**As one of Switzerland’s largest energy providers, what are the biggest challenges facing BKW over the next few years?**

“BKW is reinventing itself! And we are basing this on our expertise in the energy sector and in operating complex infrastructures. Our biggest challenge will be to rapidly compensate for the diminishing returns from conventional power sales and position BKW more robustly in the market. We also want to enter – or strengthen – areas of business that are influenced less by grand politics and in

**“We are significantly expanding the services we offer.”**

which you don’t have to wait years for a return on your investment. To achieve this, innovation and service provision are key. But don’t get me wrong: BKW has no intention of moving away from supplying energy. Instead, we want to be a modern energy company that helps its customers generate their own energy, for example,

and helps them become more energy efficient, or provides them with the full range of energy services. Going forward, BKW will be focusing on three cornerstones: our energy business, including generation, trading and sales; powerful networks; and energy and infrastructure services.”

**What are the most important projects for BKW at the present time?**

“As we work intensively on expanding our service provision, one focus will be on managing ever more complex infrastructures and the technologies that go with them. We will be doing some of this in-house and some via acquisitions. Over the past few weeks we have taken over four small firms with a total of 200 employees

## About the person

**Dr. Suzanne Thoma** was appointed head of the BKW Networks division in August 2010 and took over as CEO of the entire company in January 2013. She obtained her PhD in chemical engineering at ETH Zurich and also has a postgraduate qualification in business administration. Before Suzanne Thoma joined BKW she was head of the Automotive Division of the WICOR Group and CEO of the high-tech company Rolic Technologies Ltd., and worked for Ciba Spezialitätenchemie AG in various functions and countries. Mother of two grown-up daughters, Suzanne Thoma grew up in the Canton of Zug and has lived in Bern since joining BKW.



“What drives me both in my private life and in my career is the pleasure I get from never standing still, the joy of succeeding and the determination not to give up when the going gets tough.” Dr. Suzanne Thoma

that specialize in pipeline construction, such as water pipelines, for example, and heating systems.

Another focus of our innovation work is to develop a smart way to integrate fluctuating renewable energies such as wind and solar into our distribution network. For this purpose we recently signed a cooperation agreement with Entelios AG, a company belonging to the US software provider EnerNOC that produces market-leading software in this field. We will be contributing the application expertise. Our aim is to optimize the delivery of power, the quality of the power we deliver and the need to further expand the networks.”

**In your work at BKW, you are involved in a field with equal relevance to business and society. What does this mean to you?**

“I find it fascinating to work for a company whose vision centers around supplying energy and its infrastructure in a modern way. But we can only achieve this if, as a company, we can develop on a healthy, profitable footing at the same time. With the distortions in the energy landscape,

this poses a double challenge these days. For this very reason, we must spread our wings even further and take BKW into new areas of business.”

**How can BKW contribute to the economy of the Canton of Bern today and in the future?**

“We are an innovative company that operates throughout Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe and we work in networks with universities, SMEs and start-ups as well as with the public sector via public-private partnerships. In doing so we create jobs and training places, we pay taxes – and we pay dividends to our shareholders, one of which is the Canton of Bern. BKW is committed to tackling one of the key challenges of the present and, even more importantly, the future: building powerful, robust and cost-effective infrastructures that are environmentally sustainable. All this helps boost the Canton of Bern’s strength as a center of innovation and industry.”

**Information**  
[www.bkw.ch](http://www.bkw.ch)

## About the company

**BKW Group** is one of Switzerland’s largest energy and infrastructure companies. It employs more than 3,000 people; with its partners it supplies around one million people with electricity, and it covers all stages of energy supply: from production and transport to trading and sales. In addition to pure energy supply, BKW develops, implements and operates comprehensive energy solutions for private and commercial customers, as well as for energy utility companies and local authorities. It is also committed to programs focusing on research and development of innovative technologies to ensure a sustainable, secure energy supply.

# Key locational advantage

## Sylvac SA in Malleray

What sets Sylvac SA's innovative digital measuring instruments apart, and why did the company choose to move to new premises in Malleray in the Bernese Jura? CEO Erik Schnyder explains.

CEO Erik Schnyder and employee Sophie Schnyder testing digital instruments in the new facilities which Sylvac SA moved into in Malleray in June 2014.



### Why did you decide to build new premises in Malleray?

"If we are to continue to grow, we need the appropriate infrastructure. We could no longer meet our needs by extending one of our buildings at our previous Swiss locations in Crissier, Bévillard and Malleray every few years. At the same time the ongoing strength of the Swiss franc meant that we were forced to continue to increase our productivity – which is also the main objective of our new building. The promising prospects for our innovative

**"Our system enables direct Bluetooth connection."**

Bluetooth products and the low mortgage interest rates made the decision to merge our Malleray and Bévillard locations into one new building an easy one.

Now we no longer have to ship semi-finished products and components from one building to the other. And since we moved in June 2014, the working environment for our staff has improved considerably: more space, more light, faster communication paths, more direct production flows, a welcoming cafeteria and more comfortable changing rooms and rest rooms are just some examples."

### Why is the Canton of Bern a beneficial location for your company's business?

"The Canton of Bern was a natural choice for us. Firstly, it offers a range of factors such as a high-skilled workforce in our field, microtechnology, extremely helpful support from the Bern Economic Development Agency, attractive real estate prices, and a satisfactory tax system. Secondly, we were adamant that we wanted to keep our existing teams. If we had moved more than 15 km away, they would not have followed us. Thanks to the new building, we were able to retain every last one of our

people. The standard of living in Malleray is excellent and it has very good public transport links. We benefit from a beautiful rural environment and yet we are just 20 to 30 minutes away from larger cities like Biel and Delémont. Three-quarters of our people live within a radius of just 5 km. Our flexible working hours make it very easy for them to combine their working and private lives."

### Can you tell us about some of the innovative measuring instruments you have launched recently?

"At the moment we, along with our Japanese competitor, are the only providers of a high-precision, low-energy, watertight measuring system anywhere in the world. Our engineers are working constantly on optimizing our products. For example, we

### About the company

**Sylvac SA** was established in 2006 as a result of the merger of Sylvac SA in Crissier near Lausanne and Schnyder & Cie in Malleray and Bévillard, a family company formed in 1969. Sylvac SA develops and produces high-precision digital measuring instruments such as digital scales, micrometer screws, digital indicators and internal measuring instruments used mainly in automotive and aircraft construction, the clock and watch industry and medical technology. Around 150 people work at its bases in Malleray, Bévillard, and Crissier in Switzerland and Wujiang, China. 80% of its instruments are exported to more than 40 countries, with 35% going to Germany. The company's annual turnover is approximately CHF 25 million.

are currently the only manufacturer world-wide to be able to measure  $0.1\ \mu\text{m}$  – that's about 500 times smaller than a human hair – with a low-energy system powered by one single CR2032 battery. Incidentally, we are also the only manufacturer of measuring instruments to offer a lifelong guarantee on some of its products. In addition, this year we were the only manufacturer in the world to launch a series of measuring instruments with integrated low-energy Bluetooth systems. Our technology uses Bluetooth to connect our measuring instruments directly to a computer, a tablet or an Android or iOS smartphone without needing a separate dongle. But most importantly – and this is our USP – our instruments can run for up to 6 months with one single CR2032 button cell battery, unlike smartphones which you have to charge every 1 to 2 days. With the combination of Bluetooth technology and the microtechnology expertise to be found in the Bern region, we can give the market a boost with top-quality, innovative measuring instruments."

**Information**  
www.sylvac.ch



Traditional family company: brothers Jacques and Eric Schnyder work shoulder to shoulder at Sylvac SA – Jacques as technical director, Eric as CEO.

Optimizing productivity, procedures, processes, and infrastructure on a 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> site: the new premises of Sylvac SA in Malleray.



#### About the person

**Eric Schnyder** manages Sylvac SA jointly with his brother Jacques. The microtechnology engineer has a postgraduate business management degree and lives with his family in the village of Nods in the Bernese Jura. Triathlon, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking are among his favorite sports.

## Exploring design in Oberaargau

### Design Tour Langenthal

For some years now, innovative design companies, Designers' Saturday, and the Design Preis Schweiz have transformed the Oberaargau region into a unique meeting place for anyone interested in design. Thanks to the Design Tour Langenthal, the region has been one design experience richer since this summer.

The Design Preis Schweiz and Designers' Saturday have attracted well-known artists and upcoming designers to Langenthal for many years. "But these events only last a few days a year," says Uschi

**"We want to put Langenthal firmly back on the map as a design stronghold."**

Tschannen, project coordinator of a new initiative, Design Tour Langenthal. "In creating Design Tour Langenthal we intend to expand on the well-known design events and provide an exciting, year-round tourist offering for anyone interested in design. We

want to put Langenthal firmly back on the national and international map as a design stronghold." Since August 2014, groups and individuals alike have been able to gain exciting insights into the development and manufacture of design products at five locations across the Oberaargau region. The idea for the project stems from the region's rich industrial history and its

great potential in the area of design. Various textile and high-tech companies based in Langenthal and Bützberg can look back over as much as 150 years of history and are now successful global players. "Visitors can experience at first hand and with all the senses what exacting standards these companies' products have to meet and how they are made with so much craftsmanship and passion,"

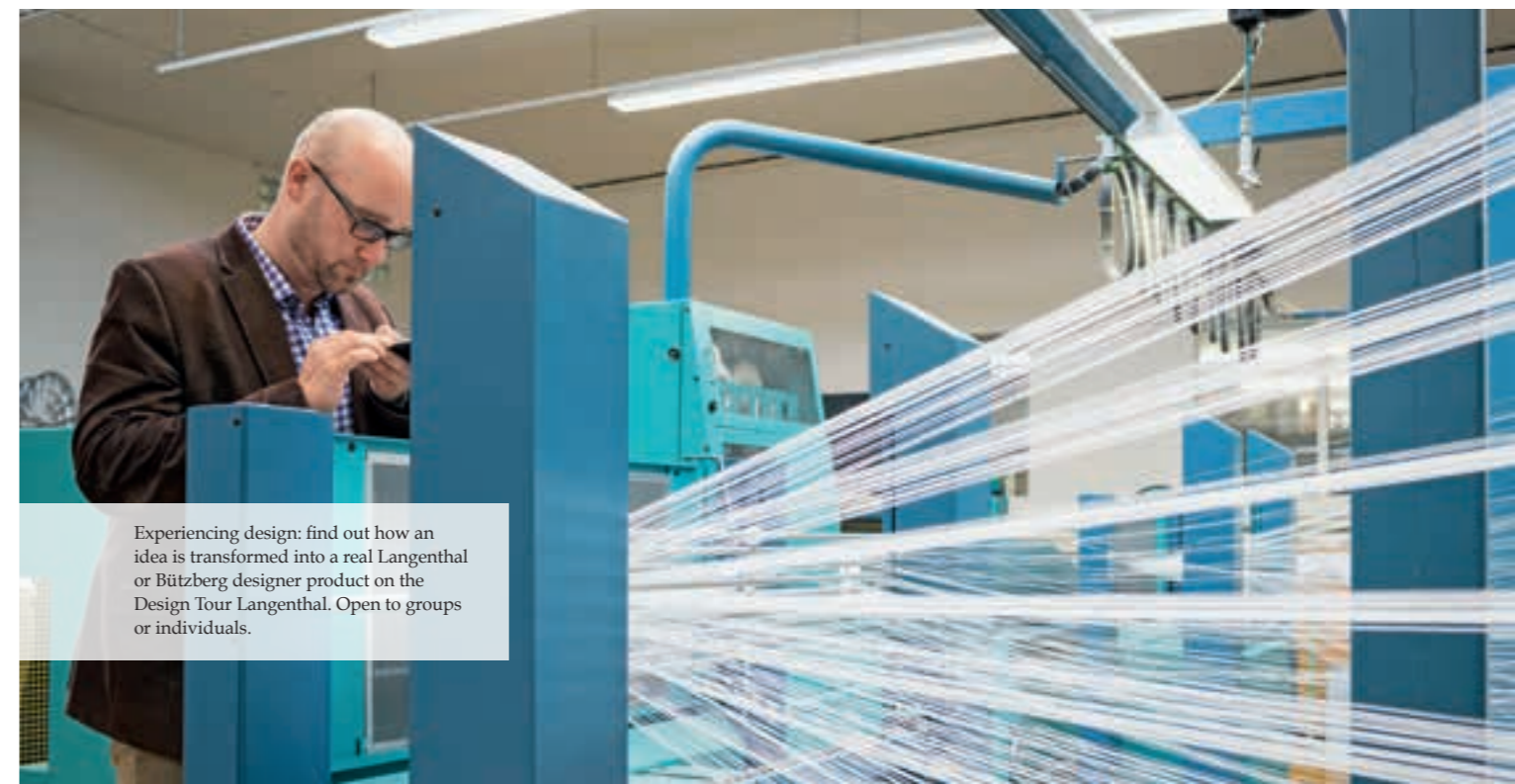
Uschi Tschannen explains, praising the participating companies' involvement: "All the companies we approached agreed to join in and have committed fully to the project."

#### Tailor-made journey of discovery

Even before the project launched, the companies would take visitors on tours of their production facilities on request. "But in the past, these tours were restricted to

#### Tip for visitors

**Design Tour Langenthal** is a year-round design trail through the Oberaargau region, on which the well-known companies Création Baumann AG, Hector Egger Holzbau AG, Ruckstuhl AG, Glas Trösch AG and Girsberger AG give visitors insights into their showrooms, production facilities and company histories. The tour comes in two variants: the Factory Tour (guided, including tours of production facilities) and the Showroom Tour (self-guided). Extras such as the use of e-bikes, lunch, accommodation in a designer hotel room and recommendations for restaurants, cultural events or special attractions in Oberaargau are also available.



Experiencing design: find out how an idea is transformed into a real Langenthal or Bützberg designer product on the Design Tour Langenthal. Open to groups or individuals.



"All the companies we approached agreed to join in and have committed fully to the project."  
Uschi Tschannen, project coordinator,  
Design Tour Langenthal

groups only, and in particular trade visitors. With our new offering we are now delivering a complete package that is also suitable for individuals. It combines a range of attractive features and it is very easy to book online or by telephone." The project was initiated by the Oberaargau Regional Association with financial support from Neue Regionalpolitik (NRP), a federal government initiative to support innovative, value-enhancing projects in rural areas. Besides professionals in sectors like design, textiles, wood construction, interior design and architecture, the Design Tour Langenthal is also aimed at suppliers and customers of participating companies as well as schools, universities and other organizations. It is also intended to attract individuals with an affinity for design – holidaymakers, media people and persons on

Showroom Tour or Factory Tour: visitors can choose between a self-guided tour that can be taken at any time and a guided tour including transfers and lunch that takes place on a fixed date once a month.

#### About the companies

**The Design Tour Langenthal encompasses the following companies:**

Création Baumann AG, Langenthal (established 1886): "Passionate about fabric: refined textiles for interiors"

Hector Egger Holzbau AG, Langenthal (established 1848): "High-tech wood construction: committed to wood as a building material"

Ruckstuhl AG, Langenthal (established 1881): "Turning nature into culture: high-quality natural fiber carpets for domestic and contract use"

Girsberger AG, Bützberg (established 1889): "Tables and chairs: solid wood, metal and upholstery specialists under one roof"

Glas Trösch AG, Bützberg (established 1905): "Focusing on glass: an elegant material with perspective"

study trips, currently largely from Switzerland and Germany, although the plan is to extend the offering to include English-speaking visitors in the future.

#### Growth through world-class design

The Oberaargau region has been part of the Tourist Destination Bern initiative for the past three years. Together with the City of Bern, the Gantrisch, Laupen, Emmental and Oberaargau regions form one of the five tourist destinations in the Canton of Bern defined in the Tourism Act. For Oberaargau this collaboration opens up a whole new range of opportunities for marketing its tourist offerings and recreational facilities. "We saw occupancy rates in the Oberaargau region increase by more than 12.3% from

2012 to 2013," a delighted Uschi Tschannen tells us. "We want to build on this growth – and the Design Tour Langenthal is an excellent opportunity to do so. We want our new tourist offering to be an additional incentive for people to visit our region, take a tour of the town and the Langenthal region, and generally stay a little longer here. We are making world-class design accessible at the heart of a magnificent landscape bursting with attractive places to visit."

#### Information

[www.designtour.ch](http://www.designtour.ch)

# Where the sun is at center stage

**InnoCampus Biel and CSEM**

Why are Neuchâtel and Biel hotspots for Swiss solar power research? And how do interdisciplinary collaborations accelerate the industrialization process? Professor Christophe Ballif explains the roles played by CSEM (Centre Suisse d'électronique et de microtechnique) in Neuchâtel and InnoCampus in Biel.

"We are currently establishing an Energy Storage Research Center at InnoCampus in Biel in collaboration with the Bern University of Applied Sciences. To us, InnoCampus is a test bed for a brand-new type of solar energy storage battery: various components, systems, and materials are tested, analyzed, and optimized here by students, scientists, and industrial partners," explains Christophe Ballif, director of the Photovoltaic Center (PV-center) at CSEM and head of the ETH Lausanne PV-lab in Neuchâtel. "The more efficient and cheaper we can make the storage battery, the more attractive it becomes for solar power management and therefore for industry and the end user."

## "InnoCampus fuels our projects."

### InnoCampus Biel as the interface

InnoCampus AG was established in 2013 by the Canton of Bern, the City of Biel, the Bern University of Applied Sciences, and various companies and organizations in industry and commerce. Its aim was to bring together industry, start-ups, R&D organizations, and universities and help them bring their products to market. The Bern University of Applied Sciences provides input in four main areas of research: Energy/Battery Technologies, Medical Technology, IT Security and Automotive, EMPA Thun inputs Powder and Nanomaterials know-how, and the University of Bern contributes the expertise of the Artorg Center. InnoCampus AG works with CSEM Neuchâtel, ETH Zurich and EPF Lausanne on a project-specific basis. "We very much appreciate being part of this new innovation center," Christophe Ballif says. "InnoCampus fuels our projects. It forms an interface

### About the company

Founded in 1984, **CSEM** Centre Suisse d'Electronique et de Microtechnique SA is a private research and development center specializing in microtechnology and nanotechnology, microelectronics, systems engineering, photovoltaics, and communications technologies. It has around 400 employees at its Neuchâtel, Zurich, Alpnach, Landquart and Muttenz bases. Dozens of day-to-day products in use in the sectors automation, clock and watch, medical technology, pharmaceuticals, cleantech, security and transport were developed and transferred to industry by CSEM.

Since obtaining his PhD in thin-film solar cells, Christophe Ballif has been closely involved in photovoltaics, having undertaken research in the USA, Israel and Germany.



Christophe Ballif in a sea of solar energy: various photovoltaic systems are being tested and optimized on the roof of the Microcity building in Neuchâtel.

### About the person

**Christophe Ballif** is director of the new PV-center at CSEM in Neuchâtel, which opened in 2013, and Professor of Electronic Materials at ETH Lausanne. Since 2004 he has also headed the PV-lab at the Institute for Microtechnology (IMT), which, with its team of more than 50 researchers, has been a branch of ETH Lausanne in Neuchâtel since 2009. Christophe Ballif studied theoretical physics at ETH Lausanne and lives with his family in Neuchâtel. In his leisure time he enjoys cross-country skiing, kitesurfing, walking and cycling.

between students and local SMEs, and, with the application-oriented, interdisciplinary research and development that takes place there, it will bring solar technology innovations onto the market."

### Fruitful networking

Proximity to industry is very important, Ballif believes. "A crucial factor is that the technologies we develop and optimize find their way rapidly into products, processes and services. We want to see our ideas implemented in as little as three or four years' time – not twenty years down the line. To achieve this we need a lively exchange with industry." The director of the CSEM PV-center and head of the ETH Lausanne photovoltaic lab in Neuchâtel welcomes this specialist cooperation and the new proximity between the two institutions he works for: "Since we

moved to the new Microcity building this year, the PV-lab and the PV-center – and therefore all the academic and technological research departments – have been next door to each other in Neuchâtel. PhD students working in the PV-lab only have to cross the road to market or implement their ideas at the PV-center."

Exploiting the synergies with CSEM's microtechnology and nanotechnology division has helped the PV-center to develop successful innovations such as new solar cells that start working at low light levels and that could be integrated into applications such as wristwatches in the future. For the producers of solar modules, the various technological building blocks produced by the PV-center are particularly interesting. These include the manufacture of crystalline solar cells with a very

high yield (22.4%) in partnership with ETH. "CSEM has set itself the objective of accelerating the industrialization process, developing new generations of photovoltaic cells and modules, improving their reliability, integrating them into architectural components, making them more affordable, and managing and storing solar energy," Christophe Ballif explains. "We want to support the transition to a national energy system in which solar electricity will play a vital role."

### Information

[www.innocampus.ch](http://www.innocampus.ch)

[www.csem.ch](http://www.csem.ch)

# Innovative university know-how makes the running

Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie

With its racing prowess, the Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie is regularly among the front runners in energy efficiency competitions. Professor Thierry Robert explains how innovative students and the economy in the Jura Arc benefit each other, and why the Consomini project is a shining example of this.



Up to twenty students studying for the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Design Engineering take part in the Consomini project every year.

**Your students took part in the Shell Eco-marathon in May this year with two innovative vehicles. What makes this competition so attractive?**

"This is the world's largest energy efficiency competition, and we have been taking part in it every year since 2003. Our Consomini project started in 2001 on the initiative of some students who had seen

**"We have been taking part in the world's largest energy efficiency competition every year since 2003."**

pictures of the Shell Eco-marathon. The aim of the 200 plus teams of school and university students from 24 countries is to get as far as possible on the Ahoy Arena track in Rot-

terdam on just 1 l of fuel and with the lowest possible emissions. Apart from Rotterdam, the Shell Eco-marathon also takes place annually in Houston, Texas (USA), and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). In 2014 we were the only university in Switzerland to have two teams qualify for the 'Prototypes' and 'roadworthy Urban-Concept vehicles' categories."

**What is special about the Consomini vehicles?**

"We have succeeded in launching a new 4-stroke gasoline engine that is up to 38% efficient. Its 30 cm<sup>3</sup> power unit, which delivers 1.6 kW/2.2 hp at 5,500 rpm and 2.6 Nm maximum torque, is a truly energy-saving innovation. We built the Consomini Evo II's chassis out of aluminum and the bodywork out of glass fiber, while the Consomini Urban has a steel and aluminum chassis and bodywork made of wood, foamed plastic and glass fiber. This enables us to obtain the best compromise between weight and rigidity."

**Why does taking part in the Shell Eco-marathon appeal to your students?**

"Hands-on projects like the Shell Eco-marathon are an unforgettable and unique experience for our students. In the run-up to the race the teams not only have to deal with theoretical calculations and reports, they also have to develop an actual vehicle that will work perfectly on the day of the competition and will be measured against its peers. In the 'Prototypes' category, for example, our Consomini Evo II came in at an impressive 7th place out of 59 entrants and drove 1,561 km on 1 l of petrol. That works out at fuel consumption of just 0.06 l/100 km (an astonishing 3,672 mpg in US gallons).

## About the university

The Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie is part of the Haute Ecole Arc (HE-Arc) with campuses in Saint-Imier, Le Locle, Delémont and Neuchâtel. The University of Applied Sciences was established in 2004 out of the merger of the Le Locle and Saint-Imier schools of engineering. Its specialties micro-technology, IT, and industrial design engineering are geared toward the needs of the main industrial sectors resident in the Jura Arc region: medical technology, mechanical engineering, watches, IT, and electronics. The Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie has four research institutes, two of which are in Saint-Imier in the Canton of Bern.



In pole position with Consomini: “We were the only Swiss university to qualify for the Shell Eco-marathon 2014 in two vehicle categories.” Thierry Robert

#### How does being based in the Jura Arc region benefit R&D at your university, and how do Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie projects boost the local economy?

“The Jura Arc is well known the world over for its microtechnology and watch-making industries. To be able to meet local companies’ demand for high-skilled young people, the Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie specializes in microtechnology, IT, and industrial design engineering. Our Consomini project is a showcase for our university – just like the Echo-Tech ship with which we won the HydroContest in Lausanne in July. These successes do a lot to raise our profile among residents and, in particular, relevant industrial sectors. The local watch manufacturer Audemars Piguet is the Consomini project’s major sponsor. Our excellent results in competitions have already led to some interesting projects with industrial companies in the field of innovative mobility solutions.”

#### Information

[www.he-arc.ch/ingenierie](http://www.he-arc.ch/ingenierie)

#### About the person

**Thierry Robert** has been at the helm of the Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie energy and mobility lab since 2013. Having studied mechanical engineering at the Le Locle school of engineering, Thierry Robert has been researching and teaching in the fields of engines, energy and mobility since 1994. The father of one daughter also pursues his passion for technology and energy-efficient vehicles in his leisure time, along with tinkering on racing cars, swimming and skiing. Besides his home town of La Chaux-de-Fonds, his favorite places in the Canton of Bern include Bern, Interlaken and Grindelwald.



“The need for mobility will continue to rocket over the next few years, making innovative and sustainable solutions ever more important.” Thierry Robert

## Citizens of the world

### An expat family in Bern

Elliot Cintrón, senior director of Exactech International Operations AG and family man, relates why the city and region of Bern enriches their lives as expats and a family in equal measures.

“When I was offered the opportunity to build up and take charge of the international headquarters of Exactech International Operations AG in Bern as senior director, my wife Marilyn Velez and I barely hesitated. We already knew the city and region of Bern from various holiday visits and were immediately able to see ourselves living here.

Marilyn and I come from Puerto Rico; we met in Washington DC while both working for the federal government and gained our Masters in Business at the University of Florida in Gainesville. In January 2011, we moved from Gainesville, Florida, to Bern with our daughter Gabriela Cristina who was two years of age at that time. Our

**“As an expat family, Bern offers us the perfect work-life balance.”**

#### About the company

**Exactech Inc.** is an internationally active medical technology company headquartered in Gainesville, Florida, specializing in the development, production and marketing of artificial orthopaedic implants, surgical instruments, biological materials and services for hospitals and physicians in more than 30 countries around the world. The company’s orthopaedic products are used all over the world for the repair of bones and joints that have been damaged through injuries and diseases such as arthritis. Since January 2011, the epicenter for the international business has been Exactech International Operation AG in Bern. The market-listed company (Nasdaq: EXAC) ranks among the fastest-growing enterprises in this sector and employs a worldwide workforce of around 600.



The Cintrón family enjoys visiting Bern’s historic old town with its cozy cafes and restaurants and unique atmosphere.



"Our home is where our family is." Gabriela (5), Daniela (8 months), Marilyn and Elliot Cintrón have found a new home in Bern.

younger daughter Daniela Sophia, eight months old today, was born in Bern and is a thoroughbred 'Berner Meitschi' (Bernese dialect for "young Bernese girl"). We are delighted by the way in which our children can grow up here, safely, well protected and as part of an international community, in wonderful natural surroundings and with an incredible range of leisure opportunities. We regularly make excursions in the local area, stroll through the historic old town of Bern and travel to the Jungfrau region in January each year to celebrate the anniversary of our arrival in Bern. Among our other favorite spots are the Blausee and Oeschinensee lakes, Interlaken, Thun and Spiez. Gabriela loves

the Bern winter above all and, like me, is an enthusiastic skier. Our hobbies also include tennis, reading and travelling. This year I took part in the Bern Grand Prix run together with a group of work colleagues. A memorable event for us one day was forging our own bell at a Bern bell foundry, complete with family coat of arms. It now sits in our living room as a reminder of our time and memories in Switzerland.

Gabriela attends the kindergarten at the International School of Berne and recently announced proudly that she will soon be able to speak all the languages of Switzerland. At home, we converse

still is a top-rate partner in this respect for our business and my family. The fact that Bern lies in the heart of Switzerland and Europe and that we can quickly reach our friends, family members and business partners in other parts of Switzerland and the world is another benefit. When it comes to business or private get-togethers, the city is often the meeting point for us due to its central location. What we miss most in our new homeland are the family in Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican food but we are fortunate to visit each

**"For expats, every day is packed with undreamed-of possibilities and challenges."**

other a couple of times per year. As to Bernese specialties, fondue, chocolate, cakes and pastries – Butterzopf (plaited bread), Schoggigipfel (chocolate croissants) and Nidlekuchen (cream tart) – are particular favorites.

For expats, every day is packed with undreamed-of possibilities and challenges. I think the biggest challenge lies in integrating yourself in your new environment, while remaining true to your roots at the same time. Being able to live in a multilingual environment with different culture, history, traditions and languages and see our children grow up as 'citizens of the world' is something we find an immensely enriching experience."

**Information**  
[www.exac.com](http://www.exac.com)

mainly in Spanish and English, but our French, German and Bernese dialect are also becoming even more fluent. The people of Bern that we have already got to know we find respectful, polite, dependable, friendly and open minded. Amenities such as family-friendly restaurants, the exceptionally efficient and well-developed local public transport and countless leisure opportunities make it easy for us to feel at home here. Bern offers a perfect work-life balance, something that is very important for us as a family. There is a strong and diverse international community here as well as splendid events especially for expats. The Canton of Bern Economic Development Agency was and

# Ice-skating magic with a panoramic view

Top of Europe ICE MAGIC Interlaken

Action-packed fun on the ice in Interlaken: the unique Top of Europe ICE MAGIC is a brand-new ice-skating paradise with a difference that is set to transform the tourist experience in the Bernese Oberland this winter.



Ice-skating and gourmet food against a glittering backdrop – the latest winter highlight in Interlaken.

It has already taken Vienna by storm. And this winter ICE MAGIC is making its Swiss debut in Interlaken, where this innovative ice-skating experience will thrill and delight visitors and local residents alike. On December 20, Top of Europe ICE MAGIC will be opening its doors to a fascinating ice landscape on the legendary Interlaken Höhematte, the well-known promenade with its historic luxury hotels and magnificent vista of the majestic Jungfrau mountain’s snow-covered summit.

**Winter wonderland**

Magical lighting effects will frame the ice landscape made up of five skating rinks linked by a runway curving between them. This ice-skating paradise will be the perfect place for a unique ice-skating experience,

to meet friends and make new ones at the heart of Interlaken, the world-famous winter holiday destination. During the day there will be a practice rink for young skaters trying their luck on the ice for the first time. In the late afternoon this rink will be transformed into an Alpine-style curling “Eisstockschiessen” rink. In the restaurant corner skaters and friends can enjoy a wide range of delicious dishes in a traditional ambience. The Top of Europe ICE MAGIC Interlaken experience will be rounded off by stands selling mulled wine and other items and a skate hire facility.

**Information**

[www.icemagic.ch](http://www.icemagic.ch)  
[www.interlaken.ch](http://www.interlaken.ch)

**New this winter in Interlaken**

From December 20 to February 28, **Top of Europe ICE MAGIC Interlaken** will transform the center of Interlaken into a winter wonderland featuring five ice rinks of different sizes linked by an approximately 400-meter-long runway curving between them. The facility will be open free of charge to all Swiss schools until 15:00 Mondays to Fridays (prior registration required).

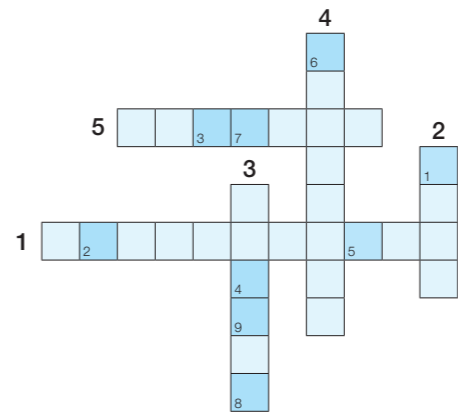
# Win a wellness weekend in Interlaken

Welcome to the VICTORIA-JUNGFRAU Grand Hotel & Spa: [www.victoria-jungfrau.ch](http://www.victoria-jungfrau.ch)

Take part in our prize draw and win a wonderful weekend break for two at the VICTORIA-JUNGFRAU Grand Hotel & Spa in Interlaken (one night in a Superior class double room, including sumptuous breakfast buffet and free use of spa, wellness area and gym; all fitness classes, Wi-Fi throughout the hotel and excursion tips from the concierge service are also included).

In the picturesque mountain setting of the Bernese Oberland, the VICTORIA-JUNGFRAU Grand Hotel & Spa offers its guests a unique grand hotel ambience and incomparable spa facilities over a total area of 5,500 m². With its 224 exquisitely designed bedrooms, prize-winning cuisine, ultramodern conference facilities and warm welcome and hospitality, this traditional 5-star Grand Hotel and Spa Resort is brimming with unmistakable charm.

Taking part couldn’t be easier. Simply find the answers to the clues and enter them in the appropriate places in the grid to find the mystery word. Send the mystery word along with your completed entry form to the address below by February 28, 2015. You can also enter online at [www.berneinvest.com/chance](http://www.berneinvest.com/chance). Tip: Every word relates to a subject covered in this issue of *bernecapitalarea*. Good luck!



**Answer**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- 1. ... ICE MAGIC
- 2. Acronym of the Swiss Center for Electronics and Microtechnology in Neuchâtel
- 3. ... Tour of Langenthal
- 4. Home to Sylvac AG in the Canton of Bern
- 5. First name of Elliot Cintrón’s younger daughter

Extra questions (optional): Which article in this issue of *bernecapitalarea* did you enjoy most?

How do you obtain your copy of *bernecapitalarea*?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The winner will be drawn by lots and notified in writing. Employees of the Bern Economic Development Agency are excluded from entering the competition. The judges’ decision is final. There is no cash alternative to the prize.

Tear out this page and send it to this address by February 28, 2015. Bern Economic Development Agency, Münsterplatz 3, CH-3011 Bern, fax +41 (0)31 633 40 88, or by e-mail to [www.berneinvest.com/chance](http://www.berneinvest.com/chance).

Many congratulations to Claude Flückiger of Bern, the winner of our competition in *bernecapitalarea* 1/2014.

# New arrivals in the Canton of Bern

## Welcoming more new companies to the region

The Bern Economic Development Agency helps innovative international companies with their decisions to establish operations in the Canton of Bern – like CSL Behring in Lengnau and PaxVax in Thörishaus.



Biotherapies for Life™ **CSL Behring**

**CSL Behring** has chosen Lengnau as a new production base to support commercial production of a series of promising recombinant hemophilia therapies. Bern is already home to the company's biggest commercial production facility for plasma-based therapies to treat rare and difficult diseases. CSL Behring plans to start building on a site in the Lengnau industrial zone during the first half of 2015. Over a five-year period the company will be investing several hundred million US dollars in the new production facility, creating at least 300 new jobs, and bolstering the recent expansions of production capacity at its bases in Germany, Australia and the USA. The Bern Economic Development Agency played an active role in helping the company to identify a suitable location and supported it intensively throughout the long evaluation phase.

CSL Behring – a subsidiary of CSL Limited headquartered in Melbourne, Australia – is one of the world's leading manufacturers of plasma protein bio therapeutics, employing more than 12,500 people in 26 countries. Its long-standing, significant presence in Switzerland and the expertise that was already available at its manufacturing facility here were key factors in its strategic choice of the Canton of Bern as the preferred location for its planned recombinant production facility.

### Information

[www.cslobehring.ch](http://www.cslobehring.ch)



**PaxVax**

**PaxVax** is taking over production of the typhoid vaccine Vivotif from Crucell Schweiz AG. This will save around 80 jobs that were under threat in Thörishaus. In the medium term the Californian company plans to expand its Thörishaus base and develop and manufacture other vaccines there. The take-over will see the continuation of the history of vaccine development and production in the Canton of Bern, which dates back more than 100 years: in 1898 the Schweizerisches Serum- und Impfinstitut Bern was founded, which went on to be renamed Berna Biotech at the turn of the 20th century and since 2006 has been a subsidiary of the Dutch Crucell N.V., which is part of Johnson & Johnson.

PaxVax was established in the USA in 2007. The company specializes in special vaccines with the emphasis on travel medicine and biodefense. It employs about 80 people at its base in Redwood City, California, and at its development site in San Diego. The take-over in Thörishaus will double the PaxVax workforce. The Bern Economic Development Agency played an active facilitating and supporting role both before and after conclusion of the consultation process, supporting staff threatened by redundancies and establishing contacts between interested parties and Crucell Schweiz AG.

### Information

[www.paxvax.com](http://www.paxvax.com)

# Canton of Bern – the home of quality

## A great location for international companies

The Canton of Bern offers numerous benefits that make it a great location for international companies. Denis Grisel explains what qualities these are and what support the Bern Economic Development Agency offers.

### What qualities does the Canton of Bern have that make it such a great place for businesses?

“Among our strengths are our well-developed infrastructure, our comprehensive education and training system, and our multi-lingual, highly qualified workforce. The Canton of Bern boasts a high standard of living, along with excellent research and higher education institutions that work closely with local companies in a lively exchange of knowledge and technology. Numerous successful international companies in cluster sectors such as the mechanical, precision and watchmaking sectors and medical technology are based here. These cluster organizations play a key role in the economic development of the area and are a particularly attractive feature for companies.”

### Have any foreign companies come to Bern recently?

“Yes. 3M EMEA GmbH's Supply Chain Center of Expertise, with its international workforce of more than 250 people, has been operating from Burgdorf since April 2013. CSL Behring chose Lengnau as its new production base and will be creating at least 300 new jobs there in 2015. In general we are involved in discussions with interested companies performing location evaluations on an ongoing basis. Sometimes it can take as long as one or more years to get to the point where the company is ready to make a decision or the evaluation is canceled.”

### What are the main criteria companies look for in deciding on a location?

“From the feedback we have received we know that the factors that clinched it for these companies were the good transport links, the pleasant environment and the expert support they received. One company representative recently told me: ‘Every day we get the impression that as a globally active company we are welcome here; we are supported and appreciated.’”

### How do you support interested companies?

“The Bern Economic Development Agency helps companies find locations and premises and assists them with all aspects around establishing their new branches. We provide information on work and residence permits, financial support, tax breaks and company formation. We also help them establish contacts and give them access to our extensive network.”



Denis Grisel, director of the Bern Economic Development Agency



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