

Press Release

Heide, 25/03/2024

Start of construction at Northvolt

Business promoters from the Energieküste welcome settlement

Now it starts! Construction of the new Northvolt Drei battery gigafactory in Heide in the district of Dithmarschen officially began on 25 March 2024. An event of historic proportions for sustainability in Schleswig-Holstein and throughout Germany. The spirit of optimism in the region is clearly noticeable - the Energieküste, the districts of Dithmarschen, Steinburg, Pinneberg and North Frisia, is in the national and international spotlight with the ground-breaking ceremony and symbolic "kick-off". The four economic development organisations see a variety of positive multiplier effects for the Energieküste associated with the Northvolt settlement.

The four managing directors of Development Agency Westholstein mbH (egw), Development Agency Region Heide A.ö.R, WEP Development Agency of the District of Pinneberg mbH and Economic Development Agency North Frisia mbH (WFG) take a clear position on a very positive development dynamic on the Energieküste as a result of the Northvolt settlement. Among other things, they refer to the recently published study* by the consultancy firm CIMA, which assumes more than 11,000 additional jobs in total (from 2029). With an initial investment of over four billion euros and an annual turnover of around 1 billion euros when fully operational, the gigafactory is seen as a "growth generator for the entire energy coast", says Martina Hummel-Manzau, Managing Director of egw. "The comprehensively planned 'energy transition cluster' of the Heide region convinced Northvolt to select this location from 140 European applicants. This is a signal effect from which the entire Energieküste and the whole of Schleswig-Holstein will benefit," says Dirk Burmeister, CEO of the Heide Region Development Agency. The business promoters are happy to explain the various multiplier and indirect effects they expect.

Boost for local companies

For the Energieküste, the additional jobs are expected to lead to a significant increase in demand for purchasing power and more orders for local companies. How the statistical multiplier effects are actually distributed regionally depends heavily on whether and where additional supplier companies can be established and whether and how quickly existing companies react to changes in demand. Caterers, logisticians or tradespeople: regional companies of all kinds can easily introduce themselves and their range of services on a website recently set up by Northvolt Germany. "The additional jobs are then created directly at our companies through more orders," explains Dr Harald Schroers, Managing Director of WEP.

Safeguarding the social infrastructure

For cities and municipalities with a declining population, there is a great chance that social infrastructure, for example, can be maintained. "Kindergartens and schools whose capacity utilisation is decreasing will remain. The new residents go shopping and spend their leisure time with us. All of this creates additional demand and ultimately economic growth," says Dr Matthias Hüppauff, Managing Director of WFG North Frisia. Planning security for daycare centres and schools - "just think of our town centres in Tönning or Garding or the school requirement plan on Eiderstedt. Public transport also works better when capacity utilisation is high," adds Dr Matthias Hüppauff.

Dynamics in the labour market

The economic development experts are aware of the concerns of regional companies that Northvolt will now poach the good people and drive up wage levels. However, they believe that this concern is unfounded. "Of course, one or two people will change employers. But overall, Northvolt has already proven in Sweden that it is a very attractive international employer that draws young people from everywhere," says Dr Harald Schroers.

Magnetic effect for skilled labour

All four business promoters associate the large-scale settlement with an attraction effect for the entire labour market on the Energieküste, which could also mitigate the existing shortage of skilled workers. The egw has already noticed such positive experiences in the chemical industry in Brunsbüttel: "If there are several attractive employers in a region, people move there because the career opportunities improve," says Martina Hummel-Manzau.

Green energy a long-term guarantee of success

The four economic development experts see the megatrend towards green energy and e-mobility and the high availability of green energy in the region as a key locational advantage of the Energieküste. By working on a high-quality and sustainable product and living in a holiday region, the economic developers attest to the Energieküste's magnetic effect: "The sustainable industrial 'ecosystem' in the region, which is unique in Germany, will attract even more companies to the Heide region, to Dithmarschen and to the Energieküste in the medium term," says Dirk Burmeister.

The four economic development organisations see it as their task and central challenge to develop suitable measures so that the economic momentum from the processes surrounding the Northvolt settlement can be transferred to the entire west coast. "We have strong partners and a strong network - and therefore the ideal prerequisites to take this momentum with us for the entire Energieküste," emphasises Martina Hummel-Manzau.

About the Energieküste

Schleswig-Holstein's North Sea coast is Germany's hotspot for renewable energies. Experts, researchers, creative minds and energy enthusiasts are working intensively to create a highly innovative, sustainable energy system from the inexhaustible resources here. The Energieküste was initiated in 2020 as a network and umbrella brand by the Regional Cooperation West Coast. RK-West Coast is an association of the districts of North Friesland, Dithmarschen, Steinburg and Pinneberg, which are considered pioneers of the energy transition, the Development Agency Westholstein, the WEP Development Agency of the District of Pinneberg, the Economic Development Agency North Frisia and the IHK Flensburg and IHK of Kiel. The aim of Energieküste is to strengthen the existing economy, attract new companies and skilled labour and create a striking image for the business location. The Energieküste is making a significant contribution to transforming Schleswig-Holstein into the first climate-neutral federal state. The Energieküste is financed with funds from the West Coast regional budget and the partners of the West Coast Regional Cooperation and the Development Agency Region Heide. The West Coast regional budget is funded from the "State Economic Programme" with funds from the joint federal-state task "Improvement of the regional economic structure".

*CIMA on behalf of the West Coast Regional Cooperation (2023): Analysis of the regional economic effects of relocation projects on the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein. Online at: <https://www.rk-westküste.de/themen/projekte/regionaloekonomische-effekte-durch-ansiedlungsvorhaben/> (accessed: 15.03.24). Currently only available in German

Further informations on the Energieküste can be found at: <https://energiekueste.eu/>

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