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**Press Release**

Packaging Valley and PEC - fusion of equals

The two packaging clusters Packaging Valley Germany and Packaging Excellence Region Stuttgart (PEC) set out on the path to a merger in 2019. During the Packaging Valley general meeting in February, the members voted in favour of the merger. The general meeting of PEC has now also issued a positive vote on 24.06.2020.

At the joint general meeting of the now merged Packaging Valley Germany, which took place immediately after the PEC general meeting, a decision was made on the management boards for the now joint cluster. Bernd Hansen of Rommelag Kunststoff-Maschinen Vertriebsgesellschaft mbH was elected chairman. His deputy is Markus Höfliger of Harro Höfliger Verpackungsmaschinen GmbH. Further members of the board are Uwe Herold from E+K Sortiersysteme GmbH, Sabine Gauger from OPTIMA packaging group GmbH, Dr. Johannes Rauschnabel from Syntegon Technology GmbH, Christian Benz from Jetter AG and the Lord Mayor of Waiblingen, Andreas Hesky, as representative of the city of Waiblingen. The name remains Packaging Valley Germany e. V., the association's headquarters are now in Waiblingen, and the offices are still located in Schwäbisch Hall and Waiblingen.

The cluster is currently working on various marketing projects such as a new website, the Packaging Valley Podcast, a benefit guide and an intensification of social media activities. The marketing working group is headed by Sabine Gauger. The working group Human Resources and Training will start a recruiting offensive and is working on the topics Packaging Valley Talent Pool and solutions for matching job and applicant. The topic of digitization with a focus on augmented and virtual reality as well as sustainability are also on the agenda.

Packaging Valley Managing Director Martin Buchwitz is satisfied with the outcome of the general meetings: "What belongs together has grown together. The past few months have shown, through the active cooperation between the two clusters that is already taking place, that the merger is exactly the right step at the right time. Packaging Valley is gaining enormously in power through the merger, which is particularly evident in the Packaging Valley Makeathon currently taking place. I am looking forward to what lies ahead."

Dr. Marc Funk, Managing Director of PEC and now Co-Managing Director of Packaging Valley: "From a position of strength and at eye level, the Packaging Excellence Center and Packaging Valley are joining forces to shape the future together. I am very pleased that the merger is now being completed and that the preparations for it have been mastered well and in partnership. Together we will have completely new opportunities to expand our network. In this way, we are actively shaping the future, providing impetus for innovation and cooperation and providing answers to the questions that are becoming important for our members. I am sure that the merger will be to the benefit of the members and that the region will thus be able to better live up to its reputation as the “Silicon Valley” of the packaging industry and the associated automation sector".

**About Packaging Valley Germany e. V.**

Packaging Valley Germany e. V. is the world's most innovative cluster in the packaging industry. It is the result of a merger of Packaging Valley Germany and Packaging Excellence Region Stuttgart. It networks around 80 companies with a total of more than 20,000 employees. These include manufacturers of packaging systems and packaging machines, suppliers of software and automation solutions, manufacturers of components, suppliers of services for the packaging industry and public institutions.

The companies in Packaging Valley are always one step ahead of the future and offer the market the best technologies in the field of packaging machines. With an export share of over 80%, the technological diversity from Packaging Valley is represented all over the world. International market leaders from the food, beverage, confectionery, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries are among the customers.

Packaging Valley Germany e. V. is based in Waiblingen, with an additional office in Schwäbisch Hall. The majority of its members are located in the southwest, with a focus on the Stuttgart and Hohenlohe regions.

Picture captions

General Meeting: After PEC's approval of the merger, the first joint general meeting is held immediately afterwards.

Board: The new board of the now merged Packaging Valley Germany e. V. cluster