

LICHTENFELS

Presentation of the Lichtenfels Center of Next Generation Digital Technologies



By Marion Nikol 29 September 2019 12:20 pm
Updated on: 07 October 2019 03:33 am



Where science meets business, politics, and also individual citizens: The initiators made it clear on this evening that the Lichtenfels Center of Next Generation Digital Technologies (*Forschungs- & Anwendungszentrum für digitale Zukunftstechnologien, FADZ*) should be a place of innovation for everyone.



FADZ's initiators can barely contain their excitement: (from left) Frank Herzog (founder of Concept Laser), Ercole Erculei (Coburg University of Applied Sciences), Prof. Dr. Markus Stark (Coburg University of Applied Sciences), Prof. Dr. Stefan Gast

(Coburg University of Applied Sciences), First Mayor Andreas Hügerich, Dr. Jutta Michel (Vice President Coburg University of Applied Sciences), Dr. Markus Neufeld (Coburg University of Applied Sciences), and District Administrator Christian Meißner.

A "kick-off" always marks the birth of something new. This is precisely the case with FADZ, whose initiators celebrated a kick-off event in the municipal hall. Around 150 entrepreneurs from all over Upper Franconia were able to get a concrete idea of the large-scale project for which the city and district of Lichtenfels, the Coburg University of Applied Sciences, and the Lichtenfels entrepreneur Frank Herzog are responsible.



More than 150 entrepreneurs from all over Upper Franconia accepted the invitation to FADZ's kick-off event in the Lichtenfels municipal hall on Thursday.

The fact that FADZ offers tremendous opportunities for the region was expressed in the welcoming speeches of District Administrator Christian Meißner, Mayor Andreas Hügerich, and Dr. Jutta Michel, Vice President Coburg University of Applied Sciences: "Upper Franconia represents economic strength and innovation. With FADZ, we must and can convey this much more to the outside world," said Dr. Jutta Michel.

District President Heidrun Piwernetz is extremely optimistic

District President Heidrun Piwernetz expressed her enthusiasm as well: "In Lichtenfels, you can feel that the project will be a positive stimulus for the region because it addresses and involves so many interest groups from business, politics, and science."

"Upper Franconia represents economic strength and innovation. With FADZ, we must and can convey this much more to the outside world." Dr. Jutta Michel, Vice President Coburg University of Applied Sciences



A 3D-printed model shows what the "home" of FADZ could look like in four years.

The focus of FADZ will initially be on so-called additive manufacturing processes. This refers to 3D printing, which is already proving its superiority in countless industries and is enabling enormous weight, material, and cost savings. Frank Herzog, founder of Concept Laser, and Markus Stark, Professor at the Institute for Prototypes and Model Technology at the Coburg University of Applied Sciences (*Institut für Prototypen und Modelltechnik der Hochschule Coburg*), explained this in their keynote speeches: Whether cranial implants, components for airplanes and bicycles, or even jewellery – the applications of this manufacturing technology are diverse and the potential is far from exhausted. Therefore, it is now important to enthuse young people about these kinds of next-generation topics, give a boost for innovation, and thus also brace oneself for the competition from Asia.

FADZ shall become a place of innovation for everyone

All participants emphasized that FADZ shall be a place of innovation for everyone – from students to top researchers, from small craft businesses to large industrial groups.

The range is therefore very differentiated and includes research opportunities for regional companies as well as technology consulting or further training courses for skilled workers. The so-called FADZ LAB, an open creative workshop, shall, on the other hand, give students and private individuals the opportunity to build, try out, fiddle about, and tinker.

Located in the Kirschbaumühle mill in Coburger Straße

Many will already know that the Kirschbaumühle mill in Coburger Straße shall become the home of FADZ. As Mayor Andreas Hügerich emphasized, "this marks the birth of a place of exchange in the heart of Lichtenfels that is easily accessible and brings life to the city."

The planning process for the redevelopment of the building purchased by the city is already in full swing and reflects the innovative character of the research center: Architecture students from the Coburg University of Applied Sciences have already worked out possible space and utilisation concepts for the Kirschbaumühle as inspiration and proposal for planning and conversion measures, which were presented this evening using 3D-printed models.

The premises should be ready for occupancy in four years



Frank Herzog, Lichtenfels entrepreneur and founder of Concept Laser, familiarised the guests with the potential of additive manufacturing in his keynote speech.

Even though the premises in Lichtenfels will not be ready for occupancy for another four years, this does not mean that the project will be suspended until then. On the contrary: 3D plastics printers are already being used and integrated into the curriculum at the Meranier Gymnasium secondary school. 2020 will also see the first offers from FADZ at the Institute for Prototypes and Model Technology (*Institut für Prototypen- und Modelltechnik, IPM*) at the Coburg University of Applied Sciences until the Lichtenfels Center of Next Generation Digital Technologies will start operations in 2023 and will be supplemented by other digital next-generation technologies in addition to 3D printing. This will also attract students to Lichtenfels who shall work on projects at FADZ together with companies as part of the master's programme "Additive Manufacturing and Lightweight Engineering" (*Additive Fertigung und Leichtbau*).

Around EUR 1 million per year for ongoing operations

Of course, the financial requirements are just as great as the potential of the research center. These include one-off costs of around EUR 8.5 million for the acquisition of the land, the purchase and renovation of the property, and the initial equipping of the required laboratories. In addition, the annual costs for ongoing operations and university activities are expected to be approx. EUR 1 million.



Prof. Dr. Markus Stark from the Coburg University of Applied Sciences showed how in "Bionic Design" nature serves as a model for structures, materials, and design principles.

The kick-off event was also intended to attract the entrepreneurs from the region as possible supporting and financial partners who could support FADZ within the framework of a sponsoring society and thus make a sustainable contribution to the economic development of their own home region.