# PRESS RELEASE

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# Thick coil for the latest commercial vehicles

## BPW Bergische Achsen KG produces parts from high-strength steel with up to twelve-millimeter gages using Schuler presses and thick coil lines

*Göppingen/Wiehl, September 23, 2015* – Around one million brake shoes and half a million supports for the running gear of truck trailers and semi-trailers leave BPW’s main plant in Wiehl near Cologne, Germany, every year. The innovative mobility partner and system partner for the transport industry uses steel coil with gages of up to twelve millimeters – so-called thick coil – in its production. In order to produce such rigid parts from mostly high-strength materials, the family-run company has long relied on two 1,600-metric-ton presses, together with coil lines and levelers, supplied by Schuler.

“The new production concept we introduced some years ago was a giant leap forward for us,” recalls Hartmut Schmidt, Director of Operations at BPW. “We previously used presses with forces of 400 to 630 metric tons. The challenge was to find an economic way of producing the parts and to integrate it into our production flow. The old machines weren’t able to achieve this with the necessary quality and output levels. In 2006, we therefore decided to set up a completely new press center. As a one-stop shop for both press and automation equipment, Schuler was an obvious front-runner.” This concept has also been embraced by BPW itself – as a system partner for vehicle manufacturers, the company can provide its customers with complete systems and extensive services, as well as individual components like brake shoes and supports, from a single source.

The thick coil sector for such products in Germany and Europe is not exactly large: “Most suppliers produce for the automotive or domestic appliance industries where thick coil already starts at three to four millimeters,” says Schmidt. As a consequence, equipment which can straighten, blank and form coil of up to twelve millimeters is quite rare: “I’m convinced that we’ve found a competent and reliable press manufacturer in Schuler.”

## Joint development of leveler

When using such thick materials, BPW attaches great importance to keeping waste to a minimum, as scrap costs for thick coil are correspondingly high. The possibility of nesting – i.e. placing numerous parts with the smallest possible gaps between them on the coil – and thus using the coil’s full width is absolutely essential. “To ensure that the main product and subsidiary products drop out of the press in perfect condition, we not only need high blanking forces but also good guidance of the coil along the line,” explains Schmidt. Whether at the beginning, end or middle of the coil, thick coil stock must always enter the die in the correct position. The task of the leveler is therefore to balance out any bends and cambers. “At the time, there were no solutions on the market and so we decided to develop one together with Schuler,” explains the engineering graduate.

According to Schmidt, the new equipment not only enabled BPW to raise output but also machine availability. “This is equally important as our production flow is highly integrated and we produce ‘just in time’. We would need huge storage and inventory levels to compensate for a line which doesn't meet our requirements. We therefore looked for a reliable line with high availability and wanted to work with a company which can truly solve any technical problems we might have.”

BPW’s new press center helped take productivity to a new dimension: “Compared to the past, we more than doubled stroking speeds, and the higher tonnage meant that output volumes were more than quadrupled. In a good shift, we used to produce 3,500 to 4,000 mass produced parts – today, the figure is more like 16,000,” reports Schmidt. At the same time, the accuracy – and thus quality – of the parts has improved, as tolerances have been reduced from three millimeters to 0.5 millimeters: “This means we no longer have to check dimensions and rework or reject parts. Thanks to the specific machine configuration and consistent development of the interplay between die and machine, we also gained extra capacity. As a result, we no longer just produce parts for our own products but can take on outside orders, including finishing work like KTL coating.”

And how does Hartmut Schmidt himself judge the production line’s performance after several years of working with it? “There are always teething problems with projects like this – and especially with new developments. The important thing though is that you have a contact partner who can always help you solve such problems. This is what we ourselves promise as a reliable partner for the transport industry – finding solutions together with our clients. And Schuler really provided great support in all situations. This partnership is ultimately what helped us achieve such success.”

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### Captions

Bild1.jpg: For the production of its running gear components, BPW relies on two 1,600-metric-ton presses, together with coil lines and levelers, supplied by Schuler.

Bild2.jpg: The basic material for such rigid parts is steel coil with gages of up to twelve millimeters – so-called thick coil.

Bild3.jpg: The leveler for this thick coil is a joint development of BPW and Schuler.

Bild4.jpg: The new equipment enabled BPW to raise the output and quality of its running gear components significantly.

*Please name Schuler as the photo source.*

***About the Schuler Group –*** [***www.schulergroup.com***](http://www.schulergroup.com)

*Schuler is the technological and global market leader in forming equipment. The company offers cutting edge presses, automation, dies, process know-how and services for the entire metal forming industry and lightweight vehicle construction. Its clients include car manufacturers and their suppliers, as well as companies in the forging, household equipment, packaging, energy and electrical industries. Schuler is the market leader in coin minting presses and supplies systems solutions for the aerospace, railway and large pipe industries. In fiscal year 2014, Schuler posted sales of € 1.18 billion. With around 5,400 employees, Schuler is represented in 40 countries and is a member of the Austrian ANDRITZ Group.*

***About BPW Bergische Achsen KG –*** [***www.bpw.de***](http://www.bpw.de)

*Headquartered in Wiehl, Germany, BPW is a reliable international mobility and system partner for the transport industry and offers innovative solutions from a single source. The portfolio ranges from axles, suspension systems, brake technologies, closure systems, body technology, lighting systems and plastic technologies through to user-friendly telematics applications for trucks and trailers. The BPW Group’s technologies and services create the highest transparency in loading and transport processes and enable efficient fleet management. The owner-managed BPW Group has around 5,800 employees worldwide.*