

Media Release**Oerlikon Balzers inaugurates new Customer Centre and celebrates 20-year anniversary in Querétaro, Mexico**

Balzers, Liechtenstein, 18 April 2019 – **On 4 April Oerlikon Balzers, a leading provider of surface solutions, opened a new customer centre in Querétaro, Mexico. At the opening ceremony Oerlikon Balzers Mexico also celebrated its 20-year anniversary with customers and guests of honour. This new site represents another key milestone in Oerlikon Balzers' growth strategy, as it allows the company to respond to the increased demand from the automotive industry for its sustainable high-quality coatings and heat treatments.**

Oerlikon Balzers can now supply its environmentally-friendly PPD and BALITHERM PRIMEFORM technologies, which ensure sustainable production of automotive components, to the Mexican automotive industry for the first time. Both represent a unique alternative to hard chrome plating, which has long been recognised as harmful to the public and the environment. In Querétaro, Oerlikon Balzers will serve OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers in the automotive industry as well as mould makers in the metal forming and plastics processing industry.

Querétaro is ideally situated close to Oerlikon Balzers' customers, allowing delivery times to be reduced and high-quality service and consulting to be provided. Together with the existing customer centre in Querétaro, Oerlikon Balzers Mexico has now positioned itself as an all-round provider of surface solutions. The start of production in Querétaro reduces the workload in the US-based centres, and the new location is well-positioned to serve other Latin American countries.

PPD technology – the environmentally-friendly heat treatment

Developed by Oerlikon Balzers, PPD is an environmentally-friendly and more cost-effective alternative wear protection to harmful chrome plating and an improvement on conventional nitriding. PPD protects punching tools by giving them a wear-resistant, hardened surface ideal for demanding production and working environments, and the process gives automotive customers a new service for large stamping tools and plastic injection moulds of up to 40 tons and ten metres in length. The enormous capacity of the PPD chamber reduces project lead times, allows higher-quality and longer-lasting automotive components to be produced by improving tool surface properties, and results in significant cost savings owing to fewer scrapped parts and reduced tool maintenance requirements.

BALITHERM PRIMEFORM – high-efficiency moulds with brilliant surfaces

Treatment with BALITHERM PRIMEFORM is the ideal way to improve demoulding, optimise process reliability and enhance component quality. The increased surface hardness makes injection moulds more robust, reduces build-up, spalling and edge embrittlement, and allows repairs and re-polishing without stripping and recoating, significantly reducing maintenance and down times. BALITHERM PRIMEFORM is the ideal solution for plastic injection moulds in the automotive, furniture, packaging and medical industries.

Views from the opening ceremony

Marc Desrayaud, Head of Oerlikon Balzers, said in his ceremony speech: “We have decided to increase our investment here in Querétaro and expand our services by offering our PPD technology, which replaces harmful hard chrome with a solution that is 100% eco-friendly. Our PPD technology is a high-end, innovative solution that makes production more efficient, reduces downtimes and, above all, enhances the surface quality of our customers’ components. Mexico’s industry is strong, and we believe in its professional, economical and human power. Our Oerlikon Balzers team here in Querétaro is now ready and looking forward to delivering the best solutions and services to our customers.”

Nathan Olds, Regional Executive Americas, emphasised the importance of the new location: “Today marks a very special achievement for Oerlikon Balzers in the Americas region as we officially begin production in our new, state-of-the-art PPD facility. This facility is now our 26th service centre in operation serving our customers throughout a region that covers Canada down to Argentina. We are proud to have an established presence in Mexico with our main facility located in Querétaro and our growing facility located in Saltillo, where we serve our customers in the North.”

Francisco Domínguez Servién, Governor of Querétaro, said: “Querétaro is the gateway to the most competitive regions of the country. This entity has an effective vision involving industry, academia and the state government as facilitator. Having done business here for 20 years now, Oerlikon Balzers has found conditions of stability and peace to grow, and in particular it has found the necessary talent to develop its unique technology across Latin America.”



The management and the team celebrated opening and the 20th anniversary in the new premises in Querétaro, Mexico.



The traditional ribbon cutting during the opening ceremony was hosted by (left to right) Philipp Moser, Consulate of Switzerland in Querétaro City; Pietro Buccheri, Head of Sales and Operations, Latin America; Erik Mayoraz, Swiss Ambassador to Mexico; Marc Desrayaud, Head of Oerlikon Balzers; Francisco Domínguez Servién, Governor of Querétaro; Marco Antonio del Prete, Querétaro State Secretary of Sustainable Development; Nathan Olds, Regional Executive, Americas; Alejandro Ochoa, Mayor of Colón; Andreas Reiter, Head of Forming Tools Oerlikon Balzers.



Administration and Operation Employees holding Carlos Navarro, Center Manager of the new PPD Customer Centre in Querétaro.

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About Oerlikon Balzers

Oerlikon Balzers is one of the world's leading suppliers of surface technologies that significantly improve the performance and durability of precision components as well as tools for the metal and plastics processing industries. Extremely thin and exceptionally hard coatings, marketed under the BALINIT and BALIQ brand names, reduce friction and wear. The BALITHERM brand opens up a broad range of heat treatment services, whereas BALTONE comprises coatings that are available in a full range of elegant colours, perfectly suited for decorative applications. BALIMED ThinFilm coatings, with wear-resistant, biocompatible, antimicrobial and chemically inert properties, have been developed especially for medical applications. Under the BALIFOR technology brand the company has introduced technologies which provide tailor-made solutions for the automotive market, while ePD allows the metallisation of plastic parts with a chrome look.

Worldwide, more than 1'100 coating systems are in operation at Oerlikon Balzers facilities and its customers. Equipment engineering and assembly of Balzers' systems are processed in Liechtenstein, in Langenthal (Switzerland) and in Bergisch Gladbach (Germany). Oerlikon Balzers operates a dynamically growing network of more than 100 coating centres in 35 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia. Oerlikon Balzers is – together with Oerlikon Metco and Oerlikon AM – part of the Surface Solutions Segment of the Switzerland-based Oerlikon Group (SIX: OERL).