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Siemens recalls pioneers of the first age of electricity at Linderhof Palace

At a ceremony in Linderhof Palace on May 25, 2011, Prince Luitpold of Bavaria, Bavarian Finance Minister Georg Fahrenschon and Siemens President and CEO Peter Löscher honored the first pioneers of the age of electricity. It was at Linderhof in 1878 that Sigmund Schuckert built – by order of King Ludwig II – the world’s first power plant to use electric dynamos operating on the Siemens principle. “And today,” said Peter Löscher, “we’re once again on the threshold of a new age of electricity – one that will feature renewable energies, smart grids, electric mobility and a high degree of energy efficiency. As the history of Linderhof shows, visions can become reality.”

Around 100 guests from society, politics, the business world, the scientific community and the media were on hand at Linderhof Palace for the ceremony in honor of the Pioneers of the Age of Electricity. As early as 1878, King Ludwig II, who died 125 years ago on June 13, 1886, had electrical lighting installed in the palace’s Venus Grotto. “Tradition and the protection of nature were not then – and are not now – opposed to technology and progress,” emphasized Prince Luitpold of Bavaria. “Our ancestor, Ludwig II, was uncompromising in the pursuit of his visionary artistic aims. At the same time, however, he relied heavily on the inventions of technology pioneers like Sigmund Schuckert and Werner von Siemens, while always insisting on the preservation of Bavaria’s natural resources as a precious asset for the future.”

The magical blaze of color that Ludwig II envisioned for the Venus Grotto was made possible by 24 electric dynamos operating on the Siemens principle and an array of carbon arc lamps from Siemens. These electrical systems were firmly in place at Linderhof a year before Thomas A. Edison’s first experiments with incandescent light bulbs and four years before the construction of the first public power plants. “Therefore, we have every right to claim that the age of useable electricity began right here at Linderhof,” said Siemens CEO Peter Löscher.

While Ludwig II was mainly concerned with aesthetic effects, the pioneers of today are focused primarily on the optimization of efficiency. “We’re at the beginning of a new era,” said Löscher, “an

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era of sustainability. Growth, the quality of life and ever-increasing prosperity coupled with lower resource use and greater climate protection must be our goal: To bring these into harmony – this is our task and our responsibility.” The solution lies in the new age of electricity: “In the days of King Ludwig, electricity set the stage for industrialization. Today, it’s paving the way for green re-industrialization,” Löscher stated. Not only can electrical power be generated in an ecofriendly way; it can also be transmitted with little loss and used in a highly efficient manner.

“Energy and electrical power are key success factors for the economy and for environmental protection,” stressed Finance Minister Georg Fahrenschon. “With our energy concept, we’re creating in Bavaria the ideal prerequisites for the new age of electricity.” Pioneering projects and partnerships like the model regions for electric mobility and the initiative for carbon-free households are major steps on the road to a more sustainable future.

More information and press pictures are available in www.siemens.com/presse/linderhof

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