

PRESS RELEASE

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Kährs' 150th anniversary

Joins the club of 150-year-old Swedish companies

Swedish companies such as SEB Bank, SJ (Swedish Railways) and the brewery Åbro bryggeri have celebrated their 150th anniversaries in 2006.

This year floor manufacturer Kährs is also joining the select club of 150-year-olds.

Kährs has gone from making simple turned products for local customers in the Nybro region of Sweden – via a wide range of products such as wooden toys, doors and windows – to being Europe's biggest wood floor manufacturer today and one of the world leaders.

Kährs is still located where it was founded in 1857: in Nybro, in the heart of Sweden's Smålands forests, about 25 km (16 miles) from Kalmar.

At the beginning, in 1857, the population totalled 300. Today Kährs employs approx. 1500 people globally, 1300 of them in Sweden.

In addition to Nybro, manufacturing is carried out today in Blomstermåla and Ljusdal (Sweden) and Brumunddal (Norway).

The company sells currently in some 40 markets all over the world. Its biggest market today is the USA, followed by Sweden and Germany.

Rapid growth after some major inventions

In the 1930s Gustaf Kähr, grandson of the founder, started working with laminated wood with the aim of developing a door that would be able to cope with demanding indoor and outdoor climates. Subsequently, he transferred this concept to wood floors.

The laminated construction was patented in 1941, and is still the standard way of making the majority of wood floors.

At the end of the 1990s Kährs, as the world's leading floor company, launched another global success: the glueless interlocking system Woodloc. This groundbreaking invention has further consolidated the company's position as the world's leading innovative wood floor company.

More patents and certifications

In 1969 the company also patented a new construction for sports floors. This too forms the basis for the majority of sports floors even today. In 2004 a further development was launched: "Activity Floor", a sports floor with the resilient material built-in on the back of the board.

In 1993 Kährs was the first floor manufacturer to gain ISO 9001 quality certification. Kährs was awarded ISO 14001 environmental certification four years later.

Even before tougher environmental legislation came into force, Kährs had also developed totally solvent-free production processes and carried out continuous upgrades of their production process to minimise discharges and other environmental impacts.

Other events in 1857, the year Kährs was born:

- World's first football team, Sheffield FC, was founded.
- Reuters was founded.
- Hollywood district of Los Angeles was founded.

- In Sweden, a society promoting the introduction of the formal term of address “ni” was formed.
- Sweden decided to revoke the ban on the Danish language and Danish books in Blekinge, Halland and Skåne.
- Stockholm’s population exceeded 100,000.
- The Indian mutiny against British rule broke out.
- The Gul Tre Skilling Banco stamp, which later became the world’s most expensive and famous stamp, was franked in Kopparberg.

Facts about Kährs:

AB Gustaf Kähr was family-owned from its foundation in 1857 until 1982, and today joins floor manufacturers Bauwerk (Switzerland) and Marty (France), both market leaders in their respective home markets, as business areas within Nybron Flooring International.

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Kährs is a business area within Nybron Flooring International (Switzerland). The NFI Group is Europe’s leading wooden flooring company. Other group members are Bauwerk and Marty. AB Gustaf Kähr was founded in 1857 and is now one of Europe’s leading manufacturers of parquet and wooden flooring. Net turnover in 2005 was EUR 229.8 million, with 1384 employees. Major markets are Europe and the USA, but the company is active on more than 40 markets throughout the world and has its own sales team in 11 countries. See also: www.kahrs.com

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