

Media Release

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"Wir von der Insel" – the book on the occasion of the Beznau 50-year anniversary

The Beznau nuclear power plant (KKB) took up operation five decades ago. This marked the beginning of half a century of climate-friendly power production and an important part of Swiss industrial and technological history. The initial euphoria about using the new technology was huge, but soon a wave of criticism washed over the nuclear power plant. Axpo has published a book on the occasion of the Beznau 50-year anniversary. "Wir von der Insel" tells the story of the three generations that worked and still work at Beznau with a strong commitment.

The Beznau nuclear power plant comprises two largely identical light-water reactors (Unit 1 + 2) each with a net electrical output of 365 megawatts. They generate approximately 6000 gigawatt-hours of electricity per year. This corresponds to around twice the power consumption of the city of Zurich. The commercial commissioning of the first unit took place at the beginning of December 1969. The second unit followed at the beginning of April 1972. Since commissioning, the plant has produced 250 terawatt-hours of electricity. In comparison to generation with a brown coal-fired power plant, about 300 million tonnes in CO₂ emissions were saved.

The euphoria over the use of the new technology was huge immediately after commissioning and met with applause from the media, environmentalists and social democrats alike. Thanks to the nuclear power plant, no more rivers would have to be dammed and no more gas-, coal- or oil-driven power plants would have to be built. However, a wave of criticism emerged in the early 70s. In the following decades, initiatives regarding the use of nuclear energy came to the ballot numerous times. With the adoption of the Energy Strategy 2050, the gradual phase-out of nuclear energy was decided.

Fifty years after the commissioning of Beznau is an occasion to honour the work of the women and men who built the plant, connected it to the grid, and who operated and still operate it with a high sense of responsibility. The Beznau staff is a family and team spirit is the foundation to master all the challenges: "No one individual is centre stage. If someone puts their own interests above those of the power plant, we have lost."

The Beznau anniversary book "Wir von der Insel" tells the story of former and current employees: The first generation that was inspired by pioneer spirit and big ideas; the second that got caught in the storms; and the third that knows the plant will be decommissioned. The book makes the Beznau spirit, the strong dedication and the daily work of the employees perceptible. At the same time, it documents an important piece of Swiss industrial and technological history.

Bibliographic details: The book "Wir von der Insel" – Beznau nuclear power plant 50-year anniversary will be available in bookstores and online as of the beginning of October 2019 and can be ordered for CHF 49.-, plus shipping costs (ISBN 978-3-033-07414-9).

Additional information

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About Axpo: The Axpo Group produces, trades and distributes energy reliably for over 3 million people and several thousand companies in Switzerland and in over 30 countries throughout Europe. Around 4500 employees combine the expertise from 100 years of climate-friendly power production with innovative strength for a sustainable energy future. Axpo is an international leader in energy trading and in the development of tailor-made energy solutions for its customers.