

Media release

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Two new railcars for the Rorschach–Heiden line

Appenzeller Bahnen (AB) is renewing its fleet of vehicles on the Rorschach–Heiden line. Stadler is supplying AB with two new adhesion cogwheel railcars. The new vehicles will go into service at the end of 2028. They will increase reliability, comfort and availability. The total cost of the two railcars is around 17.5 million Swiss francs. The existing vehicles have reached the end of their service life.

From the end of 2028, two 21-metre-long adhesion and rack-and-pinion railcars will replace the regular vehicle built in 1998 and two significantly older reserve vehicles. The procurement of two identical railcars brings many operational advantages for AB. When passenger numbers are high, they run coupled together (double traction), creating additional capacity with this flexible concept. Thanks to the reduced weight of the vehicles and the latest technologies, energy and maintenance costs can be reduced.

Unique travel experience

The new Stadler vehicles meet all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (BehiG), offering low-floor access, generous space for bicycles and prams, two wheelchair spaces, air conditioning, infotainment and charging sockets. Another new feature is the reintroduction of 1st class on the Rorschach–Heiden line. With seating at the front and rear of the train, it offers a special view of the route and Lake Constance. Another special feature is that first class is combined with the driver's cab. Passengers sit right next to the train driver and experience the train control system at close quarters. This creates a unique travel experience.

The popular summer service with open observation cars will continue to be offered with the new railcars. With the new railcars, AB is setting an important milestone for future operating models. The vehicles are prepared for later automated operation on GoA4. AB plans to introduce fully automated operation from around 2035.

End of service life reached

The two existing replacement vehicles from 1953 and 1967 have exceeded their technical service life. The operating licence from the Federal Office of Transport expires at the end of 2028. Retrofitting these reserve vehicles is not technically possible and would involve disproportionately high costs for the current standard vehicle from 1998. Furthermore, the existing vehicles do not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Against this background, AB, together with the cantons of St. Gallen and Appenzell Ausserrhoden and the federal government, have decided to procure new vehicles. The investment volume amounts to 17.5 million Swiss francs. The Rorschach–Heiden railway line has been in existence since 1875 and is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

*Caption Signing of the contract (from left to right): **Alain Brunold**, Head of Rolling Stock/Workshop at Appenzeller Bahnen; **Thomas Baumgartner**, Director of Appenzeller Bahnen; **Ansgar Brockmeyer**, Head of Marketing & Sales Division and Deputy Group CEO at Stadler; **Dennis Laubbacher**, CEO of Stadler Bussnang*

About Stadler

Stadler has been building trains for over 80 years. The provider of mobility solutions in rail vehicle construction, service and signalling technology has its headquarters in Bussnang in eastern Switzerland. Around 16,600 employees work at eight production and six engineering sites and over 80 service locations, including around 6,000 employees in Switzerland. Stadler is the world's leading manufacturer of vehicles with alternative drive systems (hydrogen and battery) and rack railway vehicles. The company is aware of its social responsibility for sustainable mobility and therefore stands for innovative, sustainable and durable quality products.

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