



INDUSTRY and EDUCATION

Filipstad is situated in between many of the major Nordic cities. With 300 kilometres to Stockholm, Gothenburg and Oslo, communications with the European continent work well. Filipstad's municipality works actively with local industry, which facilitates the setting up of new businesses and encourages growth. There is plenty of room for enthusiasm and innovation here.

Interacting forces

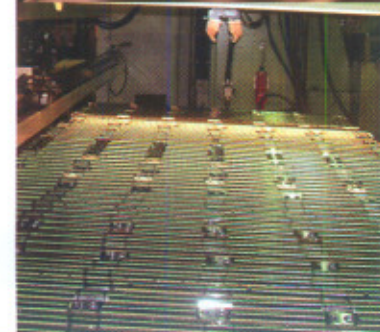
There is a variety of industry in and around Filipstad with the historical focus on metal production. Mill-based industrial traditions have influenced the area and its people. Iron mining was undertaken here as early as the 15th century. The region is full of industrial memorials from a very prosperous period, when local mines and foundries were world-leading exporters of iron.

The entrepreneurial spirit is still alive. Several organisations and business networks actively support trade and industry; for small as well as large companies. Businesses are helped by the Enterprise Office, where contacts and various activities are co-ordinated, creating effective growth and development. An Enterprise Advisory body has been set up with all sectors of industry represented. Innovation, quality and safety are keywords in the drive for increased interaction between municipality and local companies.

The Enterprise Office includes business advisors, EU co-ordinators, a Resource Centre for Women and rural advisors.

Filipstad – in the centre of the Nordic region

There are around 450 businesses based in the region. Many are manufacturing workshops or parts producers. They include the Nordic countries' biggest blasting equipment manufacturer, a spring producer with eight niche production plants (the main one in Lesjöfors), a company producing spears for shop front signage/exposure that has been family run since the 1950s... just to name a few. One of the most important employers in the municipality is Wasabröd, producer of one of Sweden's leading crispbread brands. Another major player within the food industry is OLW snacks, which is also based in Filipstad.



important inventors and entrepreneurs over the years. Brothers John and Nils Ericsson completed their education at Sweden's first technical school, connected to the building of Göta Canal. Nils became 'the father of the Swedish railway', following his work on the Swedish trunk lines. John Ericsson was ahead of his time, and it was apparent early on that he had an exceptional technical talent. Among his groundbreaking patents are; the first modern fire pump, a circotherm machine, the first practical propeller, the armoured boat Monitor, which made him most famous, and the world's first solar energy machine!

The memory of John Ericsson is honoured by the John Ericsson Society, whose members gather together in Filipstad each year at the end of July. The 1862 naval battle, when John Ericsson's Monitor fought the Merrimac in the American Civil War, is reconstructed in front of a great audience on lake Daglösen in the centre of Filipstad. In compliance with the inventor's last wishes his mortal remains were brought home to Filipstad, where a mausoleum has been erected in his honour.

The mausoleum is one of the most frequently visited memorials of John Ericsson.

Our current inventors distinguish themselves at both national and international level. Johan Sundström designs and develops haze machines for theatres and scenes. The company Swefog successfully exports machines and equipment all over the world.

Lars Bruun has developed forestry machines since the 1960s, and achieved some unique patents. The machines "put forestry on wheels" and are now exported worldwide. Current development projects include a system to reduce fuel consumption, which will ultimately result in significant cost reductions. Lars Bruun's motto is: "There is nothing that cannot change." He emphasizes the benefits of working in a smaller place, where you can produce a drawing in the morning, pick up the finished product at the suppliers at lunchtime and then test it in the applicable machine where development work is taking place.



Education = employment

In Filipstad's municipality there are two higher education institutions with specialised disciplines that, without exception, lead students straight to employment. Students are often offered full time jobs before even graduating! Bergsskolan in Filipstad educates engineers within mining and metallurgy.

The key word for applicants to Bergsskolan is *interest* – interest in production focused work within geology! Many of them take on the basic technical introductory course; others are recruited from secondary schools or other professions. There are around 25 places on each course.

Studying at Bergsskolan leads to self-fulfilling and interesting jobs on a wide market. Bergsskolan awards *all* students on the Geology and Structural Technology programme a tax-free scholarship.

Bergsskolan was founded in 1830 by geologist Frank von Schéele, an important entrepreneur who also set up Filipstad's library – one of the first public libraries in Sweden. In 1842, von Schéele, Öttn (a quantity surveyor) and O L Geier (a land owner), started a society for insurance of chattels; Wermlands Brandstodsbolag – today Länsförsäkringar.

Gammelkroppa Skogsskola is a modern college dating from the 1860s. The school educates forestry engineers and conducts forestry research. At Gammelkroppa there is also a high standard conference establishment. The combination of college and further education ensures a degree that is linked to reality. During studying there are good possibilities of creating close contacts with the forest industry. The education is in accordance with Sweden's Agricultural University (SLU) course outline.

