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This work, including modernising the stations on the route, is scheduled for completion by the end of 2018. The SBB station at Sevelen is the nearest to Vaduz at only 1.5km from the Liechtenstein border and just another 1km from the centre of the capital; also the Swiss station at Trübbach is right on the border (the Rhein) and adjacent to Balzers, one of the larger communities in the Principality. In the longer term (2025) there are Swiss plans to improve the local services south from Sargans through Bad Ragaz and Maienfeld to Landquart and Chur. The Austrians also have plans in the shorter term to upgrade their already frequent services on the ÖBB line from Feldkirch, along the east bank of the Rhein to Dornbirn and the Vorarlberg Provincial Capital of Bregenz.

INNOTRANS

Ron Smith looks at the Swiss presence at the 2012 exhibition

Innotrans is probably the world's largest rail transport exhibition. It is held in Berlin every two-years (see **www.innotrans.de**). In 2012 it was larger than ever. The Berlin Messe site was fully used, covering 161,420 m2 with 2,515 exhibitors from all over the world. There were 126, 110 attendees during the trade-only days of 18th to 21st September with the public being admitted to the outdoor displays on the 22nd and 23rd. Innotrans is the showcase for all the latest developments in technology, hardware, software, track, electrical equipment, cables, and of course new trains and trams. Switzerland was well represented particularly with the Stadler presence. A growing market segment is for new open access operators, who may not be ordering in the large quantities that national operators can, but are looking for something special to differentiate them from the incumbent operator. A good example is the Stadler built version of their FLIRT electric units for Czech open access company Leo Express, who now operate between Prague and Ostrava from last December's timetable change. These five very high quality trains will have 160kph top speed, and their 237 seats are divided into 212 "Economy", 19 "Business" and 6 "Premium" classes. The latter are in a small compartment with luxury leather reclining seats with leg/foot rests, individual lights, screens for films or TV, and electrical sockets. Newspapers, beverages and so on will be provided by a hostess. The new trains will be quite a contrast to some of CD's rolling stock! Double-deck trains for the BLS and German operator ODEG were there, as was one of SBB's hybrid shunters. Also on display were a Re450 Zurich S-Bahn set and a Re4/4 locomotive, both of which have been refurbished. Modalohr displayed their new profile intermodal wagon that will allow 4m high (at the corners) road vehicles to be carried within many existing loading gauges, as the present Gotthard route through Switzerland. This is proving a little controversial, as it appears to negate some of the arguments put forward for the Base Tunnel. However, this is not serious as track capacity constraints and factors make the new Gotthard tunnel a vital necessity. Other intermodal wagons were on display on the outside tracks. The future of rail freight must lie in attracting road freight to use rail intermodally. The sheer volume of new ideas, manufacturers, trains and technology present at Innotrans meant that it was impossible to see it all. It is a great sign of the vitality and drive that is in the industry today as it adapts to environmental, lower cost, and flexibility demands, plus shorter term ordering and delivery schedules, and all to a higher quality level than ever before. Innotrans is certainly impressive, and huge – and not all serious, as a 1925 built 0-6-0 tank engine gave very popular cab rides up and down the tracks that feed the rail section!

1. Stadler unit for BLS. ***2.*** Stadler unit for Leo Express.
3. Stadler unit for ODEG. ***4.*** Stadler tram for Stuttgart.
5. Stadler shunter SBB 923005-3. *All photos:* Ron Smith