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CAPITAL EQUIPMENT NEWS

For informed decision-making

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PREMIUM PAYS SUPERIOR DIVIDENDS

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FEATURES

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RENTAL LEADS THE WAY

The state of the construction and mining industries has a direct bearing on the health of the earthmoving equipment and truck supply chain. Subdued construction and mining markets discernibly translate into depressed machinery and truck sales, a situation we had in 2016, especially on the back of downward global commodity prices and the resultant shrinking infrastructure spend across many African countries. To give an idea, South Africa, arguably Africa's principal market, lost almost a third of its over 6 000 earthmoving machine sales recorded in 2015, while the truck market saw a 10% decline in the same period.

But, as they say, something positive always comes from something negative. This is especially true as far as the prospects of the African plant-hire market are concerned. The demise of the cyclical construction and mining industries is a significant factor that spurs the prospects for growth for the equipment hire market.

There is also general consensus that the construction contracting market in South Africa has significantly changed. Previously dominated by the so-called "Big Five", it is now a feast of the smaller and upcoming concerns. This scenario is mostly fuelled by the way infrastructure projects are being rolled out at present. The days of multi-million rand projects are long gone. Projects are being packaged into smaller lots to allow every contractor to have a piece of the country's infrastructure project rollout.

With most of the smaller contractors seemingly busier than anyone else, they ought to opt for hire rather than outright purchasing of their own gear, for their equipment needs. Understandably, these are small companies still finding their feet in the construction business, and their work is mostly project based. In my recent conversation with Filippo Bevilacqua, owner of Riviera Hire, he noted that the clientele for his plant-hire business had significantly changed. He deals a lot more with new, small and upcoming companies. Already, this group of customers constitutes 35% of his client base.

Figures from the Construction and Mining Equipment Suppliers' Association also reflect that the plant-hire sector continues to grow as most users prefer hiring equipment to buying, especially when times are this tough. For example, the plant hire industry was recipient to 22,8% of total unit sales of equipment in 2005 in South Africa, a figure that significantly rose to 30,5% in 2014. Plant hire growth has been at the expense of the mining market's buying power, which cut down its spending from 26,4% of South Africa's equipment sales in 2005 to only 15,2% in 2014.

To further show that the rental culture is entrenching itself in the mind of the African equipment community, there is a growing trend towards big construction contractors establishing their own plant-hire divisions that cater for their own construction contracts, as well as for external customers when contracts are few and far between.

With rental companies' fleets now more often on sites than standing idle in the yards, there is no doubt that owners will be calling at suppliers' doors this year to replace their ever-busy pieces of equipment. Companies have, in recent years, postponed their fleet replacement programmes, but I believe there comes a point in time when outdated equipment becomes too expensive to maintain.

Construction and mining equipment cannot be used after a certain period as the cost of maintenance outweighs the cost of investment. Consequently, I foresee the need to replace obsolete equipment increasing rapidly this year so as to meet the operational demands of businesses.

Munesu Shoko – Editor

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SCANIA

Road Milling's core business is the rental of milling machines for the rehabilitation of asphalt and concrete roads.

PREMIUM PAYS SUPERIOR DIVIDENDS

Over its 17-year existence, Road Milling and Sweeping has carved itself a niche rental business to become the largest privately-owned operator of milling machines in South Africa. With a clear understanding that the success of a business of this nature largely depends on machine uptime, the company has vested its trust in premium Wirtgen milling machines over the years, a decision that is continually paying dividends, writes *Munesu Shoko*.

From humble beginnings back in 1999 with a single Wirtgen 1000C milling machine, Road Milling and Sweeping (RMS) today owns a strong 21-unit fleet of milling machines, making it the single biggest privately-owned operator of such specialised gear in South Africa. Founded by Cecil Aling and a business partner at the time, today the family-owned business is being steered by two of Cecil and Glynn Aling's three daughters, Leigh Cameron and Lesley Kafka, who share their father's passion for anything mechanical, but with a premium taste, of course. Over the years, RMS has supported the Wirtgen brand for its milling equipment needs purely driven by the understanding that though premium calls for premium capital outlay, the returns, in the long run, are massive.

Road Milling's core business is the rental of milling machines for rehabilitation of asphalt and concrete roads. The company operates on a national basis and has recently successfully completed cross-border contracts. "We work all over South Africa in terms of the milling work we do. In the past year, we have done quite a lot of cross border work," says Lesley Kafka, general manager of RMS. "We still have ongoing work in Lesotho that will pick up in 2017. We have also worked in Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland and Malawi."

Kafka foresees increased cross-border work moving forward as most of the South African civil contractors spread their wings into the rest of Africa for greener pastures. This is considering that most of the cross-border contracts RMS has are with local South African companies doing work outside the country. According to Kafka, 98% of the company's cross-border work is through the South African contracting fraternity working elsewhere in Africa.

Sticking to core business

Over the years, RMS has stuck to its core niche business of renting out milling machines, but with a few other value adds such as lowbed trucking services, road sweeping, tippers and water carts. The company now owns its own three lowbed trucks used mostly for transporting its rented milling machines to sites, but these can be outsourced to any other customers in need of lowbed trucking. However, Kafka says sticking to the milling business only is a difficult decision from a strategic point of view. "We ask ourselves whether we need to stick to our niche or diversify the business," says Kafka.

"Diversification has got its own pros and cons. Sometimes you become too thinly spread. Ours is a capital intensive business, so to diversify you need to invest huge amounts of capital into equipment. Diversifying is also a bit challenging in the sense that all of our people are focused on milling; our operators know how to mill and are not versed with any other work," reasons Kafka.

But, Leigh Cameron, financial manager at RMS, believes that if ever the decision to expand the product portfolio is made, the immediate possible and closest option would be recyclers. She believes that recycling is aligned to what the company does and will allow it to continue dealing with the very same customer base.

RMS reports increased demand for its

RMS recently purchased a new Wirtgen W200 milling machine. Standing in front of the new acquisition are: (left to right) Brian Manganyi, operator manager at RMS; Errol Edwards, workshop manager; Lesley Kafka, general manager at RMS; Leigh Cameron, financial manager; and Waylon Kukard; sales manager at Wirtgen South Africa.

Cecil Aling founded RMS back in 1999.

milling machines in the past 12-18 months. "We believe we had a fantastic year in 2016 in terms of being able to keep our machines on hire," says Kafka. Demand is mostly driven by smaller civil engineering contractors. This is in direct contrast to some five years ago where the company would mostly deal with the bigger civil contractors.

Understandably so, this trend is because of the way civil projects are being packaged in South Africa at this stage. Projects are being packaged into smaller lots to allow smaller and upcoming contractors to have a share of the government infrastructure spend. Most of these smaller contractors lack the financial muscle to invest in their own specialised gear such as milling machines, hence the increased demand for RMS's services.

Success drivers

For a rental business of this nature, machine uptime is a key success driver. For that reason, RMS, from its inception, has always purchased Wirtgen milling machines only. All its 21 milling machines are Wirtgen machines. Kafka explains the reasons behind the loyalty to the brand. "We started out with a Wirtgen and created a strong bond at the time," she says, adding that the relationship has been further strengthened over the years.

RMS has also built a strong technical competence on Wirtgen machines with its own mechanical workshop equipped with strong technical capability to service these machines in-house. Led by Errol Edwards, workshop manager at RMS, the technical knowhow on Wirtgen machines goes beyond service and maintenance to include complete rebuilds of the machines in-house.

Another reason for sticking to Wirtgen is the fact that these German-made milling machines have a good reputation among RMS's customer base. "Wirtgen machines are popular products among our customers, in terms of their quality of work and productivity," says Kafka.

The quality of the build and durability is another key driver for sticking it out with this range of machines. This is reinforced by the fact that the first Wirtgen 1000C which kicked off the business back in 1999 is still in operation today, and works beyond expectations.

Meanwhile, a good product is as good as its service, and aftermarket support from Wirtgen South Africa has kept this relationship intact over the years. Waylon Kukard, Wirtgen sales manager, who has become more than just a business partner, is always at hand to respond to RMS's needs, be it technical queries, parts issues or even advice, especially at a time when the company is grappling with the idea of diversifying its product range. "We have become friends along the way. We work closely together on RMS's plans for the future," says Kukard.

Strong maintenance regime

Prior to the purchase of its new machine in July 2016, the previous machine RMS bought was back in 2013. According to Cameron, that speaks volumes about the quality of the build of the machines, but more importantly the strict service and maintenance regime. "Due to our strong focus on maintenance, even our first machine is still running perfectly beyond our customers' expectations," she says.

The longevity of this gear is also buoyed by the fact that these machines are rented out with an operator. Every operator sticks to their own machine, which, over the years, becomes their daily office. "Our operators are very territorial about their machines and they look after them," says Kafka.

A strict service and maintenance regime is followed, according to Edwards. Services, including oils, hubs, gear boxes and engine oil, are done at every 250-hour intervals. These intervals are maintained even when machines are out on sites. These services are undertaken on sites 95% of the time. Major services, such as drums and hydraulics, are done once a year, especially during the December downtime period when most machines return to the workshop.

Wirtgen undertakes services for all machines under warranty. All services are then done in-house when machines are off warranty. Continuous training of the 25 operators is also a key focus for the company, says Brian Manganyi, operations manager at RMS. It is this thorough training regime that has seen Manganyi himself rising through the ranks over the years when he started as a security guard, before he became a foreman, a supervisor and currently the operations manager.

Looking ahead, Kafka and Cameron are convinced that the business will continue on a good course in 2017. "Our vision is to continually strive for excellence to further build our reputation. We always go an extra mile for our customers, delivering more than they expect." This goes beyond the equipment to the people, constantly focusing on the people who make it happen on the ground. "Being a smaller, family-owned business, allows you to have that desire to always go out of your way for customer service." ✪

Auto Maquinaria appointed Terex Trucks' Angolan dealer

Auto Maquinaria (AMQA) has been appointed by Terex Trucks as its official distributor of articulated and rigid dump trucks in Angola.

Headquartered in its newly-opened facility in the capital Luanda, AMQA will also provide factory-approved parts and other essential aftermarket care services to customers throughout the iron ore, diamonds, and oil-rich country in southern Africa.

Pleased with the addition of Terex Trucks' machines to the company's portfolio, Adriano David, managing director at AMQA, says the appointment means its hauler offering to customers in Angola now comes with an increased payload. "The partnership with Terex Trucks is a great opportunity for AMQA to establish its position as the leading supplier of transport solutions to the mining industry in Angola," says David.

"During the years of the global commodity boom, AMQA delivered a significant number of ADTs to mines in Angola and even became the best seller of articulated haulers in the entire world in 2007. However, with the increased depth of mines, many operations switched to the use of rigid dump trucks, which wasn't a product we had to offer to customers – until now."

The durability and efficiency of Terex Trucks' equipment is a good match for the demanding climate and conditions of the Angolan mining industry.

The durability and efficiency of Terex Trucks' equipment is a good match for the demanding climate and conditions of the Angolan mining industry. To complement its existing range of products, AMQA will add all four Terex Trucks rigid haulers, the TR45, TR60, TR70, and TR100, as well as the TA250, TA300 and TA400 articulated dump trucks.

"AMQA has made a name for itself as a trusted and established distributor for construction equipment across various sectors of the Angolan market. We are confident that this appointment will mean Terex Trucks is well represented in the years to come, where we anticipate new and exciting opportunities in Angola's diamond, gold and iron mining sectors," says Guy Wilson, EMEA's sales and marketing director at Terex Trucks. ✪

AEL's IntelliShot sets new blasting standards

AEL Mining Services, Africa's leading innovator in explosives and blasting services, has launched its most advanced electronic initiating system yet. The IntelliShot Electronic Initiating System is designed to work in partnership with DetNet technology, and is the newest addition to AEL's Electronic Initiating Systems product suite.

"The current economic climate leaves no room for error in mining, and companies are unwilling to compromise on safety, expecting the most state-of-the-art and cost-effective solutions," says Dirk van Soelen, AEL's Global Portfolio manager. "AEL's extensive experience and expertise is what sets us apart as industry leaders in innovation and bring electronic blasting technology to Africa."

AEL, a member of the JSE-listed AECI Group in South Africa, has developed the intelliShot system with the notion of innovation and modernisation of mining practices in mind. By bringing technology and innovation into the mining landscape, AEL can enable its customers to achieve superior and cost-effective blasting results.

Designed to accommodate different blasting complexities, intelliShot can either be adjusted to work accordingly with a "tag by plan" option for advanced and complex blasting, or a "time assignment" option for non-complex blasts.

The fully programmable intelliShot 4G detonator builds on the safety principles of the DigiShot / DigiShot Plus range. Its key feature is a new ability to write a delay time into the detonators memory during tagging from the handheld CE4 Tagger. The detonator also has a redesigned Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC) with 15 times more memory capacity. The detonator is able to store and track critical information such as delay times and unique ID to be stored on the detonator; GPS co-ordinates, time and date of tagging and blasting information; and dynamic calculation of installed network capacity and resistance when deployed.

Working in conjunction with the 4G detonator, is the handheld CE4 Tagger; a leading innovation from DetNet. It has the capability to wirelessly control the intelliShot Commander to tag and test up to 300 detonators per line.

"This is an unprecedented benchmark in blasting," says Van Soelen. "The tagger is inherently safe, and allows users to trouble-shoot the bench before leaving." ✪

Zest Energy powers Balama Graphite Mine

The remote operation to mine one of the world's largest finds of high grade graphite – the Balama deposit in Mozambique – will be powered by a generator plant being constructed by South Africa-based Zest Energy, part of the Zest WEG Group.

According to Alastair Gerrard, managing director of Zest Energy, the plant will begin producing electricity during the first quarter of 2017, with an initial capacity of 12,5 MW from an installation of seven 2 200 kW diesel generators.

"The isolated location of the Balama mine – over 250 km west of Pemba in northern Mozambique – means that while the operation does have access to power from the national grid, this will need to be supplemented to ensure an adequate supply for full plant demand," says Gerrard. "We are therefore required by the customer to ensure 100% availability, and have consequently designed the plant with substantial standby capacity to allow for maintenance and repairs without affecting the continuous supply."

Gerrard says the plant, the largest footprint project yet tackled by Zest Energy, would initially run with seven 2 200 kW generators; six running and one on standby, and would later be expanded to include eleven generators, of which two will be standby units.

Equipment for the extensive scope of supply has been sourced from various companies within the Zest WEG Group, locally and worldwide. The containerised power generators include WEG alternators with automatic voltage regulation systems, as well as motorised louvres, generator auxiliary systems, and fuel and lube tanks. To cool the engines, a horizontal-type radiator system, rated for 50°C ambient temperature, was manufactured in South Africa and each

Business rescue can help struggling mining businesses

Low commodity prices and rising costs have kept the mining industry under severe pressure during the past year. According to Statistics South Africa (SSA) mining production had declined by 6,9% between the beginning of 2016 and the end of August 2016.

"The effects of the low commodity price environment are compounded by the continued rise in operating cost. These include above inflation increases in labour and electricity costs," says Annabel Bishop, economist at Investec in a recent note to clients.

Bishop says in an effort to remain profitable many mining companies have been forced to reduce both their capital expenditure and head counts. "The gold price is looking better so gold mining is doing well, but the real pressure is on coal and iron ore. Coal could face a terminal decline as the word switches to new technology to make increasing use of gas and renewable energy sources. Smaller minerals like manganese and chrome are also struggling," says Mike Schüssler, economist and director at Economists.co.za.

SSA figures show that the production of manganese ore was 13,7% lower in August 2016, compared to the previous year, while the production of nickel was 20,6% lower.

Gareth Cremen, partner specialising in business rescue at the Johannesburg office of global law firm Hogan Lovells, says struggling companies often remain in denial about their financial position until it is too late. "They keep telling themselves things like 'we just need this one big contract' or 'prices will pick up soon'. This means they fail to seek much needed help and by the time reality sets in it's far too late."

The effects of the low commodity price environment are compounded by the continued rise in operating cost.

Cremen says many directors are still not aware of how business rescue can be used to save struggling mining companies – if they act soon enough. This could mean the difference between failing during a difficult period and surviving to take advantage of an improvement in conditions.

Business Rescue was introduced in the Companies Act as a legal process aimed at restructuring companies which are in financial distress in order to save them. The first goal of effective business rescue is to rescue a company from financial distress and avoid liquidation. If this is not possible, the goal becomes to implement a business rescue plan that should result in a better return for the creditors or shareholders of the company than immediate liquidation would. "Ultimately business rescue is a win-win situation in comparison to flat out liquidation. It was developed with the aim of saving jobs, while with liquidation all employees usually lose their jobs," says Cremen. ✪

radiator includes 10 WEG 3 kW fan motors positioned in two cooling banks of five fans each.

The complete 35 t packaged diesel generator set being lifted for loading onto transport vehicle.

"One of the challenges of the mine environment is the presence of graphite dust, which is highly conductive and must not be allowed to enter the power generation units," Gerrard says. "For this reason, a filter system was designed that could accommodate the high volumes of moving air required to cool the engines, while also requiring as little maintenance as possible."

Once again, a local solution was designed, in the form of a custom-engineered, self-cleaning cartridge type ventilation and pressurisation fan unit, comprising four WEG 7,5 kW fan motors.

To feed diesel to the generators, Zest Energy will install a 30 000 litre intermediate fuel tank to draw from the customer's bulk fuel storage system with a duplex fuel filtration and circulation system as well as all interconnecting piping, valves, pumps and fittings within the power plant area. ✪

IN BRIEF

PVS pump range for sludge and slurries

Becker Mining South Africa's PVS range of vortex pumps has been designed to efficiently pump sludge and slurries containing large abrasive solids and fibrous materials in light, medium and heavy service industries. The PVS (pumpmor vertical spindle) range, which can handle solids of up to 72 mm and S.G's (specific gravities) to 1,5, achieves up to 87 m heads at speeds of 2 950 rpm. These units are available in two and three-inch models, with a 0,7 m spindle length and single motor drive.

"The most important feature of these vertical pumps is the recessed, non-clog impeller design that prevents binding and clogging problems. Since the impeller is clear of the pump casing, any solids and fibrous materials that enter the suction inlet will be expelled through the pump discharge, without damaging the impeller," says Theo Cambanis of Becker Mining South Africa.

Stemming safety stoppages

More frequent government-ordered safety stoppages on mines – which demand a halt to a mine's entire operation – highlight the need for a system that detects potential collisions underground and alerts personnel of dangerous situations, according to Booyco Electronics continuous improvement manager, Jaco du Plessis.

The Chamber of Mines recently reported that South African platinum producers had experienced three times as many 'Section 54' stoppages by the Department of Mineral Resources in 2016 than previous years; the cost of safety stoppages for the industry as a whole were estimated at R4,8 billion in 2015, up from R2,6 billion in 2012, the report said.

Du Plessis says that Booyco Electronics' Proximity Detection System (PDS) has built a reputation for helping mines protect their most important asset: its people. "The PDS is designed to allow for intervention where a potentially dangerous situation exists between a pedestrian and a machine," he says. "Consisting of a sensing device that detects the presence of an object in a working area, the system can provide an audible and visual alarm to both the equipment operator and pedestrians as they enter danger zones." ✪

DEUTZ launches new TCD 9.0 engine

The four-cylinder TCD 9.0 diesel engine is the first in a new generation of engines that DEUTZ is planning as part of an alliance with the Liebherr Group.

At bauma China 2016, Asia's biggest trade fair for construction equipment, DEUTZ exhibited together with its Chinese joint venture, DEUTZ (Dalian) Engine (DDE) and the major highlight of its exhibit was the world premiere of the new TCD 9.0 engine.

The four-cylinder diesel engine with a capacity of 9 l is the first in a new generation of engines that DEUTZ is planning as part of an alliance with the Liebherr Group. As well as the TCD 9.0, the alliance will comprise six-cylinder diesel engines. The engines made by Liebherr within this cooperation will be sold by DEUTZ under its own brand.

The plan is for DEUTZ's Chinese joint venture to manufacture the TCD 9.0 under licence so that it can more easily serve the local market. The engine has a power rating of 300 kW and produces 1 700 Nm of torque. It also features a highly compact design that makes it easy to install in a wide range of applications and is particularly well suited for excavators and wheel loaders.

All new engines are being developed for the EU Stage V, US Tier 4, China IV and EU Stage IIIA emissions standards and will be ready to go into series production in 2019. They will follow a standardised concept with a common customer interface and a high proportion of shared parts and are to be distributed via DEUTZ's global network of dealers and service outlets.

"By adding new engines from the alliance with Liebherr, we are enhancing our product portfolio and can now cover further power output ranges and applications," says Michael Wellenzohn, member of the Board of Management of DEUTZ AG with responsibility for Sales / Service & Marketing. ✪

SDLG launches its largest ever motor grader

SDLG's G9260 is ideally suited for large-scale infrastructure projects.

SDLG has unveiled the biggest motor grader the company has ever made – the G9260, at bauma China 2016 in Shanghai. The new G9260 motor grader has been built to handle a variety of tasks such as land grading, ditching, bulldozing, slope scraping and snow removal work. It is ideally suited for mining and large-scale infrastructure projects. The new model will be available in early 2018.

Powered by a Tier 3 SD13 engine, the G9260 features optimised weight distribution, 136 kN tractive force and is equipped with a hydraulically-powered wet brake system. The electronically-controlled engine matches perfectly with the power shift transmission control valve and the mechanical transmission system, achieving optimum performance and fuel efficiency. The double fuel tanks in the G9260, said to be the first of their kind in China, ensure high driving force and reliability. With safety in mind, the electric-hydraulic locking mechanism ensures safe and convenient operation.

"SDLG has established itself as one of China's most reliable machinery brands in the global market," says Yu Mengsheng, CEO of SDLG. "Responding to customer demand, launching the G9260 marks another milestone for SDLG, as the company strives to produce the best motor graders in the nation. The new model joins our broad range of road building equipment and we are excited to unveil it to our customers and dealers. To us, bauma China is the gateway to the international market and we look forward to showcasing some of our newest capabilities to potential future customers." ✪

Probe to distribute SCC air compressors locally

Probe, South Africa's largest importer of premium batteries and a leader in rotating electrics, has established Probe Industrial Technologies. The new division is focused on providing quality air, power and safety solutions to industrial clients. Within this division is Air Power Technologies, which primarily distributes SCC compressors, a leading global brand of air compressors.

As part of Probe's expansion strategy and commitment to providing a complete industrial solution, the company sought to partner with a suitable manufacturer of high-quality air compressors. The innovative German-based company, Tolpec SCC, which produces the SCC air compressor, was the perfect fit.

Trevor Volker, who heads up Probe's Industrial Technologies division, says that Tolpec SCC's combination of best-in-class practices and total in-house capabilities made the company an ideal partner for Probe. "The partnership is a win-win for both companies. We were looking for a premium class of air compressor to distribute at a competitive market price. Tolpec SCC had recently embarked on a global expansion strategy that included establishing a German-managed manufacturing facility in China. The company was looking at the potential African market and required a local partner. Probe's 50-year experience in local and African markets attracted them to the company."

"The air compressor market is dominated by overpriced OEM brands and numerous companies offering a cheaper product with no aftermarket or spares support. We believe that it is an opportune time for new entrants to come into the market and provide a quality premium air compressor brand at competitive prices," says Volker. Additionally, some of the more familiar brands are without distributors at present. "Our aim is to provide the customer with a product that provides optimal performance, along with huge energy saving potential, at the right price," says Volker. ✪

Building a capital equipment fleet

A number of key criteria should form the basis of establishing or replenishing capital equipment fleets based on performance and reliability rather than simply making decisions based on a single-brand mentality, or purely a price consideration.

Rather than putting all eggs in one basket, fleet owners should practice best-of-breed procurement where the offerings of specialist manufacturers are purposefully weighed into the option, says Desmond van Heerden of ELB Equipment. Some of the world's highest-rated plant equipment is manufactured by specialist manufacturers who concentrate their efforts on producing world-beating machines of a certain type, such as excavators, wheel loaders, road building equipment, crushers, to mention a few.

With their entire reputation and livelihood invested in a single product type, original equipment manufacturers of well-known brands such as Sumitomo, Kawasaki, Ammann, Powerscreen processing equipment and a long list of others, have proven to be masters of their trade by continuously working on perfecting their offerings.

According to Van Heerden, fleet owners who want to simplify their purchasing through a single supplier can do so by procuring from an established best-of-breed distributor, such as ELB Equipment. As a subsidiary of the nearly century-old ELB Group, ELB Equipment has grown to become a leading capital equipment supplier with decades-old agreements in place with a full range of specialist manufacturers.

Rather than concluding agreements with any one large multi-product manufacturer (or "jack of all trades"), the company carefully seeks masters of world-leading equipment manufacturers and concludes distribution agreements with them – provided they comply with key criteria regarding product quality, availability and support, etc. As a result, local customers have the benefit of being able to access these best-of-breed machines with the full support of ELB Equipment's entire branch and dealer network strategically placed throughout the entire southern African sub-region as well as East Africa.

Desmond van Heerden says fleet owners who want to simplify their purchasing through a single supplier can do so by procuring from an established best-of-breed distributor.

The company's "hand-picked" product offering covers the equipment spectrum for earthmoving, construction, mining and industrial purposes. Brands represented are household names within the relevant industries and are managed by seasoned product specialists who are able to assist fleet owners with selecting the right machines for their specific applications. And having cross functional teams of specialists throughout ELB Equipment's operations ensures that support on Equipment is just as rewarding to the customer. ✪

Atlas Copco establishes Vacuum Technique

Atlas Copco has established a fifth business area, Vacuum Technique. The new business area will be operational from January 1, 2017 and has approximately 6 800 employees, including external workforce.

The new business area had restated revenues of SEK10,5 billion (USD1,2 billion) for the 12 months ended June 30, 2016. In addition, the new business area will include the operations of certain businesses acquired after June 30, 2016, with combined annual revenues of approximately SEK4 billion.

Since the acquisition of Edwards Group in January 2014, Atlas Copco's vacuum business has been growing. Several acquisitions in the vacuum area have been made or are under way, including Leybold and CSK, providing the opportunity to create a dedicated business area.

"Our ambition is to become the global leader in vacuum solutions," says Ronnie Leten, president and CEO of the Atlas Copco Group. "The global vacuum business is a growth area and by creating a separate business area with a dedicated organisation, the already strong customer focus will increase further."

Effective January 1, 2017, Atlas Copco now has five business areas. These are Compressor Technique, Vacuum Technique, Industrial Technique, Mining and Rock Excavation Technique and Construction Technique. Following the establishment of a fifth business area, the Vacuum Solutions division within Compressor Technique will no longer be operational and its business will move to Vacuum Technique. ✪

Kong takes the reins at Hyundai

Hyundai Heavy Industries has announced the appointment of K.Y. Kong as the new chief operating officer (COO) of the Hyundai Construction Equipment division. Kong has been working for Hyundai for 30 years and has held several positions within the company.

"Technology, quality, marketing and HR are the key drivers for sustainable growth in our business. I am very confident that by focusing on these four pillars we will deliver great value to our customers, grow our market share and achieve our goal of becoming a global top-three construction equipment manufacturer and a top-ten material handling equipment manufacturer," says Kong.

New Brokk 280 increases power

Brokk, a manufacturer of remote controlled demolition machines, has introduced its new Brokk 280. The machine features increased demolition power over its predecessor, includes the all-new Brokk SmartPower electrical system and incorporates additional hardened parts for extra durability in tough environments.

Bell spells growth strategy

Gary Bell, Bell Group chief executive, says 2016 was a challenging year due to the ongoing decline in the mining sector. Although 2017 looks to be another "fairly tough year", the company has strategies in place to try to reduce reliance on the current products and markets.

Gary also addressed rumours about plans to scale down the Richards Bay factory. "We may move some of our current activities from Richards Bay to somewhere closer to the big markets in Europe and America," he says. "But, we will only do this if we can reduce costs and ensure the company as a whole benefits so that we can grow the business and become more sustainable going forward. The strategy is that we would like to grow the Richards Bay business and there are a number of projects underway to support that. We are busy testing and evaluating some trucks, with a view to one day producing those in the factory here in Richards Bay, and I firmly believe that the volumes of that new product would be higher than what we're doing today on the current ADT truck programme."

ARTICULATING MORE HAULING GAINS

Southern Africa remains one of the key articulated hauler markets in the world. Its incredible versatility means that the articulated dump truck has become a popular piece of equipment in a range of applications including quarrying, general earthmoving and open pit mining. Amid stiff competition with manufacturers jostling for a share of the market, key innovations on ADT offerings abound, translating into better reliability and productivity for fleet owners, writes *Munesu Shoko*.

The local articulated dump truck (ADT) market is very competitive with several original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and their local dealers vying for a sizeable chunk of the seemingly lucrative market. Names that come to mind as far as this market is concerned include Bell Equipment, Caterpillar, Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE), Komatsu, Terex Trucks, Doosan, Astra and Dezzi.

As much as the ADT remains a popular piece of equipment on local quarry, construction and mining sites, the market hasn't been spared from the tide of challenging economic conditions currently sweeping across many of the recipient sectors, especially on the back of downward commodity prices. To give an idea, the ADT market accounted for about 950 unit sales in 2013, but official figures reflect that sales tumbled in the following years with 2014 recording 620 units, while 2015 further shrunk to 453 units. 2016 continued on this downward trend with 391 unit sales recorded by October.

"It is estimated that 70% of ADT usage in sub-Saharan Africa is in the mining industry. It is the nature of the environment that where mining needs to take place ADTs are an extremely good solution. As a result the ADT market in this region is heavily dependent on commodity prices."

"It is estimated that 70% of ADT usage in sub Saharan-Africa is in the mining industry. It is the nature of the environment that where mining needs to take place ADTs are an extremely good solution. As a result the ADT market in this region is heavily dependent on commodity prices," says Tristan du Pisanie, product marketing manager at Bell Equipment.

"2014 and 2015 were the challenging years as the slowdown in consumption of commodities brought an end to the commodity super-cycle. There were very

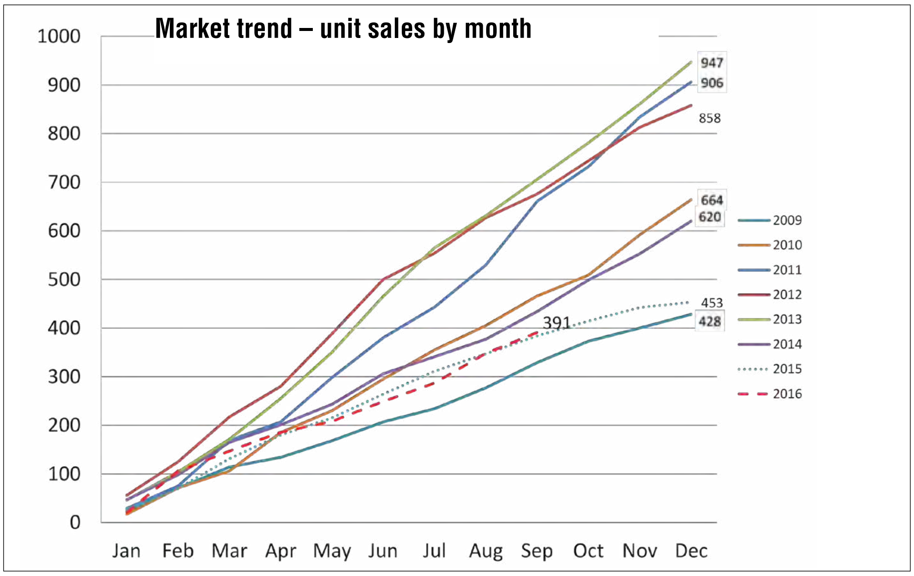
few new mining projects and ADT operators were running machines for longer as they did not want to commit to large capital outlays at that time. 2016 saw some optimism with some commodity prices recovering and customers starting to engage in fleet replacements," adds Du Pisanie.

According to Du Pisanie, the market size varies significantly, which is one of the challenges for ADT manufacturers. "South Africa varies from 400 to 1 000 trucks a year. Africa as a whole goes from 700 to 1 500 per year. The global total is generally between 5 500 and 10 000."

Roelof Wallace, Astra sales manager at CNH Industrial, agrees that South Africa is a very well-known ADT market for all manufacturers in this space, especially with its high commodity wealth. "Due to the current economic status of South Africa and other African regions at large, investments and sales numbers have slowed," says Wallace. He notes that fleet owners are also starting to look at on-highway options, which are somehow cheaper than their ADT counterparts. To date, Astra has more than 30 ADT units operating in the local market. "But, with a focus on further dealer expansions, we trust and believe we can grow this number significantly on an annual basis," says Wallace.

Competitive market

Add to the slowing market, competition is rife in this market as OEMs continue jockeying for market share, with a substantial move, on a global scale, being the acquisition of Terex Trucks business by Volvo CE in 2014, giving the Swedish OEM a strong position with two different product lines that cater for two different market tiers. Locally, that has also given Babcock, the southern African dealer for Volvo CE, an edge with two reputable ADT brands catering for two market segments.



"The southern African ADT market, and in particular the South African marketplace, remains highly competitive. However, from a Terex Trucks point of view, we are definitely seeing a resurgence of our brand under Babcock's distribution in southern Africa," says Erik Lundberg, business manager – sub-Saharan Africa at Terex Trucks. "Simultaneously, we are beginning to see, what will hopefully be a long and sustained recovery in the South African mining / earthmoving industry, which is contributing to higher sales volumes and market share for Terex Trucks in southern Africa."

Doosan also recently introduced its ADT range to the local market through DISA Equipment, trading as Doosan South

Bell Equipment is one of the OEMs leading the move towards bigger ADTs globally.

With a rated payload of 41 t, up from 39,5t on the Cat 740B, the Cat 745C is ideal for mining, construction and allied industrial segments.

Africa, the exclusive dealer for Doosan in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana. Chris Whitehead, managing director of Doosan SA, is targeting to grow the market base for Doosan's articulated haulers despite the competitive nature of this market segment.

Whitehead agrees that the local ADT market is a challenging space to enter as owners of this range of equipment are generally brand loyal due to the investments they have made over the years. But, he is convinced that Doosan will continue to make inroads into this market with several units recently tipping onto sites. "We will target some of the larger customers, but once again, it's a very difficult product range to break into, especially considering that most of the existing fleet owners already have certain brands they have been running over time. But, we look forward to showing the capabilities of our articulated haulers."

Innovations abound

In such a competitive environment, continued innovation in the ADT space is at play as OEMs continue to look at ways to differentiate their product from the competition. To remain competitive in this and other demanding markets globally, Terex Trucks, under the Volvo CE ownership, is investing in product development. The 10th generation of its ADTs became the first product Terex Trucks put out to market since joining the Volvo CE stable. The new ADT made its official debut at bauma 2016 in Munich. "The Terex Trucks Gen 10 ADT represents the first product launch for the company under Volvo ownership and is an important development for Terex Trucks," says Lundberg.

Available in South Africa in 2017, the Terex Trucks Gen 10 TA400, with its 38 t capacity, is the largest in the Terex Trucks articulated hauler range. It comes with several enhancements aimed at improving both productivity and operator comfort. "There are numerous improvements that have been made all over the truck. These include significant enhancements to the cabin and operator environment, including a new improved HVAC system, general comfort zone improvements throughout cab and improved insulation between operator's cab and engine compartment for reduced heat ingress into the cabin," says Lundberg.

Several improvements have also been made to the hydraulic system. Emergency body activation enables safe body lowering and service interventions, while magnetic suction filters guard against environmental contamination. "Improved cushioned steering cylinders also help to enhance operator comfort, while improved over-pivot hose routing and retention offer enhanced severe worksite tolerance," adds Lundberg.

The TA250 Gen 10 and TA 300 complete Terex Trucks' ADT line-up for southern Africa. The TA250 and TA300, with their respective 25 t and 28 t payload capacities, are ideal for construction, road building and general earthmoving. The applications overlap considerably with that of the TA400, but because of its size, the TA400 is more suited for mining and quarrying than the smaller models, says Lundberg.

"In southern Africa, due to the size of the mining market and operations in general, certainly our most popular ADT would be the TA400. The truck provides a great balance between power, versatility, reliability, fuel efficiency and low cost of operation, which makes it an attractive prospect for the South African market which traditionally favours larger ADTs," says Lundberg. "The 38 t payload capacity of the TA400 lends the truck to both mining and construction applications equally well and enables customers to move the truck from site to site and between different kinds of applications, as and when required."

Size matters

As Lundberg notes, there is a big trend towards increased preference for larger-sized ADTs, not just in South Africa, but globally. Volvo CE and Bell Equipment are leading the rapid progression of ADT sizes with the recent launches of their 60 ton (55 tonne) juggernauts. Growth in sizes of ADTs has been ongoing for at least a decade now, and that trend shows no sign of flagging.

It's only 10 years back when the largest ADT available in the market was Caterpillar's 740 tipping in at 42 t. At the time, the 20-30 t classifications were the flagship offerings for ADT users. But, there is a big drive towards the larger offerings as operations demand increased payload from their haulers.

The introduction of the Volvo A60H and the Bell B60E, both weighing in at 55 t, is testimony that the ADT market is continually convinced that this truck can tread where the rigid dump truck has over the years become the principal choice. The market for 55 t ADTs is definite: high production, large sites with room to manoeuvre a big truck of this nature and in challenging underfoot conditions. In the African market, quarries, open pit mines and large earthmoving operations are ideally suited for these behemoths.

The new 55t capacity A60H is the largest machine to be built by VolcoCE

Bells rings big

To further underline the growth in demand for bigger ADTs, Bell Equipment introduced its E-Series Large Truck range, a radical upgrade of the previous D-Series as far as payload is concerned. Du Pisanie believes that with the Large Truck range, the South African based OEM has introduced machines that offer better cost per tonne moved, a big driver for fleet owners operating in today's challenging economic conditions.

The Bell E-Series Large Truck range comes with significant increases in payloads. Compared with the B35D, the B35E has gone from 32,5 t to 33,5 t, while the B40E tips in with 39 t, compared with the 37 t on the previous B40D. During comparative testing between the B40E and the B40D, Bell found that, taking into account all the variables, the B40E up to 10% lower cost per tonne than its predecessor, the B40D.

Du Pisanie explains some of the reasons behind the move towards increased payload. "The general rule for hauling earth is that bigger trucks give a lower cost per tonne. Right now the earthmoving industry in Africa is looking for the most cost-efficient operation. The commodity prices have dropped, and so has income," reasons Du Pisanie. There are also other factors contributing to the lower cost per tonne of the E-Series. Firstly there is the new engine from Mercedes Benz, optimised for off-highway use by MTU, which offers more power and lower fuel consumption. Secondly there is the 7-speed Allison transmission which gives better performance and fuel burn than that fitted to the outgoing D-Series range of trucks.

The demand for ultra-large (60 t) ADTs is coming from a number of sources. "Firstly, we have customers who are looking for a solution for the simple reason that bigger is cheaper. The second source is that we have customers who run rigid dump trucks which struggle to give good productivity in wet, muddy and undulating conditions. There are smaller rigid dump trucks available in the market, but the smallest RDT sold in significant numbers is a 60 t truck and that is why we decided to offer something that matched this size class in payload but which is significantly more capable off-road. The B60E offers a viable alternative to customers running 60 t RDTs in conditions where the RDTs sometimes struggle with underfoot conditions," adds Du Pisanie.

While the B45E maintains the B45D's 41 t payload, Du Pisanie believes this has the potential to be the company's jewel in the crown. The company notes an increase in demand for 45 t trucks globally, and the B45E, with its rated payload of 41 000 kg, a bin volume of 25 m³, and a powerful new engine, has the potential to become the most popular model in the range due to its overall value proposition.

"The B60E is another special offering in our range by virtue of it being our largest truck, which is also a ground-breaking concept. It is capable of moving large volumes of material in all weather conditions. It also provides a unique solution to a market segment that was previously contested by rigid trucks only," says Du Pisanie.

Enter Volvo

Volvo CE also flexed a big ADT muscle with its new 55 t A60H that made the headlines at bauma 2016. The behemoth fits the bill for high production sites. It is interesting to note that a South African coal miner became the first customer to place the first order of three A60H units at bauma 2016. Tomas Kuta of Volvo CE says that bigger sized ADTs offer a better value proposition than their RDT counterparts in the same size category. He believes that the versatility of articulated trucks, along with availability of these larger machines, means they are gaining ground on rigid alternatives.

Kuta believes that the 55 t ADT will take 60-80 t rigid trucks to task, especially where unfavourable underfoot conditions such as rain-washed sites, can bring rigid haulers to a complete halt. He also argues that the lure of a 40% more capacity on the A60H compared with the previous 43 t Volvo A40G, is too good to ignore.

The new 55 t capacity A60H is the largest machine to be built by Volvo CE. It is ideal for heavy hauling in taxing off-road operations, including quarries, opencast mines and large earthmoving operations. It comes with a host of features aimed at improving onsite efficiency. With intelligent systems from Volvo CE, such as MATRIS, CareTrack and the On Board Weighing System, fleet operators can optimise production and minimise operational costs.

"CareTrack is the Volvo CE telematics system that offers access to a wide range of machine monitoring information designed to save the operator time and money," says Marnix Reedijk, product manager of Customer Services at Volvo CE EMEA. CareTrack generates a wide range of reports – including fuel consumption, operational hours and geographical location – via a web portal, as well as sending SMS/email alerts.

Fleet managers can use CareTrack to proactively manage their wear parts and their service maintenance. The benefits include a reduction in fuel costs, optimised machine and operator performance and increased uptime. Operation reports allow machine owners to monitor idle time – information that gives you the power to reduce fuel consumption, non-productive machine hours and service costs. Geo and time fencing features on CareTrack can notify the owner if a machine goes outside pre-set location and time boundaries. A status report provides access to fuel level, machine location and machine hours.

Tipping large volumes

Speaking of size, Barloworld Equipment, the southern African dealer for Caterpillar, introduced the Cat 745C, said to be Caterpillar's flagship ADT, and a radical redesign of its previous star model, the Cat 740B. It notably comes with increased payload capacity, improved fuel efficiency and productivity, along with a host of other new and improved features for lower owning and operating costs.

With a rated payload of 41 t, up from 39,5 t on the Cat 740B, the Cat 745C is ideal for mining, construction and allied industrial segments. It has a newly designed dump body with a heaped capacity of 25 m³. "The Cat 745C represents one of the biggest product development programmes in recent Cat history," says Julien Balardelle, Caterpillar product application specialist for Cat articulated trucks, based at the Peterlee factory in England.

The Cat 745C derivative joined other C-series models launched locally in 2014, namely the 725C, 730C and 730C EJ. In the wake of tough operating conditions, fuel efficiency now ranks as one of the most important factors in decisions to purchase a vehicle of this nature, with some users putting it even above price. With this in mind, the Cat 745C is said to be up to 10% more fuel efficient than the previous model. This has been achieved through major changes to the powertrain, according to Balardelle.

The transition from the Cat C15 engine on the Cat 740B to the C18 powering the Cat 745C translates into a 4,2% increase in power output from 365 kW to 381 kW. This further improves power to weight ratio by 3%. This is also complemented by the new Output Transfer Gearbox which distributes drive to the tractor and trailer and includes an automatic wet clutch differential lock for optimum traction in poor underfoot conditions.

The 745C is driven by the new CX38 High Density Power Shift (HPDS) transmission with Advanced Productivity Electronic Control Strategy with nine forward and two reverse gears, combined with Electronic Clutch Pressure Control, Shift Torque Management with Shift Control Logic (SCL) and Part Throttle Shifting (PTS). SCL offers automatic gear shift selection specific to the desired machine operation, as well as earlier gear changes and less time at higher engine speeds. PTS allows for shifting at lower speeds during part throttle operations. This improves part throttle fuel economy, quieter machine operation and better manoeuvring in reduced speed operating conditions.

Why ADT?

Wallace explains some of the reasons why the ADT is a gem in most applications. "The ADT, in most conditions, is the best hauler as it does not need any prepared roads and can operate in any environment," says Wallace. The Astra ADT can operate in any mining, quarry and construction site. "An ADT is a multiple mission machine that can be used as a hauler, water tanker and fuel tanker, to mention a few," says Wallace. "ADTs excel in hauling material over rough terrain. They are rugged and are built to handle great inclines and slippery conditions. This is their main advantage over their rigid counterparts." Wallace argues that rigids excel in carrying capacity, which in turn calls for more prepared roads.

Astra has a four-model range available for the southern African market. It comprises the ADT 25D, with a maximum payload of 23,2 t; the ADT 30D, with a maximum payload of 28,18 t; the ADT 35D with a maximum payload of 31,5 t; and the larger ADT 40D with its maximum payload of 36 t. This range comes with several innovative features which Wallace believes sets the Astra ADT apart from its competition. "Astra has some major advantages over its competition such as hoisting cylinders on the inside of the chassis and bucket, whereas our competitors have them on the outside," says Wallace. "The advantage of having them on the inside rather than outside is that the cylinders are protected in case of a body roll over and it also gives stability to the body when lifting."

Lundberg says ADTs are designed with the understanding that the trucks will often be put to work in remote and harsh locations, sometimes in extreme weather conditions. He reasons that the advantage of an ADT is that it can operate in almost any working condition or road surface. "It is at home in difficult road conditions where the six-wheel drive ability takes it places," says Lundberg.

Lundberg also explains some of the key advantages of an ADT over the RDT. "Quite simply, it's all about versatility and manoeuvrability. These machines can operate in environments and road surfaces where RDTs would not be able to operate efficiently, or where there isn't simply enough room to operate the RDT," says Lundberg.

For Du Pisanie, the biggest advantage of ADTs over their rigid counterparts is that they are able to manage harsh underfoot conditions and steep gradients, enabling them to continue working even in adverse weather conditions where rigids would need to park. "Additionally, ADT customers really enjoy the versatility and flexibility of the machine. One day it can be operating on good quality mine roads as part of the mining production and the next it can be breaking new ground in another part of the mine where there are no roads whatsoever," says Du Pisanie. "Another benefit of ADTs is that they can be easily adapted to various roles, such as a water or fuel tanker or a service truck. This is very popular in the Australian mining industry and is a growing trend in South Africa." ✪

With its large receiving hopper that can hold more than 16 t, the Vögele MT 3000-2 Offset ensures continuous paving, doing away with stop/starts of the paver.

ROAD TO QUALITY PAVEMENTS

The conventional methodology of having a truck tipping directly into the paver constitutes many quality flaws that translate into excessive maintenance costs over the lifecycle of the pavement. To address this setback, in 2012, Sanral compelled the use of a material transfer vehicle on most of its road contracts, and this technology weighs in with key benefits that translate into reduced maintenance costs over the lifespan of a pavement, writes *Munesu Shoko*.

It is proven that aggregate and temperature segregation in hot mix asphalt is mostly the root of poor quality roads. In circumstances where the mix has material or temperature segregation, the pavement will have areas with poor structure and texture. Large temperature differentials within the mix are prevalent during long hauls from the batching plant to the site or during colder days. As a result of long haul distances from a batching plant to a site, the top layer of the asphalt mix in the truck bed can have temperature variances of up to 50°C when compared with the rest of the material. Non-uniform compaction, ravelling, stripping and potholes can all be traced back to these temperature differentials in the mat.

Studies in pavement failure have also shown that a major cause is material segregation. In conventional road construction a truck dumps material directly into the hopper of the paver. As the truck dumps the hot mix asphalt directly into the paver hopper, aggregates in the mix separate, changing the overall asphalt mix, causing material segregation. When segregated material is laid down on the pavement, it is compacted with poor structure or texture and eventually the mat lacks uniform density, causing the pavement to fail prematurely. The gradation of the aggregate and uniformity of the asphalt mix are both very important considerations for mix stability and road mat structure.

To deal with these challenges, in 2012, the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) decided to specify a material transfer vehicle on all its road contracts of 2 000m² and more. The road principal reasoned that the conventional method of having a truck feeding directly into the paver constituted many quality flaws that

"Most of the contractors we carried out trials with have since purchased our material transfer vehicle. This was also aided by our ability to meet and exceed Sanral's expectations as far as the specifications are concerned."

Osborn has more than 20 Roadtec Shuttle Buggy units operating in South Africa, with two more units to be delivered in the first quarter of 2017.

translated into excessive maintenance costs over the lifecycle of a pavement, weighing heavily on its road maintenance bill.

Osborn was first to market with its Roadtec Shuttle Buggy which it introduced to the South African road construction sector in 2012. It is a material transfer vehicle that "shuttles" between an asphalt delivery vehicle and a paver during paving, and is said to reduce road maintenance costs by as much as 90% over the lifecycle of a pavement. The Shuttle Buggy was initially the only material transfer vehicle specified in Sanral's contracts.

Wirtgen has also since introduced its Vögele MT 3000-2 material transfer vehicle which comes with a range of innovative features. Following Wirtgen's recent trials of its Vögele MT 3000-2 Offset with the road principal and some of the leading local contractors, Sanral has since changed the specification to a material transfer vehicle to allow Wirtgen's offering to be used on its road contracts. This is very specialised gear and to date only these two companies are supplying this technology locally.

Increased uptake

Philip Saunders, technical sales representative, Asphalt Equipment – Astec & Roadtec at Osborn Engineered Products SA, says since 2012, the demand for the Shuttle Buggy has increased substantially and "we currently sit in a market of about 6-7 units sold a year". "We currently have 20 units operating in South Africa, with two more units to be delivered in the first quarter of 2017," says Saunders. Initially Osborn offered the Roadtec Shuttle Buggy SB-2500 only, with a 22,7 t holding capacity, in this market. The range has since been expanded with the smaller SB-1500 with a 15 t asphalt holding capacity. However, Saunders tells Capital Equipment News that the larger SB-2500 seems to be the firm favourite, obviously due to its larger holding capability for increased productivity.

Wirtgen sold its first unit in 2014, but following extensive focus on the technology this year, the company has added a further five units into the market, this year alone. "Most of the contractors we carried out trials with have since purchased our material transfer vehicle. This was also aided by our ability to meet and exceed Sanral's expectations as far as the specifications are concerned," says Waylon Kukard, national sales manager at Wirtgen South Africa.

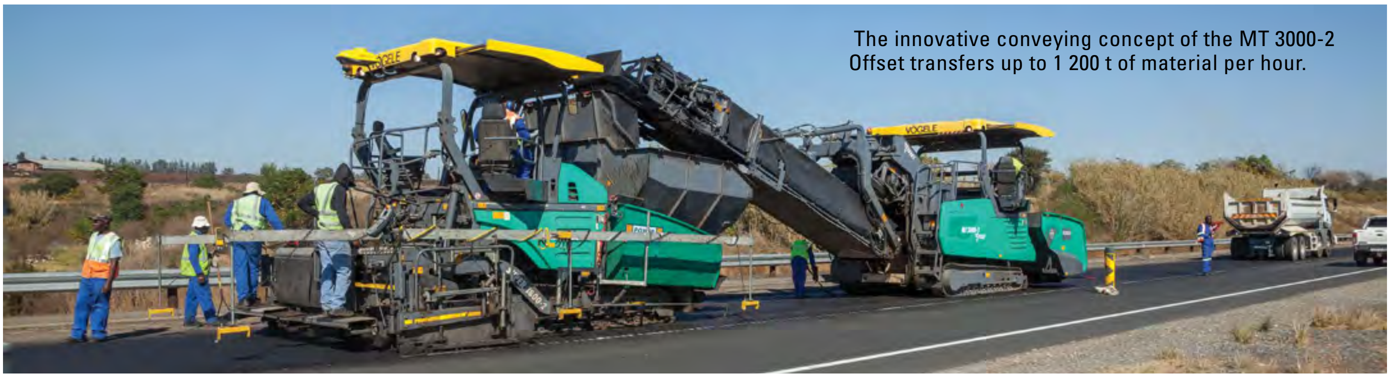
Calvin Fennell, business development manager at Wirtgen South Africa, believes that, despite the specification of material transfer vehicles locally by Sanral, the quick uptake has also been fuelled by the fact that contractors have since experienced the wide range of benefits offered by this technology. Many road contracts now include a smoothness index or a rideability bonus for contractors, which can even repay a significant chunk of the total investment into the machine. Added cost benefits are the exceptionally low fuel consumption of the Deutz engine and the fact that The MT3000-2 does not need to be transported as an abnormal load.

With South Africa being such a big asphalt market, Jacques Horn, sales representative at Wirtgen South Africa, believes prospects of further uptake of this technology in the country are quite high. For example, the Airport Company of South Africa is reportedly considering compelling the use of a material transfer vehicle on its airport projects.

Saunders is also optimistic about the prospects of rolling this technology into other southern African countries. "There are several large road development projects in their final planning and implementation phases at this stage, including airports repairs and renovations. We are currently in discussions with key contractors involved and these projects should see us expanding our footprint into most of the southern African region and possibly further north too," says Saunders.

Focus on Shuttle Buggy

With a range of its innovative features, the Shuttle Buggy is said to reduce road maintenance costs by as much as 90%


The innovative conveying concept of the MT 3000-2 Offset transfers up to 1 200 t of material per hour.

over the lifecycle of a pavement. One of the key features is continuous paving, which ensures a smooth mat on the road. In conventional paving ways, where a truck feeds directly into the paver, whenever a truck backs up to unload into the stationary paver, there can be a bump on the mat of the pavement.

When a paver stops for another truck to dump, it leaves an indication on the road when it starts moving again. The bumps can be exacerbated over time to create potholes, cracks and defects on the road. The Shuttle Buggy allows for continuous paving, minimising stop/starts of the paver. This is facilitated by the machine's 22,7 t storage bin, which can be supplemented by a further 9-14 t by adding an insert to the paver.

"Keeping your paver moving increases efficiency and the quality of the mat. Whenever the paver stops, the screed has a chance to settle. The head of mix cools, creating a bump in the mat when you start moving again. And whenever a truck backs up to unload into the idle paver, there can be another bump. All these issues affect smoothness readings," says Saunders.

The Shuttle Buggy also allows for trucks to be stopped about 30-60 m away from the paver and dump safely into the machine without moving the paver. "Being able to unload without moving the machine makes it possible to use bigger trailers, thus even further reducing the number of trucks needed on site," says Saunders.

The Shuttle Buggy's storage capacity also eliminates the need for having many trucks waiting to unload at a job site, cutting trucking-related and diesel burn costs. It can unload a truck at about 1 000 t per hour and has a paver loading capacity of 600 t per hour.

Innovation abounds

The triple-pitch auger flighting design used in the Roadtec Shuttle Buggy material transfer vehicles provides uniform remixing across the width of the entire hopper. "The triple-pitch auger located in the bottom of the hopper remixes the contents of the storage hopper. The mixing action equalises temperatures and evenly mixes large and small particles. A slat conveyor runs from the bottom of the hopper and feeds the discharge conveyor," explains Saunders.

The discharge conveyor swings 50° right or left, allowing for offset paving and to save significant time and money when adding lanes, or working with string lines or barriers. This feature also allows contractors to keep trucks off the milled edge and off the tack coat. "Specialty projects, such as high-banked racetracks or airports requiring string lines on both sides, are paved much easier with Roadtec's standard pivoting conveyors," says Saunders.

The Shuttle Buggy's conveyors are supplied with roller bashing chains and slats are made of steel, which is more resistant to abrasion than rubber conveyor belts. The machine's conveyor floors are also installed with a thick wear plate. The floor of the paver loading conveyor is insulated to eliminate heat loss, and is fitted with rails at the bottom to protect it from any damage that may be caused by the impact against the paver.

A vibrating bottom plate in the hopper prevents material build up. The machine has an optional, expandable hopper that accommodates wider truck beds. Material flow to the truck unloading conveyor can be regulated by adjusting the position of hydraulically operated baffles in the intake hopper.

Powered by a 224 kW Caterpillar engine, its engine access is gained by hydraulically lifting the one-piece hood for better maintenance access.

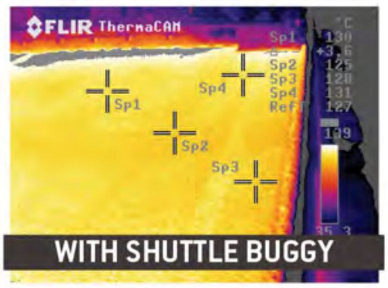
Enter MT 3000-2

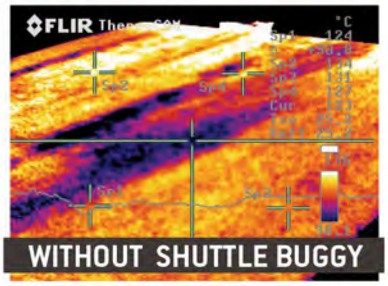
Wirtgen has introduced two models of its material transfer vehicle range to the local market, the MT 3000-2 Standard and MT 3000-2 Offset. With its large receiving hopper that can hold more than 16 t, the Vögele MT 3000-2 Offset ensures continuous paving, doing away with stop/starts of the paver, which in turn guarantees a smooth mat.

The innovative conveying concept of the material feeder transfers up to 1 200 t of material per hour. "That means a 25 t feed truck can be emptied in just 60 seconds," says Kukard. Working together with an 1800-3 Vögele paver, the two have a minimum material storage capacity of 35 t. "This allows the paving team to work

The Roadtec "Shuttle Buggy" material transfer vehicle (MTV) provides unequaled performance to other MTVs and is required extensively by government road departments worldwide to achieve consistently high quality asphalt pavement. Pavement lifespan tests have shown that a temperature differential of less than seven degrees Celsius in the mat behind the paver is key to even compaction and pavement durability.

Infrared imaging behind the Shuttle Buggy™ MTV in tests conducted in the U.S. as well as in Europe has shown that the machine easily and consistently remixes to achieve temperature differential below the seven degree Celsius threshold. This proven performance has led not only to the machine's popularity all over the world, but also allows contractors to earn maximum smoothness bonuses and win quality awards, while improving production.





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The ROADTEC SB-2500 Shuttle Buggy feeds the asphalt paver offset to avoid driving on the tack or binder coat of the asphalt layer.

non-stop and ensure maximum pavement evenness at all times, with no form of interruption," he says.

One of the ground-breaking features of the Vögele MT 3000-2 Offset is its material conveying concept, according to Kukard. The trough-shaped conveyor belt centres the material during transfer and provides a clean and uniform flow. This ensures that the mix quality is maintained in every phase of conveying, up to the point of paving, without being lost. Tensioning cylinders guiding the rubber belt ensure centre alignment of the belt. A smart automatic system adjusts the belt tension as required.

Bearing in mind that material management is a success factor for any paving project, the Vögele MT 3000-2 Offset is fitted with transverse conical augers which homogenise the material in the feeder's receiving hopper by mixing the cooler asphalt from the sides with the warmer material from the middle of the hopper.

"To ensure optimum material management, a specially developed diesel heating system with non-contact infrared panels maintains the correct temperature of the conveyor belt. The path of the material is pre-heated before the transfer of material begins," says Kukard. "These technical measures ideally complement one another, so that the paving material is in an optimal condition when being laid."

The non-contact transfer of material is also one of the winning recipes for optimal paving quality. Decoupling the feeding from the paving process prevents jolts by feed trucks from being transmitted to the paver. A non-contact distance control system ensures the correct space between the paver and the material feeder.

"Three laser sensors permanently measure the space between the feeder and the paver, allowing the system to automatically adjust the speed of the material transfer vehicle to that of the paver," says Horn. The very same system also automatically prevents the feeder from colliding with the paver. "If the paver stops unexpectedly, the feeder also stops automatically as soon as the distance between the two machines falls below the set minimum," adds Kukard.

Versatility is key

With the ability to pivot 55° to the left or right, the conveyor is said to be a key factor to the versatility of the MT 3000-2 Offset. The maximum distance from the outside edge of the material feeder to the centre of the discharge point is 3,5 m. The conveyor can also be raised by up to 23° from the horizontal position to a discharge height of 3,9 m. This allows the machine to be used in a range of applications, enabling high utilisation.

For example, backfilling trenches or filling cavities between safety barriers in highway construction can be done quickly and easily. Paving on shoulders and other hard-to-reach areas is also made easy. Moreover, the conveying concept has been designed to allow other materials such as topsoil, base course material or recycled material to be conveyed in addition to asphalt.

The ErgoPlus operating system on the Vögele MT 3000-2 Offset is the very same system on the new generation of Vögele pavers, translating into commonality of skills sets required to operate the machines. The centrepiece of this system is said to be the feeder operator's console. All the controls required for main and frequent functions are arranged in logical groups. Operation is intuitive and easy to learn. A joystick in the armrests of the two operator seats is used to pivot the proportionally controlled conveyor with good precision and sensitivity. For the majority of applications, only one person is needed to operate the material transfer vehicle. ✪

SAMAR is designed to allow contractors, OEMs, importers, builders, banks and insurers, as well as the general public to control title and ownership of all movable assets such as yellow metal equipment.

BRIDGING THE CAPITAL EQUIPMENT REGISTRY GAP

The exclusion of vehicles not designed for public road use, such as yellow metal equipment and forklifts, from registration on the Electronic National Traffic Information System created a gap to effectively manage and control title and ownership of such high-risk, high-value moveable assets. The newly-created Southern Africa Moveable Assets Register has been designed to bridge this gap with its ability to offer registration and verification of information related to moveable assets, on a common platform, writes *Munesu Shoko*.

Following the exclusion of vehicles not designed for public road use, such as tracked vehicles, quad bikes and forklifts, to mention a few, from the Electronic National Traffic Information System (eNaTIS), a new concept platform currently under trial, the Southern African Movable Asset Register (SAMAR), is designed to allow contractors, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), importers, builders, banks and insurers, as well as the general public to control title and ownership of all movable assets, including yellow metal equipment and other gear used in the construction, mining, quarrying, agriculture and plant hire markets.

For some background information, Regulation 5 of the National Traffic Act of 1996 (Act 3 of 1996) stipulates that certain motor vehicles are not allowed to be registered on eNaTIS. "The vehicles prescribed in this regulation are those not designed for public road use, in other words, vehicles that cannot legally pass a roadworthy test, such as tracked vehicles and forklifts," says Kyle Dutton of SAMAR. In the banks' controls suites, the use of "title" on an eNaTIS registration document is used as confirmation of the particular bank's interest in an asset. By denying access to eNaTIS for assets such as yellow metal equipment, the ability to apply "title" has been effectively withdrawn, reasons Dutton.

This has since brought about the development of SAMAR, at the request of several of the local banks and importers of construction equipment. SAMAR is deemed as a practical solution to the impasse created by the legislation. Risk officials at several of the participating institutions have asked for the use of

About 7 000 assets are already on the SARMA register across various banks' titles and people's ownerships.

Kyle Dutton of SAMAR says the idea behind SAMAR is to allow for better control of title and ownership of movable assets.

SAMAR to be agreed across the industry. At present, three of the four "big" banks have since issued SAMAR with letters of recognition as the authorised registry of movable assets, while some of the prominent equipment dealers have already loaded hundreds of their assets on the system. Dutton tells Capital Equipment News that the system is currently under testing and will go live in February 2017.

Better control

Dutton says the idea behind SAMAR is to allow for better control of title and ownership of movable assets, which in turn offers better control over these assets. It also provides for improved risk management of movable assets through registration and verification of all critical information related to the identifiers of movable assets, on a common framework. Registration of an asset on SAMAR will be billed at a cost of R80 per asset, per registration or transfer of ownership. Dutton believes the cost is very favourable to the industry and is substantially less than eNaTIS transactions.

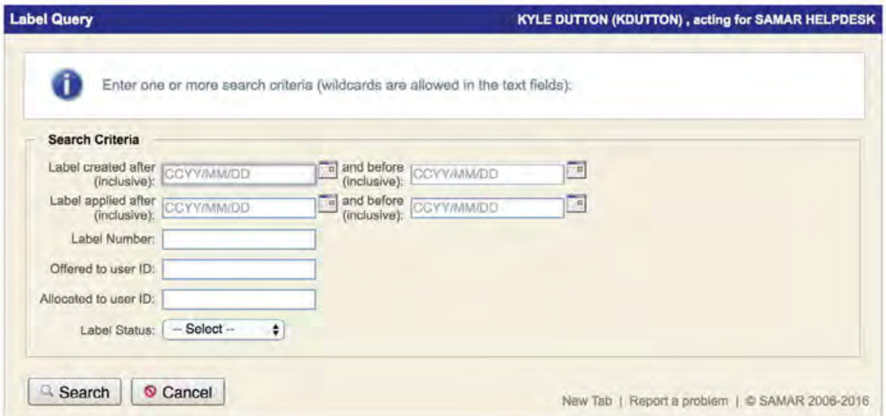
Three financing institutions have already loaded some of their assets on SAMAR during this trial phase. As soon as the system goes live in February, these institutions will start compelling all their customers financing their equipment needs through them to register the asset before they can conclude the purchase.

In an ideal world, the products financed by the banks would already be on the SAMAR registry as manufacturers and equipment importers have been invited to load their assets as soon as they enter the country or roll off the production line. About 7 000 assets are already on register across various banks' titles and people's ownerships. Of the 7 000, about 5 000 are Volvo pieces of equipment, a gesture that demonstrates the immediate buy-in from manufacturers and local yellow metal equipment dealers. When the asset is sold, registration into the ownership of the buyer takes place for an R80 fee. If the asset is being financed, the title will reside with the bank or the

Of the 7 000 assets already on the registry, about 5 000 are Volvo equipment, a gesture that signals strong buy-in from manufacturers.

financing institution. If one is buying an asset through a cash transaction, they become the owner and titleholder.

SAMAR has already approached about six other OEMs and dealers who have shown interest. "They realise that there is need for it. They know that theft is an issue they have to grapple with and it makes sense to have a registry of their assets." SAMAR also realises there is a big task ahead with a lot of other assets in the used equipment market. The same goes for plant hire companies, who, by the nature of their hiring business, are exposed to a lot of risk, mostly theft of plant.



A SAMAR High Security label (HSL) will be attached to each asset loaded onto the registry. The HSL contains a unique reference number, which remains with that asset throughout its lifetime. "The label incorporates several features that make it difficult to copy and the asset number is also contained in the barcode as a failsafe mechanism," says Dutton. These high security labels are already being used by the automotive industry globally to replace the conventional VIN plates. In South Africa, they are being used by Ford. To ensure the labels are tamper-proof and suitable for high-security scenarios, they exhibit properties such as HSL, acrylic adhesive, high heat resistance, tamper evident, Tesa labels and are not removable without label destruction.

Key advantages

SAMAR is a consolidated platform that offers an array of benefits for all stakeholders in the movable assets value chain, from manufacturers, dealers, banks through to insurers and equipment owners. For equipment owners, the benefits of registering movable assets on SAMAR will facilitate financing that may not otherwise have been available by providing identifiable data and markings for tracking and control that are admissible in a court of law. "Users of the system can anticipate improved availability of personal and commercial financing of movable assets," says Dutton.

For used equipment buyers, SAMAR provides history of the asset which may be very critical for buying decisions. SAMAR covers the entire lifecycle of an asset and creates the most recent, reliable record of an asset by continuously updating the record in real-time as changes are made by various system interactions. "Essentially SAMAR provides a detailed summary of the life of the asset throughout its entire lifecycle," says Dutton. "We will know if a piece of equipment was previously stolen or has been refurbished before. We will provide banks, insurance companies, plant hire companies, manufacturers and importers, as well as the consumer with the knowledge that this is what has happened to this asset. If it has gone thorough 15 different names, interested parties will know. It helps with purchasing decisions, especially for the second-hand market."

Meanwhile, for insurance companies, loading their interest against the asset under finance will reduce the risk for the banks and related costs. The high-value, high-risk nature of these movable assets, such as yellow metal equipment financed and insured, is substantial and the risks of double financing and fraud requires additional control.

The identification of these assets in instances where the purchaser owing, and/or in instances of loss due to theft, is problematic for both the financier and insurer. For banks, the system will also greatly reduce cases of fraud and double financing, while it guards against incorrect depiction for value and insurance purposes.

To drive SAMAR adoption, a mobile app will be available for download by anyone. The app will not require any registration for use and will be available on the Android platform initially. Any user of the SAMAR app will be able to scan the SAMAR HSL and view limited details pertaining to the asset. However, details available through this interface will be limited to ensure Protection of Personal Information Act compliance. ✪


882:66:63
872:9873:72
74:663:62
09:982:73
882:66:63
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The Metso had truck rubber lining acts as a barrier to protect the truck bin from impact and stress of loading and dumping.

IMPROVING TRUCK BED LONGEVITY

During loading and unloading, a dump truck bin receives the greatest amount of wear from severe abrasion, while noise and vibrations have their fair share of impact on the operator. With that in mind, Metso has launched its haul truck rubber lining said to absorb impact way better than steel, writes *Munesu Shoko.*

Keeping your haul trucks moving with maximum availability and finding ways to keep downtime to a possible minimum, is an important part of ensuring good haul truck productivity. When it comes to issues of haul truck uptime, one critical issue that never gets the attention it should is the lining change-out process for truck bins. While it is not a regular process to deal with, long shutdowns, mainly due to welding work or time consuming shipments of truck boxes for box refurbishment and lining change-outs, may wreak havoc to production timelines due to the amount of downtime involved.

The Metso haul truck rubber lining is a solution that acts as a barrier to protect the truck bin from the repeated impact and stress of loading and dumping heavy, abrasive material that can cause expensive damage to the box and truck as a whole.

Officially introduced locally at Electra Mining Africa 2016 in September last year, Metso's modular rubber lining system reduces impact, wear, carry-back and noise. "It's tough enough to squeeze maximum profitability out of a mining or aggregate operation. Unproductive trucks make it even tougher," reasons Julian Steinmann, sales specialist, Screening Media and Lining Solutions at Metso South Africa, adding that Metso's haul truck rubber lining is designed to maximise the availability of haul trucks, while reducing service and maintenance.

Michael Gyberg, global support manager Nordics, Europe, Africa & Middle East, Screening Media and Lining Solutions at Metso, says the Metso rubber lining was developed from years of on-site experience in some of the toughest conditions. The optimised rubber lining is said to offer four or more times service life than traditional steel lining. "In addition, once it is time to make any change-out, only a few individual lining modules need to be replaced," says Gyberg.

Savings abound

According to Gyberg, once the Mesto haul truck lining has been installed, fleet owners don't need to worry about expensive unplanned maintenance or regular lining system adjustments. The modular design makes the lining easier to install and maintain than traditional steel options. This is further boosted by the possibility to only replace individual modules instead of the entire lining.

"You can easily arrange for the quick

With Metso's rubber lining solution, there are fewer or no carry-backs.

KEY BENEFITS – METSO HAUL TRUCK RUBBER LINING

10-15 decibels (50%) reduction in noise levels

95% reduction in vibrations

4X wear life than steel

KEY BENEFITS OF METSO'S PROTECTIVE LINING

- High availability and increased wear life
- Adapted to fit directly to the crusher
- Reduced operational costs

Easy handling and installation

Keeps downtime to a minimum

Fewer and shorter maintenance stops

change-outs when the truck is in the repair centre, say for regular engine maintenance. The result is shorter replacement and installation times compared to steel lining," says Gyberg, who adds that Metso has also developed a lifting device to ensure safe, reliable, fast and easy installations and maintenance of the haul truck rubber lining.

With Metso's rubber lining solution, there are less or no carry-back, making the trucks more productive. According to Steinmann, less or no carry-back, translates into less fuel consumption over time. Savings related to tyre life due to less or no carry-backs are also said to be massive over a period of time. Meanwhile, fewer spare boxes mean limited and quick change-outs of lining modules, resulting in less need for spare boxes on site.

"Its wear resistance design not only reduces damages to the truck box, but to the truck as a whole. Bearings, transmission, tyres and chassis are protected and the cost of service and damaged equipment are minimised," says Steinmann.

Boliden Aitik mine in northern Sweden is a good example of one operation that has already seen the massive gains associated with this solution. The mine has signed a three-year contract with Metso to deliver truck bed linings for a total of 15 haul trucks in its existing fleet of 30 trucks.

According to Magnus Fjellström, maintenance superintendent at Bolden Aitik, for two years, the mine evaluated Metso's truck bed lining through its existing lifecycle services contract for its truck models Cat 793 Flat, Cat 793 DS and Cat 795 Flat. The company has since reported increased availability of its trucks, and Fjellström adds that the benefits from a health and safety perspective are massive. Boliden Aitik mine's truck drivers now prefer to drive the trucks equipped with

The rubber lining absorbs impact better than steel and reduces noise by 10-15 decibels.

Metso's rubber lining due to the reduced noise level and vibrations during operation.

Safety and comfort

The loud noises and strong vibrations associated with driving a haul truck can make the job sometimes uncomfortable, and this can have a drastic effect on the overall productivity of the driver. Truck drivers belong to a group of workers that is most exposed to whole-body vibrations and noise. Regular exposure can cause damage to the body, hearing loss, stress, high blood pressure and fatigue – serious symptoms of health and safety problems. Employers are constantly working on ways to improve the conditions of their employees.

The loud noise from loading and dumping material with a haul truck affects both drivers and the surroundings. Improving the function of the truck bed lining is one way of addressing this problem.

Metso's rubber truck bed lining improves the working environment for drivers in a number of ways. The rubber lining absorbs impact better than steel and reduces noise by an average of 10-15 decibels – the effect of cutting noise in half or more. Moreover, measurements show that a rubber-lined truck bed absorbs up to 95% of the energy from the impact during loading. Consequently, the vibration is dissipated before reaching other parts of the truck structure, including the operator cabin. This means that the operator can feel and hear the difference when sitting in the cabin during loading and dumping.


Metso's protective lining offers four times or more wear life than steel options.

"Metso haul truck rubber lining absorbs vibrations and reduces stress at every point in the truck work cycle – during loading, transport and loading," says Gyberg.

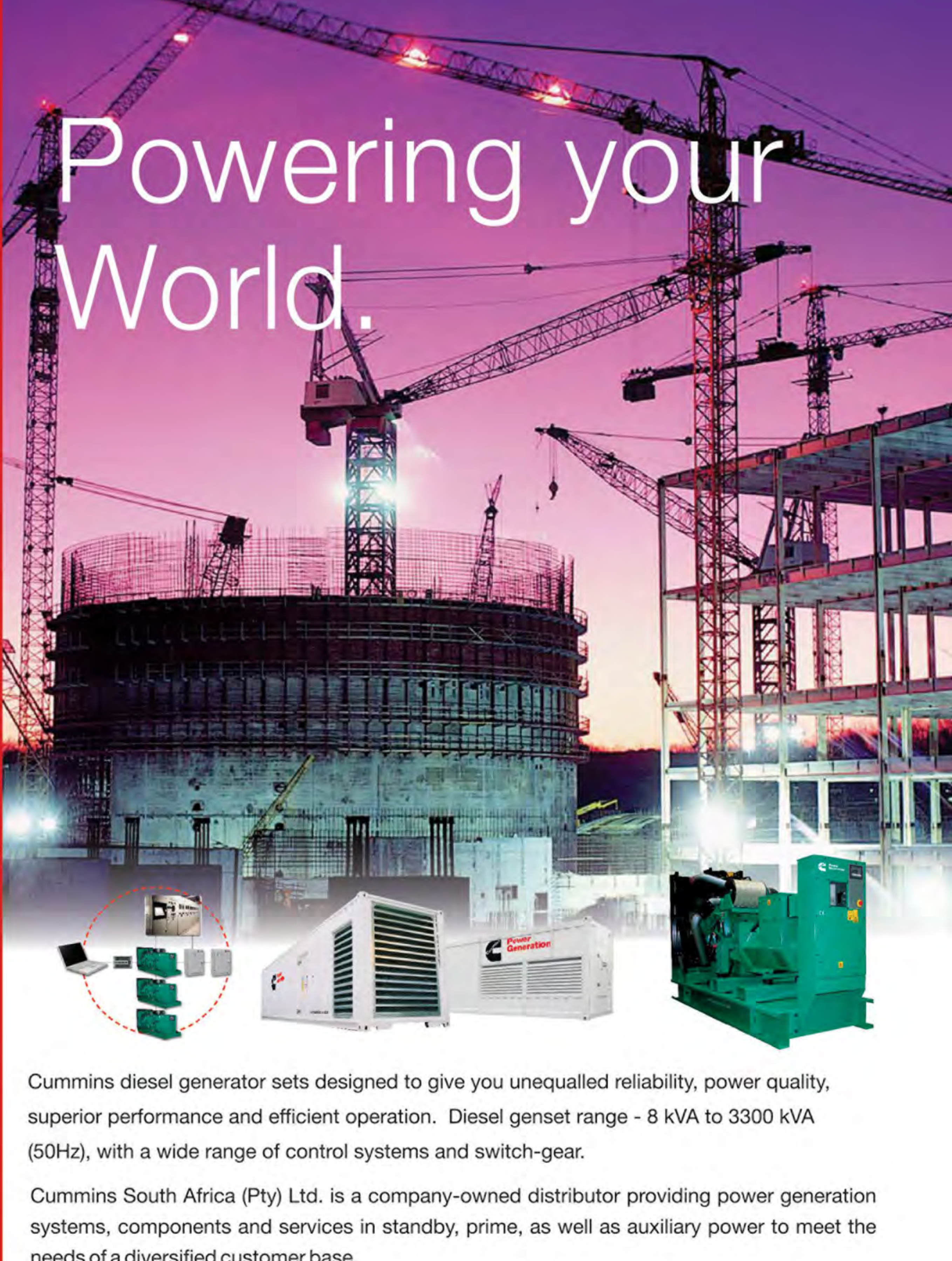
Today, safety is a key priority for aggregates producers, mines and their related contractors. A well-functioning working environment is key in improving safety. A guaranteed and standardised stud welding process for easy handling also ensures that the lining is firmly installed to increase safety during operation.

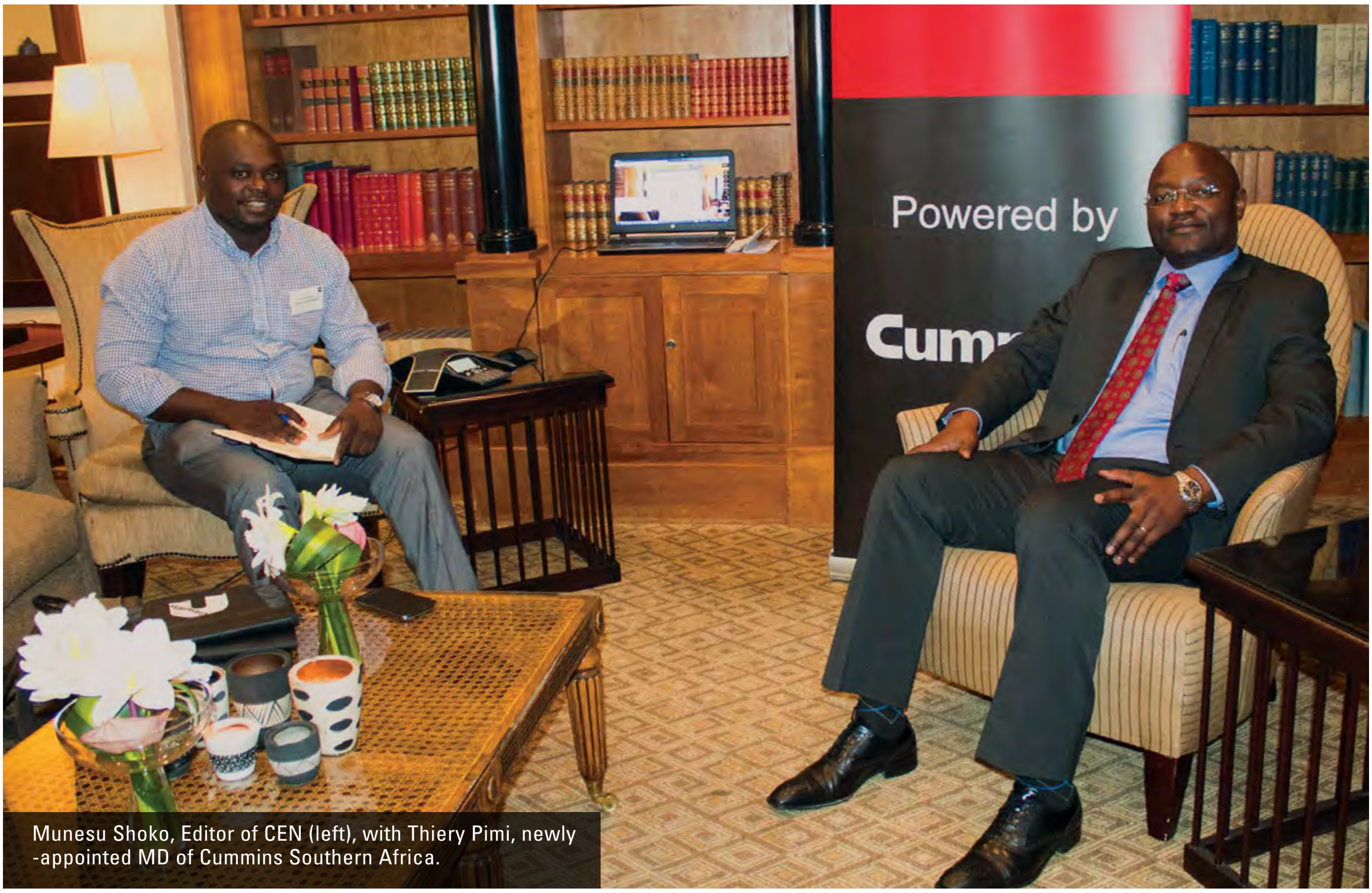
Crusher protection

As part of its lining solutions focus, Metso also used Electra Mining to show its protective lining for crushers, which is designed for the countershaft, mainframe and locknut. It is available for its line of crushers including HP800, MP800, MP1000 and MP1250 models. Since last November the main frame protective range is extended to the complete HP range.

Mesto's protective lining is also said to offer four times or more wear life than the steel lining option. The solution is designed and specified in a seamless process to fit selected crusher models. The "ready-to-install" package fits directly to the crusher and enables quick and safe change-outs. There is no need for rework or welding to adapt the lining which opens up for shorter stops and further increases crusher availability.

Metso protective lining is made of Trellex Poly-Cer, which is a combination of rubber and ceramic, designed to be extremely resistant to abrasion even in high material flows and speeds. The design and composition is said to result in long wear life and guarantees lower operating costs over time. ✪


Powering your World.
Power Generation



Munesu Shoko, Editor of CEN (left), with Thiery Pimi, newly -appointed MD of Cummins Southern Africa.

POWERING SOUTHERN AFRICAN GROWTH STRATEGY

Good strategy is one thing, but execution is quite another. Based on that understanding, Cummins has appointed Thierry Pimi, a proven strategy executor with vast experience across power generation, manufacturing and mining industries, as the MD of Cummins Southern Africa. Backed by a proven track record in his previous senior management roles, he is undoubtedly the ideal candidate to drive Cummins Southern Africa's ambitious growth plans across the region. Munesu Shoko gets to grips with his winning ways and outlook of the business.

Scan QR code to watch the interview

Munesu Shoko (MS): Effective 1 September 2016, you took over as the new managing director of Cummins Southern Africa. What are your immediate plans?

Thierry Pimi (TP): My immediate goal is to quickly understand the landscape and the environment, as well as getting familiar with the Cummins Southern Africa team. I am very fortunate to have inherited a world-class team. I would also like to meet some of our key customers, as well as understanding the country, especially issues such as the regulatory framework. In a nutshell, I would like to quickly understand what the dynamics are internally in our company, but also externally as far as stakeholders, such as customers and suppliers, are concerned.

MS: You are in charge of the distribution side of the business and have taken over when aftermarket is a key focus area for the company. Just how important is distribution for Cummins?

TP: Distribution is fundamental for Cummins. We build these big engines intended to work for long durations. The only way these engines can perform for the expected duration and even beyond is when there is provision of good aftermarket support. So, that's where the distribution comes into play. We build and sell a solid and reliable product but on the ground when this product is operating, the reliability and performance can only be realised through strong aftermarket assistance. This is done through capable technicians, parts availability, easy flow of processes and everything else the customer may need to optimise the operation of their engines.

Aftermarket is critical. In fact, our distribution segment is one of the largest global business units within Cummins. It is the second largest entity within Cummins. So, this shows how important distribution is, not only in southern Africa, but globally for us.

MS: Just how big is your footprint to support customers across the region?

TP: As Cummins Southern Africa, we are in charge of 11 countries in the region, with the exception of Angola. We have 16 distribution centres across southern Africa, covering construction, mining, agriculture, defence and power generation. The distribution arm of the business is primarily there to provide all the aftermarket support.

The countries we support are at various levels of maturity in terms of business density. We chose South Africa as the hub where we support other entities across the borders. But, as there becomes increased business density in these areas there will be need to set up entities in those areas to optimise the capacity to develop both sales and aftersales administration and support.

MS: South Africa is also the base for many of the OEMs you support in terms of engines, such as Liebherr, Hitachi and Komatsu. Just how important is the OEM business for you?

TP: We have made a strategic decision to be an independent engine manufacturer, but our model is to go to market in partnership with these OEMs. On the front end, we work in close partnership with our OEMs to design and meet the specification in which their equipment will operate. Downstream, where the equipment has been purchased by a mining company, for example, we now have to support the customer in the environment where they are. That means we partner with the OEM both on the front end and downstream.

The engine is a critical component of that piece of equipment and Cummins needs to be there to provide the much needed support for better equipment uptime for customers. An engine may be 10% of the price of new equipment, but it could be 30% of the criticality of the operation. That makes Cummins a critical key partner to both the OEM and the mine. So, our association with OEMs is partnership-based, not transactional. We partner with them to provide a solution across the board.

MS: How important is the Master Rebuild Centre in your ability to support your engines in this market?

TP: The Master Rebuild Centre is one of the distinguishing factors for Cummins Southern Africa. When engines are due for maintenance, service or rebuild, they come into this facility where we have all the technical capacity to deal with these needs. We also have a same facility in Ghana. These investments are testament of our belief that we are in Africa for the long haul. We are putting our money where our mouth is. We are investing in those world-class capabilities here because we believe that the business is going to be here for the long term.

The upgrade to that facility was because of our approach that we need to be able to deal with the day-to-day business while preparing for the big fight of the future. We are confident that demand for engine rebuilds is going to increase and we want to put in place the right infrastructure to be able to provide that critical service. This is sending the right signal to our customers and different stakeholders across the region.

MS: You have a great track record of developing and managing talent. Skills shortage is one of the critical setbacks for many businesses. What are some of the plans to bridge the skills gap?

TP: We need to look not only at talent acquisition, but talent development as well. Demand for qualified talent is a big issue for the whole continent and we want to play an active role in increasing talent development output. However, I don't believe that Africa is particularly poor in terms of talent. I am of the view that there is a lot of good raw talent and we need to empower them through giving them the much needed opportunities. I believe in giving people chances to develop themselves.

We understand the skills gap in some particular trades but we are also very encouraged by the enthusiasm that we see in the youth. We are also encouraged by the competence we see in the people we have. We just think that we need to figure a way to multiply that.

MS: Cummins recently took a major decision to merge the African and Middle East businesses. Just how important is that development?

TP: This is big and good for our employees, for our customers and the business at large. We have significant capacity in the Middle East which was developed over the years mostly because of the specific demands of that particular market. We also have some significant capability in Africa which came about because of the primary demands of this market. As we move forward, we see the demand in other resources that have not been developed from both sides. The key power projects in southern Africa will be supported by the core competence we have acquired in the Middle East, while the mining knowledge that we have acquired in Africa will be applied in the Middle East.

Merging these two regions will give us a lot of advantage and scale, but also gives our employees more opportunity to grow. We will see people moving from parts of Africa to the Middle East and vice versa.

MS: You mentioned opportunity. Most economies in southern Africa largely depend on the mining sector, an industry currently in dire straits. But, problems also translate into opportunities. Where do you see untapped potential?

TP: Southern Africa is not immune to the infrastructure development gap that we have seen in all parts of the continent. There are lots of opportunities in the infrastructure development cluster around southern Africa. There is great opportunity for us to be part of the solution. If you talk of the power gap, Africa is still one of the few parts of the world where the gap between power production and energy demand is widening through to 2035. We have a role to play in filling that gap, helping governments build major power projects. These are not overnight projects, they will take many years to develop. So, there is opportunity for us, not only in the mining space, but across other critical areas of development.

While it's true that mining is down, it's not out. There is still a lot of mineral extraction going on. Maybe certain greenfields projects are being delayed but it doesn't mean that extraction has ceased. Commodity prices have this funny way of going up and down and right now, on average, they are down, but there is activity going on. The most important thing at this point is cost optimisation across the board. We just need to prepare ourselves to adjust quickly in these difficult times.

MS: How do you see 2017 turning out?

TP: I am very optimistic, part of it may be naïve, but it's my nature. But the other part of it is based on what I see. I believe the outlook is good. As a company we remain very ambitious. Our stated ambition is to grow 17% year-on-year over the next several years. We are buoyed by the fact that we have a role to play in many things across the spectrum of our product offering.

There is general perception that times are tough but the reality is that this is just periodic, not permanent. Our view is long term, and the medium to long-term outlook is bright. We continue investing because we see opportunity to be here for the long haul. We are optimistic and see that growth materialising for us. ✪

Raimo Lehtiö is the new MD of Scania South Africa.

SCANIA'S GROWTH DRIVER

Scan QR code to watch the interview

Already holding a very strong share of the southern African truck market, Scania is gunning to be the number one truck and bus supplier in the region. Top of key initiatives to further grow the brand's position in the region is the recent appointment of Raimo Lehtiö as the MD of Scania South Africa, a proven specialist in market share growth, especially in tough trading conditions. *Munesu Shoko* gets a lowdown of his plans to further drive Scania's growth, as well as his outlook of the local truck market.

Munesu Shoko (MS): You have taken the reins at Scania South Africa. What is your biggest task in your new role?

Raimo Lehtiö (RL): Continued profitable growth is the major task at hand. This will be achieved through a strong focus on a number of crucial aspects of our business. Our total solutions package will be the basis of our envisaged growth. We are positioning ourselves even closer to our customers to be able to take care of all their needs. This has been extended to in-house financing and insurance. The service package to support the customer is the major driver for the company. Service packages vary from case to case but overall we have a total offering for every customer.

Very often we talk about products, but the majority of customers rank service highly in their buying decisions. We have a very good network in the places we are present but more often, especially in construction and mining, you must be even closer to the customer. That's why we have mobile service capabilities, container workshops to allow us to go into mines and remote construction sites where our customers are operating. Uptime is very important for our customers, especially in the current difficult trading environment.

MS: You are coming in a time when the local truck market is not enjoying the best of times, but you have a track record

of thriving in challenging markets. What is your strategy to further drive Scania's sales volumes?

RL: Quite often in my career I have taken over where the market situation is not the best. I find it ideal to come into such a situation when things are not at their easiest. For example, I started my Scania career in Finland as the MD in 2001 and after three years there I got a big challenge to take over the Scania Russia operations. We were selling about 1 400 vehicles when I arrived. We had pushed the number to 5 800 vehicles by the time I left. It was a huge growth within the four years I was at the helm. I am an optimist who believes that there is always lots of opportunity in economically challenged markets, especially with Scania's solutions-driven approach.

MS: What is Scania South Africa's biggest focus in 2017?

RL: We want to continue on the existing strong performances of the brand. We are market leaders in Namibia and Botswana. We have also been second in a row in trucks and buses in South Africa, slightly behind two different market leaders in both segments. This shows how big we are in both segments. My job is to continue the journey of steering Scania to the number one position in future.

We are also taking greater success stories and ideas from other markets that have shown success. For example, in Finland I worked closely with a Canadian company which was working in an 800 m deep pit and was hauling ore out of the pit using another brand of vehicles. The company changed to Scania and immediately productivity was 20% higher compared with the other brand. You understand how much 20% meant for such a big mine. That feat was achieved with a combination of having the right vehicle and right solutions. These are some of the success stories we want to replicate in the local market.

MS: Speaking of mining, you mentioned that the European market is advanced when it comes to using your type of trucks on mines. Locally the challenge has always been the "bigger is better" mentality which favours yellow metal equipment. How do you intend challenging that?

RL: In many countries mines have started to test and use our trucks instead of the big yellow machines. It is a very cost efficient option. Yellow metal machines are bigger but also call for bigger budgets in terms of fuel consumption and service-related costs. For example, we have made a breakthrough in Indonesia where a lot of our trucks have since replaced a lot of the bigger yellow metal haulers on many mines.

Our trucks are proving efficient than yellow machines in many aspects. In terms of service-related downtime, our trucks are proving to be economical when considering how fast they can be serviced compared to the yellow metal haulers. Uptime is so much better. Trucks are also far more versatile than the yellow metal haulers. With the price of one yellow hauler you can get many of our trucks. We believe it's a matter of time before the local mining fraternity gets a grasp of the potential savings with our mining trucks.

MS: Southern Africa is such a big mining destination. How is your mining division faring at this stage?

RL: We are still in the preparation phase where we are educating the market about the product and its benefits over existing preferred solutions. In time, we believe there will be key purchases on the mining side. I also believe that the commodity prices might start to pick up.

We have a long-term view to growing our mining business and we are working with several mines locally. They have an awareness of our product offering and many are already impressed by our fuel consumption and the total value offering. We are positive that when the market turns, we will start seeing some deals coming through.

Our mining division has a long list of customers currently testing our products. I believe this is the right sales and marketing time, especially when times are tough and purchasing decisions have to be very cost-conscious. We are laying the ground work now and we will harvest when the commodity prices start picking up and investments into capital equipment abound again.

MS: What ere the prospects of growth in construction?

RL: Construction is one of the key focus markets for us and we are selling more vehicles into that market. We see that construction is taking off in so many areas and prospects are very bright this year. We see many construction projects being awarded and it's a very big opportunity for us. Tippers are our biggest offering in this regard, but also mixers and other related models needed for construction-related applications.

To make the most of the construction market, we have plans to offer fully assembled tipper trucks. Often the delivery lead times become too long because of the body-building turnaround times. Some of the contracts may be too urgent and require ready vehicles. We are now carefully determining what kind of vehicle models would be the most efficient for our construction customers. We will then standardise a few of those models and partner some of the professional bodybuilders to build complete vehicles for the construction sector.

MS: When will these standardised vehicles be available in the market?

RL: During 2017 we will have the first standardised units in the market. Of course the customer can still order special vehicles with special bodies, but I would say 80% of companies are willing to choose the readily-made vehicle if we do our market research properly. The same goes for the mixers as well.

MS: By how much will this reduce the lead times?

RL: In a normal current process it will take months to deliver a construction vehicle after placing an order. With the process we are introducing, we can deliver in two weeks. We will also have some models ready in the yard.

MS: After tough trading conditions in 2016, what is your outlook of the business in the short, medium and long term?

RL: We expect this year to be very close to 2016. But, it is encouraging that commodity prices are starting to rebound. Generally I would say this year will be quite close to last year, but I predict 2018 and 2019 to enjoy good growth, not only in South Africa, but southern Africa at large. Zambia, for example, after the presidential elections, is starting to invest again. Mozambique also has great potential if political stability could be restored.

Namibia is also a very good market. We are establishing a new workshop in Walvis Bay which is seeing a lot of investment to become one of the busiest ports in the region. It will be operational this year. I believe opportunities abound in the region, but you must have your eyes open and keep your ears to the ground to make the most of them. ✪

MAN supports IMAGinE research project

Intelligent integrated networking: the focus of the joint IMAGinE project (intelligent automation of manoeuvres-cooperative risk prevention in real-time) lies on increasing the safety of all road users. In future, vehicles communicating with each other in real-time will form the basis for a cooperative interplay in road traffic.

Action not reaction: cooperative risk detection and prevention are key steps on the way towards accident-free and anticipatory driving as well as the optimisation of traffic flow. The cooperative driver assistance systems developed as part of the joint IMAGinE project will help road users reach their destinations not only more safely, but also more efficiently and more relaxed.

MAN's role within this project focuses on the coordination of the various manoeuvres of participating road users under consideration of the particular requirements of commercial vehicles. Among other things, this includes overtaking manoeuvres of trucks, entering and exiting motorways at junctions and regulating the distance to preceding vehicles.

In a real-life scenario, this could involve the following: the vehicle behind coordinates with the vehicle in front to determine a suitable overtaking spot to ensure an efficient overtaking manoeuvre. At motorway junctions, vehicles leaving the motorway synchronise their manoeuvres with vehicles remaining on the motorway so that the process is executed efficiently and safely for all participants. The same applies to vehicles joining the motorway.

In an ideal scenario, it will be possible to implement this not only for individually controlled vehicles but also for trucks driving in convoy linked via vehicle-to-vehicle communication. All in all, IMAGinE promotes the vision of fully-automated driverless driving, without forgetting the currently still necessary driver. This is why IMAGinE is also placing significant importance on the design of a man-machine-interface for cooperative manoeuvres.

IMAGinE brings together a consortium of 12 leading companies and research facilities in Germany. Participating in the project alongside MAN Truck & Bus AG are Adam Opel AG, BMW AG, Daimler AG, Volkswagen AG, Robert Bosch GmbH, Continental Teves AG & Co. oHG, the Würzburg Institute for Traffic Sciences GmbH, IPG Automotive GmbH, Nordsys GmbH, Hessen Road and Traffic Management and the Technical University of Munich. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Industry (BMWi) is providing EUR17,9 million of funding for the research project. ✪

Memorable 2016 for FAW SA

FAW Vehicle Manufacturers SA reported a particularly memorable 2016, racking up unmatched milestones among FAW manufacturing plants outside of the headquartered plants in China.

Besides the fact that FAW SA started only 20 years ago selling trucks locally, it has in recent years truly stepped up to the plate. FAW SA made a strong commitment three years ago with over USD100 million investment in a local plant and related infrastructure. The Coega-based plant and nearby body-building facility have only been in full operation for just over two years.

One of the most recent achievements, and reason for celebration, was on 31 August when the Coega based plant saw its 2 000 locally built truck roll off the production line, giving rightful claim to the company motto – "Built in South Africa, for Africa."

It is in the export market that FAW SA has particularly flourished over the past few months of 2016, having one of the most consistent month-on-month export drives in the SA truck building industry. The company recently exceeded the 200-unit mark in exports into African countries.

"What is most gratifying is that many of the units being bought by sub-Saharan customers are now 2nd, and soon to be delivered, our 3rd generation repurchase. This is testament to us honouring our commitment for service and support into the African regions," says Jianyu Hao, CEO of FAW SA. ✪

FAW SA made a strong commitment to the local market with over USD100 million worth of investment in its local Coega assembly plant.

Another of FAW's popular units sold locally has been the remarkable 5t FAW 8.140FL, which moved into the second position, based on market share end October year-to-date, just one year after being launched and holding sway for being the lowest cost-per-ton vehicle in the market.

Of the most recent achievements added to the expansive list of successes by FAW, was in November when FAW's 8 t 15.180FL achieved year-on-year growth of 19,4% with 289 units sold during the year, compared with the same period in 2015.

Meanwhile, another milestone which marked a highly satisfying year for FAW SA was its benchmark of over 1 000 unit sales in a single year. "The indications for 2017 remain largely similar to 2016. It will be a tough and competitive market in slowly recovering economies. However, the opportunities are there and the chance of a 1-3% growth is possible," says Jianyu Hao. ✪

Toyota to start sales of fuel cell buses

Toyota Motor Corporation will begin to sell fuel cell buses (FC buses) under the Toyota brand from early 2017. Having already undergone repeated field tests for practical use, the Bureau of Transportation of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government plans to use two of these FC buses (model name: Toyota FC Bus) as fixed-route buses.

Toyota plans to introduce over 100 FC buses mainly in the Tokyo area, ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In view of this, the FC buses will be sold for the first time in Japan in early 2017, so as to help increase the level of understanding by the general public of the utilisation of FC buses as a form of public transportation.

Moreover, in preparation for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the number of FC buses being introduced will increase steadily going forward. Together with this, Toyota aims to engage continuously in the diligent development targeted at the expansion of the introduction of the new FC buses from 2018 so as to contribute to the realisation of a hydrogen-based society.

The Toyota FC Bus was developed by Toyota, based on the company's experience in developing FC buses together with Hino Motors. The Toyota Fuel Cell System (TFCS)1, which was developed for the Mirai fuel cell vehicle (FCV), has been adopted to provide better energy efficiency in comparison with internal combustion engines, as well as to deliver superior environmental performance with no CO_2 emissions or substances of concern (SOCs) when driving.

The bus also uses a high-capacity external power supply system. With a power supply capable of a 9 kW[2] maximum output, and a large capacity of electricity supply at 235 kWh[3], the FC bus can be used as a power source in the event of disasters, such as at evacuation sites. Its electricity supply can also be harnessed for home electric appliance use. ✪

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AFRICAN USED HEAVY EQUIPMENT MARKET: A REGION OF OPPORTUNITY

Paul Williamson, sales director Africa at IronPlanet, explains the varying demand across the African region for used heavy equipment, and why it must be considered a region of immense opportunity by global, online auction platforms.

Paul Williamson, sales director Africa at IronPlanet.

The demand for used heavy equipment in Africa has grown exponentially in recent years, a demand which second-hand dealers and global online auction platforms have eagerly tapped into. African buyers are not new to the concept of used goods, considering their appetite for used equipment from Europe, Dubai and Japan. However, Africa is an incredibly vast region, meaning the demand varies hugely from country to country.

Market overview

Demand for this type of equipment can be impacted by a number of factors such as the political governance of an area, the level of investment, the exploitation of resources or the number of new infrastructure projects. For example, Ethiopia is a country which has experienced better political governance in recent years, coupled with the completion of large-scale infrastructure projects which are having a positive impact.

Ethiopia was once a landlocked country, however recently a 700km railway was built to provide a link between Addis Ababa and the port of Djibouti, providing railroad access to the sea. This project, which received investment from China, inevitably brought heavy construction machinery to the area, as well as jobs, business and ongoing investment. Large amounts of Chinese investment have also grown the used heavy equipment market in countries such as Mozambique, Botswana, Uganda and Kenya.

It has also been reported by Global Construction Perspectives that Nigeria's construction growth will be the fastest of all global markets by 2018 – beating the construction growth of the often impassable India.

North African countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Libya were all areas where the demand for construction equipment was high, and the market was vibrant, however due to unrest in these countries, their markets have become unstable, impacting tourism and investment. Investors are less likely to want to take long-term risks in these countries. However, the future is beginning to look brighter for Egypt, following their decision to widen the Suez Canal – which hopes to revive the country's market and bring an influx of used heavy equipment to the country's shores.

Shift in reputation

The need to improve infrastructure and exploit natural resources such as oil and gold have led to an increase in the buying and selling of used heavy equipment in Africa. However, Africa's used heavy machinery hasn't always had a great reputation. Widely renowned as being a graveyard for used equipment, African regions were the last stop for these types of machines. They would fail to be sold on because they were often in a poorly maintained condition.

Often in African regions, the simpler the machine, the higher the demand. Technicians prefer to deal with machines with simple configurations, and have the basic set up of a simple engine and gearbox. The pool of used machinery available in these countries is fairly low due to the desire for simplicity, but this will hopefully expand as various African countries diversify.

However, the outlook for African used heavy equipment is looking up, thanks to the introduction of global, online auction platforms into the market. African buyers would traditionally have travelled to purchase used equipment from locations such as Europe, Dubai and the Far East. Now with online platforms such as IronPlanet and their detailed inspections, African buyers can buy with confidence, without needing to travel. This trend only looks to gain momentum over time as younger generations embrace the internet.

High-quality inspection reports increase trust

In order for the used heavy equipment market to truly flourish in emerging African nations, the buyer and seller relationship must be fine-tuned, which can be offered via global online auction platforms. Each machine that is listed on IronPlanet is listed alongside a bank of images and videos of the machine on offer, as well as detailed inspection reports which provide exact descriptions of the machine.

By having access to such a wide range of preliminary information, buyers are reassured that when the machine is delivered, it will be exactly as promised. This way, both buyers and sellers have complete transparency of the transaction, increasing trust in their purchase. This is incredibly important for African nations where the level of trust is low and corruption is rife.

The African used equipment market is incredibly difficult to predict, even now, as certain regions rely so heavily on foreign investment and the availability of capital – factors which can't be guaranteed. However, by introducing global online auction platforms to the African region, it will ensure that buyers and sellers of used heavy equipment are served with a reliable service where transactions are secure. A select number of African nations provide the most promising growth opportunities that the global market has ever witnessed – it is imperative that this potential is utilised. ✪


AMMANN
AMMANN

SOUTH AMERICA

Manitowoc hosted a meeting for Latin America's tower crane dealers in Panama in September to examine crane market opportunities and strategise over the best ways to address the region's lifting challenges. Approximately 30 representatives from every Potain dealer in Latin America attended the event, what will now become an annual gathering.

"This meeting marked the rollout of the Tower Crane Partner Development Program in Latin America, a pioneering initiative in the industry and region designed to help the performance of distributors locally in several areas, including sales incentives, marketing support, and services enhancement," said Mike Heacock, Manitowoc's vice president of sales for Potain tower cranes in the Americas region.

NORTH AMERICA

Kobelco Construction Machinery U.S.A. and Kobelco Cranes North America merge under the Kobelco Construction Machinery U.S.A. name on January 1, 2017. The move follows the global merger announced in April 2016.

"This consolidation will harness the strength of both businesses to build our capabilities as a whole," says Naoto Suzuki. "It will further enhance our service functions, strengthen our product development capabilities and reinforce our foundation in the North American market." Both dealer networks will continue as independent networks serving their respective industries.

First EC750E delivered in Eastern Europe

The first Volvo EC750E has been delivered in Eastern Europe, following its official unveiling at bauma Munich in April 2016.

During the exhibition, the 75 t crawler excavator – the largest available in regulated markets – was praised for its ability to offer a higher capacity in any application, thanks to its perfect combination of power and stability.

Before the new machine even had a chance to make its grand debut, however, one customer had already put in an order – that company was cement specialist Cementownia Warta. Warta, based in Pajęczno County, Poland, produces cement for road construction, airports and hydraulic structures, such as dams and water power stations. Its machines are required to work long hours while maintaining efficiency, meaning operator comfort and extended uptime are key requirements. It was for these reasons that the Volvo EC750E was the perfect fit.

"The decision to choose a Volvo machine was an obvious and natural choice for us," says Sławomir Goszczak, transport and machinery manager at Warta. "We bought our first Volvo unit in 2008 – an L120F wheel loader – and have since gone on to own a whole fleet of its machines, culminating in our most recent purchase, the EC750E."

Powerscreen plans to enter Chinese market

Powerscreen, one of the giants in the global crushing and screening industry, announced its intention to enter to the Chinese market at bauma China 2016.

"We will leverage our strong global reputation and expertise to enter the Chinese market," says Colin Clements, global product line director at Powerscreen.

Powerscreen will offer its comprehensive product portfolio of crushing and screening machinery that suits quarrying, sand and gravel, mining, demolition and recycling industries, contract crushing and screening companies, as well as the rental industry. First of its machines into China will enter the market in 2017.

"We see a requirement for Powerscreen products working in the small recycling business, medium size contractors and mine sites in China," says Willie Yin, business development director, Powerscreen China. "While the Chinese market has traditionally used static crushing and screening equipment, we believe there is an expanding market for the mobile concept."

The key to the success of the Powerscreen brand is the global distribution network. It has over 120 distributors operating globally providing local maintenance, education and support service to end users. "This dealer network is something we will replicate in China," says Yin.

EUROPE

A Potain MDT98 tower crane was used at the famed Verona Arena in Italy to change theatrical sets between productions for its entire 2016 opera season.

Verona, Italy-based Toffoli Macchine rented the 6 t crane for the project, which had the crane use its 55 m jib radius to reach over the arena's walls and assemble sets during the day. By night the crane helped dismantle the scenery. The MDT 98 replaced a Potain GTMR 386 B that was formerly used for this job for 15 years.

AFRICA

SEW-EURODRIVE Cape Town has invested in new assembly cells for geared motors to speed up production, increase quality and reduce wastage. As part of its ongoing development, the branch also plans a new assembly cell for electronics in the near future.

"We have definitely started to do more business on the electronics side, especially in terms of servo motors and mechatronic units, which combine electronics with mechanical gearing," says branch manager Byron Griffiths. He explains that the assembly-cell development embarked upon by the Cape Town branch will increase its flexibility and capability to deliver total solutions for clients. It will also assist in reducing stockholding, as a lot of components are interchangeable, as opposed to having to keep one item in stock in every available size and configuration.

AUSTRALIA

Terex Trucks has appointed OPS Equipment as its official dealer in Australian's South, West and Northern territories to support and supply its articulated haulers.

Founded in 1989, OPS provides equipment sales, service and consultation to customers in the mining, screening, crushing, washing, block making, earthmoving and construction industries. The addition of Terex Trucks will enable OPS to broaden its portfolio and offer customers all three articulated haulers manufactured by the Motherwell-based company.

ASIA

The German machine tool industry believes Vietnam offers huge market potential. For the first time, the VDW (German Machine Tool Builders' Association), in conjunction with the German-Vietnamese Chamber of Industry and Commerce, in late November 2016 organised a one-day symposium in Ho Chi Minh City.

12 prestigious companies including Chiron, DMG Mori, Heller, Hermle, Klingelnberg, Mauser, Open Mind, Peiseler, Siemens, SW Schwäbische Werkzeugmaschinen, Trumpf and Zimmer & Kreim showcased their products, solutions and services for modern-day industrial production operations. About 100 customers from the relevant user categories in the metalworking sector responded to the invitation, and attended the VDW's symposium in the cultural and commercial centre of Vietnam.

CASE has its eyes on the Middle East

Following the success of its prominent Eagle Days events held in Tunisia and South Africa, CASE Construction Equipment recently had another one in Dubai, the first one to be held in the Middle East.

Held at the Jebel Ali Golf Resort and Shooting Club in Dubai, the three-day event took place from 20 to 22 November. The CASE Eagle Days is designed to provide product and commercial training for sales professionals, together with offering customers the opportunity to see first-hand the performance of CASE machines in action.

In Dubai, CASE also took the opportunity to introduce both salesmen and customers to the new parts facility in the region, which will increase service levels and reduce downtime to help CASE customers maintain high levels of productivity.

The two-day training organised by the CASE Commercial Training Team was attended by almost 50 salesmen from 10 countries, including eight from the Middle East and two from Africa. It provided both in-depth product walk-arounds in the demonstration area as well as classroom sessions.

CASE recently held its first Eagle Days in Dubai.

More than 160 customers attended the Customer event held on the third day, including a large number from the UAE, as well as Oman, Qatar, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon and Ethiopia. There was a live machinery show plus product demonstrations from expert CASE operators on a wide range of equipment. On show were crawler excavators, motor graders, wheel loaders, backhoe loaders and skid steer loaders at work. The CASE Commercial Training Team, including product specialists, were on hand to advise on the best machine for each application.

CASE also used the event to launch a new grader which became the star of the day. This machine is said to perfectly suit local needs. "Once again we have had a great response to our Eagle Days event," said Franco Invernizzi, senior business director CNH Industrial Construction Equipment for Africa and Middle East.

"The three-day format, including the sales training as preliminary to the main show on the third day, enhances the relationship between salesmen and customers from across the region." ✪

Kubota wins the day for De Rustica Olive Estate

De Rustica owns a total of five Kubota tractors ranging in size.

A fleet of Kubota tractors continues to provide excellent productivity for De Rustica Olive Estate, located in the Swartberg Mountains of the Southern Cape of South Africa.

According to farm manager Joop Steenkamp, producing quality olive oil is not a straightforward task. "It's all about making the right choices from the smallest things to the biggest, and when it comes to tractors, choosing Kubota has made a real difference to us," he says.

De Rustica started with Kubota nearly three years ago. "We were looking for an efficient orchard tractor with a cab and Kubota was the only company in this region that had what we wanted. So, we gave it a try and never looked back," says Steenkamp.

Today De Rustica has five Kubotas ranging in size. "They are great machines – very fuel efficient, reliable and, importantly, we get the best possible service from Carlu Trekkers, Kubota dealers in George. They go the extra mile for us and this makes a huge difference as downtime is so costly."

The Kubota that made all the difference in the beginning for De Rustica was the M8540 N with a cab. Boasting advanced transmission and PTO technology, a range of new features as standard and high performance hydraulics, the M8540 is said to be an exceptional workhorse.

"It was interesting that no other tractor company could provide us with a narrow tractor with a cab. This was essential to us as we spray the trees using these tractors and of course our operators need protection," says Steenkamp.

On this subject Smith Power Equipment (SPE), Kubota distributors in South Africa, warn that South African farmers generally are not taking seriously enough the importance of a well-designed, safe tractor cab which conforms to international safety standards, which is most especially important with cabs of spraying tractors.

According to SPE's Deon Engelke, one of the problems is that farmers have become guided by price alone, failing to take into consideration the lifetime costs of ownership. "It is productivity over the life of a tractor that is the most important issue, not the once-off capital cost," says Engelke.

Steenkamp agrees. "We look at our costs very carefully as any successful farmer would do. But we recognise that sometimes, especially with tractors, that a cheaper initial investment can be expensive in the long run. With our Kubotas there is no doubt that while they were a little more expensive to buy, over time they have saved us a lot of money," he says. ✪