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HOUSING

in Southern Africa

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February 2016

HOUSING
in Southern Africa

ED'S NOTES

Pay up and pay out R1 billion...

The building sector has just dusted off the traditional holidays and as work began in earnest in mid-January, Minister of Human Settlements, Lindiwe Sisulu announced that municipalities and metros needed to pay up and pay out undisputed invoices from developers and contractors.

With R1 billion still to be paid to contractors, Minister Sisulu has plans to rope in the Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, to put measures in place to address the backlog. The legislation states that any person or company doing business with government should be paid within 30 days. To assist the process, the new Ombudsman's office will mediate between contractors, developers and the municipalities and metros.

We welcome Paul Mashatile, who has taken over the role of Gauteng MEC for Human Settlements. This popular politician aims to tackle housing delivery and title deed allocations. Gauteng Premier, David Makhura says that Mashatile will oversee the construction of new cities and Catalytic Projects in the province. As the ANC's Gauteng Chairperson, Mashatile is extremely capable of navigating the human settlements landscape and has the political will to fast track housing delivery.

Moving the chess pieces around in a bid to get the strongest team in place for delivery, we welcome Rory Gallocher, new CEO at the Social Housing Regulatory Association tasked with getting the organisation back on track.

President Jacob Zuma met with all newly appointed members of the National Planning Commission to carry on the work started by Trevor Manuel on the blueprint for the country's National Development Plan. The 26 member strong team will be responsible for the country's socio-economic policy and planning.

In this issue, sectional title specialist, Marina Constatas offers insights on how to successfully manage sectional title developments, the acts, court cases and what the indemnity covers.

And, Jacques du Toit from Absa Home Loans gets to grips with residential building activity throughout the provinces and new builds. He highlights the impact of interest rate hikes and forecasts for 2016. The City of Cape Town has created support systems for small business

entrepreneurs by offering access to 90 support organisations and funders to get them up and running as successful enterprises.

On that note, Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille, has called on entrepreneurs to tender for a fleet of electric buses, single and double decker, that are capable of travelling distances of 250 km at a time. This initiative will perhaps galvanise other major metros and municipalities to follow suit. Still on the note of energy efficiency measures, the city plans to install 500 000 solar water heaters.

The UK's largest wholesale distributor of solar PV products, Segen, has launched its local subsidiary, SegenSolar. The company will begin trading in early 2016 in South Africa's rapidly growing solar market.

And, South African based Efficient Power aims to provide mobile substations with the roll out of modular plants. The units are equipped with medium voltage switchgear, motor, control and instrumentation room and are fully operational on site within a week.

We hope that you enjoy the read, and as always we welcome your comments and news!



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Slow house price growth

The South African residential property market was markedly lower in 2015 than the preceding two years.

After a nominal price growth of 10% in 2013 and 9,3% in 2014, home values increased by around 6% in 2015. Nominal price growth in the middle segment came to just below 5% year-on-year (y/y) in December last year.

In real terms, i.e. after adjustment for the effect of headline consumer price inflation, middle-segment house price growth is estimated to have been around the 1,5% level in 2015 (4% and 3,1% in 2013 and 2014 respectively), reports Jacques du Toit, Absa Home Loans Property Analyst.

These trends in home values are based on Absa applications for mortgage finance received and approved in respect of middle-segment small, medium-sized and large homes.

Nominal year-on-year price growth in middle-segment medium-sized and large homes edged higher in December last year, after levelling out at an earlier stage. This may be the result of the base effect of a downward trend in price growth in these market segments that started late in 2014. This development may have the effect that year-on-year price growth in these categories of housing may technically show a gradual upward trend in the coming months.

In real terms, house price growth remained under downward pressure up to November last year, with virtually no real year-on-year price movement recorded in that month. Real year-on-year price deflation still occurred in the small category, whereas the medium-sized and large categories showed some real price inflation on a year-on-year basis.



The average nominal value of homes in December 2015:

- Small homes (80m²-140m²): R887 000
- Medium-sized homes (141m²-220 m²): R1 274 000
- Large homes (221m²-400m²): R1 982 000

Du Toit says that the South African economy is forecast to grow by around 1% in real terms this year, with factors such as rising inflation, higher interest rates and continued financial pressure on

consumers to weigh on the economy's performance. He concludes, "The residential property market is set to reflect the broader macroeconomic trends, with subdued demand for and supply of housing expected during 2016. This will in turn dampen the demand for and growth in mortgage finance for housing. Nominal house price growth is forecast to average around 5% this year. Based on the outlook for nominal price growth and the headline consumer price inflation rate, real house price deflation is projected over the next 12 months." ■

Housing for Marikana residents

Makashule Gana, Democratic Alliance Shadow Minister of Human Settlements says that since the Minister of Human Settlements, Lindiwe Sisulu handed over housing at the Marikana Housing Development Project, there have been protests over the list of beneficiaries.

It has been reported, says Gana, that the recipients of the houses were neither miners nor from the area. The donated land from Lonmin was intended for their employees, who needed assistance in the aftermath of the 2012 massacre.

Gana plans to ask the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Ncawwe Mafu, to summon Minister Sisulu and the North West Acting MEC, Wendy Nelson, to table the inter-ministerial task team's

report on progress in Marikana. He has also called on the Premier of the North West, Supra Mahumapelo and the Rustenburg Local Municipality, who made the allocations, to publish the list of beneficiaries as well as publically reveal how the housing allocation process works.

"We want to assess whether the promises that have been made in terms of the Special Presidential Package for Distressed Mining Communities have been delivered."

Gana says, "We want the situation in Marikana to return to normal and see the rightful beneficiaries access the housing owed to them. We will continue to do everything possible to hold the executive to account. And, to ensure that residents and mineworkers of Marikana receive the services they were promised." ■

Sisulu warns municipalities to pay

The Minister of Human Settlements, Lindiwe Sisulu and provincial MECs of Human Settlements recently met with more than 500 contractors and developers to discuss how to resolve and pay all due and payable invoices.

Almost R1 billion is due to contractors by provinces and municipalities and Sisulu expects the undisputed invoices to be paid within seven days.

She convened the urgent meeting following a national analysis of all unpaid projects and invoices as reflected in the payment systems, which found that more than R1 billion had not been paid to contractors, in respect of invoices submitted for payment.

Sisulu told the Human Settlements Consultative Conference that she would meet the Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan to request that relevant measures be put in place to ensure that the National

OVERDUE

Department is able to address payment of backlogs due and payable to contractors within seven days. "The legislation stipulates that any person or company that does business with government should be paid within 30 days," added Sisulu.

The Minister also indicated that her Department would, after the State of the Nation Address, establish an Ombudsman Office to deal with

issues of conflict between contractors, provinces and municipalities. "With the Ombudsman Office, we will be setting up a structure that will mediate and work with all stakeholders to resolve disputes and cut through red tape in the best interests of the human settlements sector," said Sisulu. Contractors are an integral part of the human settlements supply chain and Sisulu is determined to solve payment challenges. She said, "Contractors help us to restore the dignity of our people and to provide an environment that assists them to perform at their best."



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Midrand property in high demand



Residential property growth in Gauteng has been lacklustre at best over the past two years, with prices for existing properties achieving little to no growth (once adjusted for inflation).

However, a sector which appears to be bucking this trend is the sectional title market (R350 000 to R850 000 price range). In Midrand, developers have struggled to keep up with demand.

“Over the past few years, the area has become a key growth point with more and more businesses like Vodacom, BMW and the South African Mint moving their base of operations from the Johannesburg CBD into either Sandton or Midrand,” says Bruce Swain, Managing Director of Leapfrog Property Group.

“A further indicator of the growth taking place is the fact that the 131 000 m² Mall of Africa (the largest single-phase shopping mall on the continent) is opening in Midrand in April 2016. This will attract visitors from nearby towns and cities. With Porsche’s purchase of the iconic Kyalami Race Track, the motoring giant plans to upgrade and develop the property. The Gautrain has also done much to open up residential, retail and commercial opportunities. It is far easier to live in Midrand and commute via train either to Johannesburg or Pretoria, without

sitting in traffic or incurring SANRAL toll fees,” says Swain.

He adds that over the past decade Johannesburg and Pretoria have seen massive influxes of people, while dealing with an increasing shortage of available land for development. More and more buyers are looking further afield to areas like Ruimsig and Midrand. “The town council estimates that at this point around 600 people move to Midrand per month,” says Swain.

A number of sectional title developments have sprung up in Midrand suburbs including Country View, Carlswald, Crowthorne, Glen Austin, Halfway House, Halfway Gardens, Vorna Valley, Noordwyk and Randjesfontein, with average sales prices ranging between R550 000 and R850 000. Properties with asking prices of less than R550 000 are being snapped up as soon as they become available, with demand far exceeding supply. Midrand’s property market is also being fed by Thembisa Township, with first time buyers viewing Midrand as an attractive lifestyle option.

“Our agents are reporting that the demand in this price range is high and seems to be unaffected by fears of a recession or expectations of a rise in interest rates—largely due to Midrand’s centrality and affordable pricing. Around 30% to 35% of residential purchases in this market are also being bought as long-term investments,” explains Swain. ■

Defaulting municipalities

According to Kevin Mileham, Democratic Alliance Shadow Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 61 municipalities and four metros have carried their collective debt of more than R2.8 billion into 2016. He says that this will mean water restrictions due to unpaid municipal water bills. “Water is an essential service and residents cannot be made to suffer as a result of incompetent municipal management. We urge the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), David van Rooyen, to require that the provinces act in terms of Section 139(5) of the Constitution and impose a recovery plan on the affected municipalities; or assume

responsibility for the implementation of the financial recovery plan.”

He also calls on the Provincial CoGTA MECs to take immediate steps to assist each municipality and metro before residents are left without water. Mileham says that these unpaid bills are largely attributable to unacceptably poor financial management, maladministration and fiscal irresponsibility of the respective municipal managers in these municipalities. It simply cannot be that residents should suffer the consequences of corrupt and financially malfeasant municipal managers. “This crisis is compounded by national government’s dismal failure to manage our nation’s water infrastructure, which



has resulted in water losses and water restrictions across many provinces already.”

He points out that South Africans are desperately in need of critical resources, such as water. ■

CITY OFFERS A HELPING HAND TO ENTREPRENEURS

This service is available to connect entrepreneurs with opportunities by finding the right support organisations or services that are freely available or partly subsidised. The service will assist budding entrepreneurs to get off the starting blocks and see their business ideas come to fruition.

There are over 90 business support organisations that provide services to entrepreneurs who are either doing business or wanting to start up a business in the city. Through this service, the city helps start-ups and existing ventures to find the most appropriate support service from the network of development organisations (including financiers and funders) located in Cape Town.

“We strive to meet the needs of our residents and we see economic development as an essential part of social upliftment. The only way that we can ensure sustainable economic development is if we create an enabling environment for start-up businesses to get off the ground and try and advise those struggling where they could find assistance,” says Bloor.

The Small Business Support Service response time is monitored and, based on the first quarter of the City’s financial year, 94% of enquiries sent through have been actioned or resolved within 48 hours. A struggling venture that may not be aware that there are support organisations who can assist or provide much needed advice can benefit from this service.

“The Small Business Support Service hosts information and outreach sessions to groups of business people to explain the city’s supply chain processes and how to access opportunities. We strive to make doing business in Cape Town easier for our entrepreneurs by sharing information about City procedures. We work with entrepreneurs to assist with resolving bottlenecks and reducing red tape caused by a lack of knowledge of city processes and business-related issues. Two of the critical success factors for any small enterprise to survive are access to training and finance, which we help to facilitate as well,” says Bloor.

To standardise the city’s approach and to ensure that Cape Town continues to provide an enabling business environment, a Draft Business Support Policy will be out for pub-

The City of Cape Town’s Small Business Support Service is a one-stop-shop that seeks to help entrepreneurs save time, energy and money.



lic comment from February 1st to March 1st, 2016.

“We encourage support organisations and businesses to submit their comments on this draft policy. We need to make sure that the policy addresses the challenges that they face. It also highlights the extent of our support for entrepreneurs.”

Recognising that information is key to the success of entrepreneurial activity and an enabler to ease potential delays in doing business, the city is committed to ensuring that the relevant information required by businesses is available through accessible channels. This includes:

- City procedures and business

assistance programmes

- Connecting businesses with the right city officials and resources
- Assistance in resolving bottlenecks caused by a lack of knowledge of city processes, business-related issues, regulatory compliance, etc.
- Access to financial guidance in order to find the most suitable source of funding
- Information about existing support organisations
- Economic trends and market opportunities
- Industry-specific information for targeted sectors ■



THE NEW NPC TEAM

The new commission is mandated to promote and advance the implementation of the NDP across different sectors of society; undertake detailed planning in a number of sectors to be determined from time to time; conduct regular engagements with various sectors of society on all matters pertaining to the long-term development of the country, and facilitate stakeholder engagements aimed at forging a social compact towards more effective implementation of the NDP.

It has a responsibility to undertake research into long-term trends, analyse the implementation of short- to medium-term plans, with a view to recommending improvements to government and inform policy and planning.

Having met the new NPC members, the President is expecting the team to hit the ground running. He said, "This will enable government to gauge the progress being made and to take stock of the landmark achievements in the implementation of our country's National Development Plan."

The new NPC members include:

- Chairperson: Jeffrey Thamsanqa Radebe, Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Deputy Chairperson: Professor Malegapuru William Makgoba (health, higher education management)
- Tasneem Essop (environmental affairs)

Picture by Albert H Teich/Shutterstock

President Jacob Zuma



President Jacob Zuma met with the new members of the National Planning Commission (NPC), which was established to promote long term planning in government. The first NPC team developed the country's socio-economic blueprint.

- Professor Abdus Salam Mohammad Karaan (agriculture)
- Dr Vuyokazi Felicity Mahlati (development planning/gender)
- Elias Masilela (economics)
- Professor Vivienne Taylor (social policy, social development)
- Dr Miriam Altman (ICT)
- Dr Siphamandla Welcome Zondi (governance, international relations)
- Johannes Petrus Landman (scenarios, future planning)
- Pulane Elsie Molokwane (science and technology)
- Jarrad Gregory Wright (energy, infrastructure)
- Dr Ntuthuko Melusi Bhengu (Public Health, health insurance)
- Professor Kholeka Constance Moloi (higher education and training)
- Tessa Gilda Dooms (youth development)
- Christina Marion Nomdo (children's rights)
- Themba Cyril Dlamini (Transformation, ICT)
- Sue Bannister (urban and regional planning, local government, infrastructure development)
- Khanyisile Thandiwe Kweyama (human resource development, business)
- Professor. Jabulani Dennis Sithole (arts and culture, heritage)
- Captain Frank Dutton (policing/ investigations)
- Advocate Lekolota Abram Makua (labour law)
- Poppy Audrey Mocumi (rights of persons with disability)
- Dr Thamsanqa Mazwai (communications, small business development)
- Thanyani Ramatsea, (civil engineering/infrastructure development)
- Percy Sechemane (water and sanitation) ■

Managing sectional titles

While there is a common misconception that the main job of trustees in sectional title developments is to enforce rules, the reality is that they play a critical role in the successful operation of the complex says Marina Constas, Director of BBM Attorneys.

Specialist sectional title attorney, Constas, urges trustees and owners to arm themselves with the basics of sectional title law and ensure that they are well represented. “This is undoubtedly a difficult and often thankless job, and we do not want to discourage anyone from taking it on, but it should not be underestimated.”

A trustee’s most important duty is to insure the building. Further obligations include keeping books of accounts and records, determining monthly levies, signing cheques and depositing body corporate funds. Trustees also appoint, manage and pay agents and employees involved in the operational running of the building – including managing agents, attorneys, contractors and gardeners.

While trustees are well protected by the law in terms of being sued in their personal capacity, Constas cautions that they should be aware that their indemnity does not extend to dishonesty or gross negligence. “If a trustee acts dishonestly or in a manner that is grossly negligent, he may be sued by the body corporate. The question of what may be construed as grossly negligent is open to interpretation by the courts, but an example of conduct that may be deemed grossly negligent would be failing to insure the building

and it burns down.” Not complying with safety regulations, as set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act – like having fire extinguishers on every floor – may also be considered gross negligence in the event of a fire, she adds. “Gross negligence is, however, difficult to prove, and this finding by the courts is more the exception than the rule,” she notes. Reflecting this, Constas cites a recent Western Cape High Court case in which trustees were being sued for gross negligence after someone slipped on a mess left by contractors working at the complex. “The court found that reasonable steps had been taken to ensure that the property was in a safe condition, and the trustees were found not negligent in this case,” she explains.

To ensure that their buildings are safe and comply with legal requirements, Constas recommends that trustees familiarise themselves with the basics of the Occupational Health & Safety Act, as well as relevant portions of the National Building Regulation & Buildings Standards Act and their area’s municipal bylaws. “There are requirements for the positioning and maintenance of fire fighting equipment that all trustees should be aware of, as well as the necessity to have swimming pools enclosed with a wall or fence of a specified height. Not



Marina Constas

complying with some of these things could land trustees in legal hot water.

“Being a trustee demands more time, effort and hard work than many people realise,” Constas contends. “On the positive side, however, a trustee has the opportunity to contribute constructively to the building and the property value. We believe that the future of the sectional title industry lies largely in the hands of trustees,” she concludes. For further information call BBM Attorneys on 011 622 3622. ■



RESIDENTIAL BUILDING STATS



Building activity with regard to new private sector-financed housing in South Africa recorded relatively low single-digit growth in the first eleven months of 2015 compared with the corresponding period in 2014, based on data published by Statistics South Africa.

The number of new housing units for which building plans were approved increased by 4% year-on-year (y/y) to a total of just more than 55 600 in the eleven months to November last year. This growth performance was largely driven by the segment for houses less than 80 m². This segment recorded growth of almost 13% y/y over this period compared to houses over 80 m². Apartments and townhouses experienced some marginal contractions up to November.

According to Jacques du Toit, Property Analyst, Absa Home Loans, the number of new housing units constructed increased by 5,2% y/y from January to November last year, with a total of more than 36 300 units built

over the 11-month period. This growth was the result of an improvement of 7,9% y/y, or 1 879 units, in new houses constructed of smaller and larger than 80 m² to a combined total of 25 797 units compared with 23 918 house built in the corresponding 11-month period of 2014.

The number of new apartments and townhouses built was marginally lower, by 0,7% y/y in January to November.

The average cost of newly built housing increased by 6% y/y to an average of R6 148 m² in the eleven months to November. Building costs per m² between January to November cost:

- Houses of <80 m²: R3912, up by 9,1% y/y.
- Houses of ≥80 m²: R6352, up by 3,9% y/y.

- Apartments and townhouses: R7 111, up by 10,2% y/y.

“The economy is forecast to show relatively low growth of about 1% in 2016, with inflation and interest rates expected to rise during the course of the year.

Against this background the household sector is forecast to experience increased financial pressure, which will weigh on consumer and building confidence.”

“These factors will be the main driving factors of the demand for and the supply of new housing this year, with residential building activity not expected to show a significant improvement from current levels over the next twelve months,” says du Toit. ■

Residential building activity by province ¹												
Building plans approved												
Segment	Period	Variable	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GAU	MPU	LIM	SA
Total new houses, flats and townhouses	Jan-Nov 14	Number	12 197	2 251	569	2 496	5 981	2 425	22 816	3 479	1 283	53 497
	January -	Number	14 516	2 892	199	3 137	3 974	3 133	23 234	3 114	1 425	55 624
	November	% change	19.0	28.5	-65.0	25.7	-33.6	29.2	1.8	-10.5	11.1	4.0
	2015	% of SA	26.1	5.2	0.4	5.6	7.1	5.6	41.8	5.6	2.6	100.0
Alterations and additions to existing houses	Jan-Nov 14	m ²	780 123	303 389	58 301	142 351	340 310	148 668	940 618	192 302	61 196	2 967 258
	January -	m ²	828 878	298 528	50 052	141 920	324 339	135 036	906 105	167 046	51 580	2 903 484
	November	% change	6.2	-1.6	-14.1	-0.3	-4.7	-9.2	-3.7	-13.1	-15.7	-2.1
	2015	% of SA	28.5	10.3	1.7	4.9	11.2	4.7	31.2	5.8	1.8	100.0
Buildings completed												
Segment	Period	Variable	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GAU	MPU	LIM	SA
Total new houses, flats and townhouses	Jan-Nov 14	Number	8 956	1 601	194	1 055	2 055	1 963	14 770	3 216	716	34 526
	January -	Number	10 495	1 553	257	2 291	1 793	1 890	15 294	2 100	658	36 331
	November	% change	17.2	-3.0	32.5	117.2	-12.7	-3.7	3.5	-34.7	-8.1	5.2
	2015	% of SA	28.9	4.3	0.7	6.3	4.9	5.2	42.1	5.8	1.8	100.0
Alterations and additions to existing houses	Jan-Nov 14	m ²	357 082	89 153	24 494	20 759	135 685	26 138	280 631	96 911	6 570	1 037 423
	January -	m ²	435 874	74 268	24 445	30 856	138 681	86 444	187 571	102 796	3 593	1 084 528
	November	% change	22.1	-16.7	-0.2	48.6	2.2	230.7	-33.2	6.1	-45.3	4.5
	2015	% of SA	40.2	6.8	2.3	2.8	12.8	8.0	17.3	9.5	0.3	100.0

¹Private-sector financed

Mokonyane withholds water reports

According to Leon Basson, Democratic Alliance Shadow Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, is deliberately concealing the mismanagement of national water infrastructure.

Denying public access to the 2014 Blue and Green Drop Reports, Basson says, "This is contrary to the spirit of the Blue and Green Drop Programmes aimed at equipping the public with the knowledge to keep the relevant authorities accountable." The reports provide information on the health of our water and wastewater treatment plants. Basson says, "The South Afri-

can public needs to be fully apprised of the state of our water affairs, especially considering that parts of South Africa are currently undergoing water restrictions that have been compounded by a severe drought."

"It is therefore imperative that Minister Mokonyane release these reports immediately in compliance with the application submitted in terms of the Promotion to Access to Information Act (PAIA)."

Mokonyane has failed to provide the information and delayed the reports which were completed in June 2015. She has recently released individual reports to various municipalities but has not released the national Blue and Green Drop Reports. ■



Gallocher takes over SHRA

The past two years of SHRA's history has been tumultuous, with the state regulatory body placed under administration by the Department of Human Settlements.

In 2014, Minister of Human Settlements, Lindiwe Sisulu, disbanded the Board of SHRA and took steps to institute a practice of fair process of accreditation for Social Housing Institutions, appoint an administrator until a suitable candidate for CEO could be put in place; reposition SHRA as the driver of housing delivery for social housing in urban areas; and appoint a new board.

Former Johannesburg Social Housing Company CEO, Rory Gallocher has taken over the helm of the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) to get the state institution back on track.

Gallocher has impressive credentials and the ability to steer the institution, which oversees the social housing sector. In his former role as CEO of Joshco, the City of Johannesburg's social housing provider, Gallocher changed the Johannesburg affordable housing landscape.

He has a master's degree in town planning and regional planning from

the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The regulatory authority is mandated to ensure it delivers 27 000 social housing units by 2019.

This also includes stimulating rental housing through investment opportunities and to register and regulate social housing institutions.

For further information contact SHRA on 011 274 6200. ■

Sectional title scheme checklist

Sectional title developments are one of the fastest-growing sectors in the property industry, and, under the right circumstances, can be excellent investments.

Bill Rawson, Chairman of the Rawson Property Group says that the competence and expertise of the development's trustees or managing agent, coupled with the efficacy of the Body Corporate, will play a significant role in the property's appreciation.

All sectional title developments will have a set of rules drawn up by the Body Corporate. These can include maintenance responsibilities, design restriction and noise and behaviour limitations, amongst other things.

"Positive cash flow is essential for a well-run sectional title scheme," says Rawson. "There are a lot of borderline-insolvent schemes around." Good indicators of solid financial management include up-to-date budgets, realistic and annually-increasing levies, and a sizeable reserve fund for unexpected arrears or large, future upgrades."

There are strict conditions set out in the Sectional Title Act that govern the way the managing agent and Body Corporate should operate. These include annual general meetings, financials audited and signed off by the trustees, and insurance policies. "There are a lot of schemes run by trustees who aren't aware of

their responsibilities under the Sectional Title Act," says Rawson. "This can lead to erratic leadership and management, which tends to allow important issues to slip through the cracks – usually resulting in the slow deterioration of the development as a whole."

Having the right rules in place is one thing, but being able to enforce them is another. Allowing a culture of non- or late-payment is a sure sign of weak management, and a good indicator that the development may descend into financial difficulties in the future. Rawson says, "The best sectional title schemes will show signs of ongoing improvement, which can be seen in common areas." ■

THE STATE OF CIVIL CONSTRUCTION

Confidence was boosted by an improvement in overall profitability amid continued restrained growth in construction activity. FNB Economics Senior Industry Analyst, Jason Muscat says that the current level of confidence still suggests that close to 60% of civil contractors are dissatisfied with prevailing business conditions.

The FNB/BER Civil Confidence Index edged higher to 42 points in the fourth quarter of 2015, from 39 in third quarter of 2015. Despite the rise in confidence, the current level of the index indicates that close to 60% of respondents are dissatisfied with prevailing business conditions.

“Civil contractors were relatively downbeat for much of 2015. After averaging 51 index points in 2014 and 53 in 2013, confidence averaged only 41 in 2015,” says Muscat.

Although work from provinces and municipalities has held up well, weak spending on construction by state-owned enterprises and the private sector continues to weigh on growth.

The change in the fortunes of civil contractors is largely due to a slowdown in construction activity. According to revised figures from the South African Reserve Bank (SARB), the growth in the real value of construction works rose by an annual rate of 5,2% in the third quarter 2015, a far cry from the average of 15,1% in 2014. The current survey results suggest that the growth in construction works likely slowed in the fourth quarter of 2015. “Although work from provinces and municipalities has held up well, weak spending on construction by state-owned enterprises and the private sector continues to weigh on growth,” added Muscat.

Overall profitability saw a noticeable improvement during the quarter as tendering competition eased, lifting confidence. Confidence was further boosted by respondents’ expectations that construction work and profitability will be noticeably

The FNB/BER Civil Confidence Index increased by 3 index points to 42 in the fourth quarter of 2015, showing that construction confidence was marginally higher.



better in first quarter of 2016. “Respondents’ predictions have been inaccurate in the past, and while it contributed to the uptick in confidence in fourth quarter of 2015, it is probably too optimistic,” says Muscat.

The percentage of respondents citing new demand as a constraint to business operations was somewhat lower in fourth quarter of 2015, although still relatively high.

He concludes: “Although confidence edged higher in fourth quarter of 2015 on the back of a marked improvement in profitability, the majority of civil contractors remain dissatisfied with prevailing business conditions. Growth in construction work likely slowed during the quarter and is set to remain fairly subdued over the short- to medium term. This is



Jason Muscat

largely due to the demand for new work which, albeit slightly higher in fourth quarter of 2015, continues to be relatively scarce.” ■

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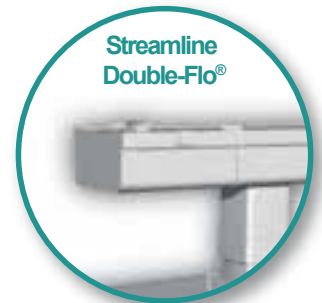
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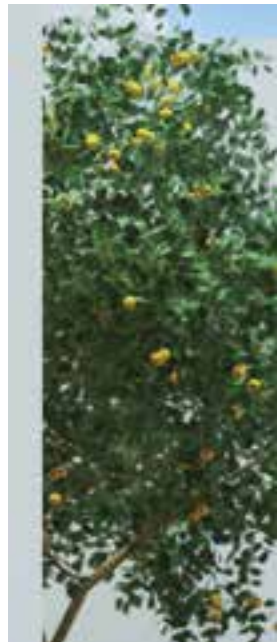
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HERITAGE ESTATE

People within the affordable to middle income brackets are tending to retire earlier. This trend, along with increased life expectancies, and an increasingly aging population, is contributing to a shortage of retirement accommodation in Johannesburg.



According to Dr Andrew Golding, Chief Executive of the Pam Golding Properties group, “The nature of retirement property is also changing; more people want a property within a secure estate, which confers on them an outstanding lifestyle as well as maximum independence. In addition, many of these individuals are also seeking properties in Modderfontein that provide them and their families with meaningful investments.”

Catering for such requirements are the developers of a large new estate aimed at the more mature market. Heritage Estate is situated nearby the tranquil Modderfontein Nature Reserve in eastern Johannesburg.

The estate, which is being developed by Norym Properties, consists of no fewer than 162 sectional title units, of which 28 are simplex units and are being sold in phases for delivery from mid-2016.

“This multi-million rand project, which involves the redevelopment of a charming historic site, brings on line a range of different kinds of retirement accommodation,” says Golding.

“These include higher end units, simplex units and a variety of different sized apartments, enabling buyers the opportunity to purchase a property that is most appropriate to their life circumstance. Private medical rooms and assisted home based care will also be available to residents who may require these services.”

Designed in an appealing style reminiscent of a bygone era, the simplexes are fitted with all the latest mod cons, including fully imported kitchens. The 28 simplexes represent the first phase of construction and are to be ready for occupation by June 2016. They are available in 140 m² and 180m² sizes. There are two show units, a standard unit and an up-spec'd unit.

“The estate moves away from the traditional Life Rights retirement model to sectional title ownership. Many retirees today recognise the long-term value of such homes and prefer being able to own their retirement property within a sectional title arrangement. They like the idea that they are not only investing in a lifestyle, but also feel assured that their properties will enjoy significant capital growth over time.”

He says that interestingly, some investors are purchasing properties within Heritage Estate with a view to renting them out until they themselves are ready to take occupation at a later date.”

Heritage House was developed by the Chamber of Mines’ as a sanatorium and was opened in 1911. A billiard room and bowling green were later added for the entertainment of recovering patients. The Pavilion was added as a concert hall in 1925



and this is now being refurbished as a clubhouse for residents. In July 1980, Heritage House was put to use as a rehabilitation centre by the Chamber of Mines and was then sold to be developed as an educational facility. Parts of the movie 'Hotel Rwanda' were filmed there in 2004.

David Coutinho of Pam Golding Properties, Johannesburg East, says that the Modderfontein area is undergoing such rapid commercial and residential development that it is becoming an important new growth hub within the greater Johannesburg area.

A massive R84 billion 'New York of Africa' development, which includes a financial hub, education centre, hospital and medical centre as well as sports stadium, has recently been mooted for the area.

"Heritage Estate is not only situated in a booming area, which augers well for the future of the residential

property market in the area, and is also centrally situated that it offers residents a high degree of convenience."

The development is strategically located on the main routes to OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg city centre, Sandton and Pretoria and has easy access to the Gautrain. In addition Greenstone Mall, which offers shopping and entertainment, is just minutes away."

The development of Heritage Estate is well underway, with the roll out of the 'Firs' consisting of 26 simplex units and two cottages that are heritage buildings. Residents will be able to take occupation by June 2016.

Heritage House, the charming old sanatorium, is currently being refurbished and renovated to its original condition, in accordance and under the guidance of the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority Gauteng.

"The developers are committed

to restoring and refurbishing Heritage House and surrounding historic buildings to their original glory. Guided by the Heritage Association, the architects have aimed to restore the character of Heritage Estate, while opening up the development to light and creating attractive living spaces for residents."

Government donated a nine hectare piece of land close to the Modderfontein Dynamite Factory, and the Chamber of Mines erected the sanatorium.

The Certificate of Incorporation was signed by the Colonial Secretary of the time of former South African Prime Minister, Jan Smuts.

According to Coutinho, residents at the estate will be encouraged to plant indigenous plants that will fit in with the communal gardens, as well as with the heritage trees, the Wild Olives, and indigenous flowers and grasses existing on the property. ■

Consumer indebtedness

According to TransUnion Credit Bureau, Consumer Credit Index (CCI), the index is based on a 100-point scale, where 50.0 is the break-even level between improvement and deterioration of credit health. A number greater than the 50.0 break-even point shows an improvement in credit health. The index comprises of consumer credit borrowing and repayment behaviour, household cash flow and debt servicing costs.

“Despite warnings of worsening macroeconomic conditions, consumer behaviour does not show signs of falling credit health. This is partly the result of an already heavily indebted household sector choosing to be more cautious, and partly the result of more prudent lending standards in the wake of the unsecured lending boom,” said Geoff Miller, Regional President of TransUnion Africa.

Miller also cautioned against complacency. “Macroeconomic conditions can take some time to reflect fully in consumer behaviour. A weaker rand exchange rate raises the cost of living while also compelling the central bank to raise interest rates.”

Household cash flow remained roughly steady in the fourth quarter, but, according to Miller, higher prices on imported goods due to rand weakness is a threat that could plausibly cause the cash flow indicator to turn negative in the first half of 2016.

Consumer credit behaviour remained stable in the fourth quarter of 2015 and neither materially worsened nor improved from the third quarter. Encouragingly, the number of new defaults declined by 5,1% compared to the previous year.

“Since the rapid rand weakness in December 2015, we’re strongly focused on the rand as a potentially big risk factor in 2016”, he added. Household debt service costs increased during the fourth quarter due to slightly

constructed the CCI in collaboration with TransUnion, noted that currency instability was one of the key factors in the interest rate outlook. “The Reserve Bank hiked interest rates by 50 basis points in January 2016,

and more such moves may be in store if the currency does not stabilise soon and begin recovering. Interest rate hikes will cause many of the most financially vulnerable borrowers to default. The key for managing this process will be for credit providers to focus on loan quality and for borrowers to be more prudent than usual.”

Facts and Figure

In the fourth quarter of 2015 the CCI shows:

- 56,4 million consumer accounts were measured
- 0,95 million of accounts were in arrears for more than three months
- 3,4 million accounts were in arrears for 30 days
- R137,7 billion value of revolving credit measured
- Prime overdraft rate in the last quarter of 2015 was 9.75% ■



higher household indebtedness and higher interest rates.

The Reserve Bank raised the benchmark repo rate from 6% to 6.25% in November 2015. But many analysts expect the pace of rate hikes to accelerate in light of a dramatic devaluation in the rand exchange rate which began in December.

Russell Lamberti, Chief Strategist of ETM Analytics, the firm that





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500 000 solar water heaters

Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille says that city plans include a 37% reduction in carbon emissions, with 22% coming from energy efficiency alone.

The Energy 2040 Goal models a more resilient, lower carbon, resource-efficient and equitable future for Cape Town, which grows the administration's stature as a leading and innovative city.

The targets for 2040 will also result in:

- the installation of over 500 000 residential solar water heaters and heat pumps
- less dependency on coal, with extensive embedded renewable generation in the commercial and residential sectors as well as diversified large-scale energy supply with photovoltaics, wind, storage and possibly natural gas
- a modal shift from private to public transport, with increased access to public transport and motorised passenger travel in efficient vehicles with higher occupancy levels
- a remodelled city with increased densification and mixed use in areas of economic activity
- increased energy savings from efficiency and cheaper energy

De Lille adds that given rising electricity tariffs and the serious constraints on South Africa's electricity supply, energy efficiency is critical to economic growth and stability. The commercial sector uses an estimated 44% of the electricity supply in the Cape Town area.

"It is therefore imperative that we increase our efforts to promote a responsible commercial sector will initiate energy efficient initiatives to reduce its energy costs," she says.

In 2009, the City, in partnership with Eskom and the South African Property Owners Association, launched Cape Town's Energy Efficiency Forum (EE Forum) which has been assisting commercial buildings and operations with practical know-how to improve energy efficiency. In 2012, the forum introduced the Energy Efficiency Forum Awards to recognise leadership in the commercial sector, and to motivate the continued reduction in energy consumption.

Bayside Mall and the Cape Town French School were named as the

The City of Cape Town recognises that resource efficiency is critical to building economic activity and increasing a city's competitiveness and resilience. This is reflected in the city's recently approved Energy 2040 Goal, which includes the installation of over 500 000 solar water heaters and heat pumps.



winners of the 2015 Energy Efficiency Forum Awards. The mall's energy efficiency interventions include upgrading to LED lighting, and improvements in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system. The flagship project is a 500 kWp pilot rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) plant, with 2 108 panels covering 3 300 m² and supplies 5% of their electricity needs.

The annual average daily energy production of the PV panels is 2100 kWh, which equates to the average daily use of 105 middle-income households in Cape Town (using 600 kWh per month).

The interventions have yielded consistent monthly energy savings

averaging at 11% so far, with the hot summer months still to come where savings reach about 17%.

The winner of the Small Building Retrofit Category is the Cape Town French School. Over the past three years, the school has been working on energy efficiency and adding renewable energy to its operations, with the help of Energy Intelligence. It has replaced all fluorescent lights with LED technology, and installed a heat pump for hot water.

De Lille emphasises: "We need to use the opportunity to get more companies and households to become energy generators so that we can become more energy secure." ■



Segen UK launches SegenSolar

Segen is a major player in the UK PV market with a market share of more than 35% of the British Solar PV market. Segen's expertise and experience will enable SegenSolar to offer an unrivalled service to its carefully selected customer base in South Africa.

The UK based company has been in operation since 2005 and employs over 85 highly skilled members of staff in its businesses in Germany, UK and now South Africa.

Earlier this year, Segen also successfully launched SegenSolar GmbH in Cologne, Germany, which focuses on providing a wide range of state-of-the-art solar PV products and solutions.

The recent launch of SegenSolar GmbH and SegenSolar are part of the UK company's overall strategy to expand and strengthen its global trading activities after celebrating a decade of success.

SegenSolar will begin trading early 2016 and focus on offering a select range of quality, proven solar PV products for PV off-grid, grid tied, hybrid, back-up and storage solutions.

SegenSolar proudly brings customers its ground breaking, reliable and easy to use on-line trade portal

The UK's largest wholesale distributor of solar PV products, Segen, has announced the launch of its innovative business in Johannesburg, SegenSolar.

that the company has developed and refined over the years.

The online portal will allow trading customers in South Africa to design a solar PV system and obtain a detailed breakdown of the components required for that system within minutes, see real time stock levels, order any product/system 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The South African company will follow the group's proven formula of success by offering customers a range of quality, proven PV products and solutions at attractive prices, great stock levels, excellent customer support and product training, and an honest, transparent relationship with its trading customers.

The executive team includes Andy Pegg, CEO Segen (UK); Sven Seeger, Managing Director, SegenSolar; Michael Schäfer, Managing Director of SegenSolar GmbH.

Pegg said: "We are very excited and confident about the launch of our new business! South Africa is one of the most dynamic and rapidly

emerging solar markets in the world."

Schäfer said: "The launch of SegenSolar is a culmination of our collective efforts over recent years to expand our solar PV work and offering in the African market. The realisation of a long-time aspiration and dream that has finally materialised.

Seeger concluded: "It is a proud moment for us and a privilege to be part of such an amazing team of people who will add significant value to our local solar PV market. Working with an established, credible and experienced company like Segen will enable us to offer our customers an unparalleled level of service, relevant quality PV products at attractive prices and innovative solutions to help grow their businesses and ours. We are incredibly excited about the launch and look forward to mirroring the level of success seen in the UK, and recently in Germany."

Visit SegenSolar at the Power & Electricity World Africa 2016 Expo, March 15-16, or call SegenSolar on 0330 9000 133. ■

Efficient Power introduces modular plants

Mobile substations are not a new concept but according to Warwick Jackson, Managing Director of Efficient Power, the construction of brick substations in remote locations has numerous challenges, such as rural roads and logistical concerns. Jackson realised that the answer was to create fully integrated structures off-site.

The company offers a complete offsite construction solution with fully constructed modular plants leaving the factory with all internal equipment already installed and fully integrated. The result is a bare minimum of site work that is set to revolutionise the time, risk and cost involved in large, complex projects.

“Traditionally, substation construction has always been complicated, costly and time consuming, requiring a large team of expensive specialists on site to complete the fitting and testing of all the equipment,” says Jackson.

In contrast, Efficient Power solutions are designed and built according to exact specifications. The highest standards are upheld throughout the process.

The launch of the new mobile modular plant was the result of Efficient Power’s alignment with Efficient Engineering, allowing it to utilise specialist skills from several unrelated industries, bringing together heavy engineering and fabrication with a project execution and technical team to custom design each element of the structure.

“This approach makes it possible to have a large pump station or substation - equipped with medium voltage switchgear, a motor control centre, and a control and instrumentation room - fully operational within a week of arriving on site. Once



Efficient Power has created an industry solution to address the challenges of building self-contained modular plants in remote regions.



Warwick Jackson

fabricated, the mobile building needs to be equipped, with every possible piece of equipment commissioned in the same facility, and test-integrated so that the building is 100% operational before being relocated,” explains Jackson.

The completed structures are then transported to site, where they are hydraulically lifted and positioned onto custom-built plinths where racking and cable work can simply be connected, resulting in a substation ready to provide more than thirty years of service. The entire process is accomplished in a fraction of the time it would take to construct on-site.

Efficient Power has already achieved a turnover of more than R100-million in its first 18 months of operation. “We look forward to showing the industry what can be achieved when the right group of people and skills are put together to find a better way of doing things.” ■

Kusile nears completion

However, the construction of any power station comes with environmental implications, which can only be neutralised through geosynthetics.

To this end, construction and engineering group GAST was awarded the contract to manage the geosynthetic requirements of the Kusile Power Station. The contract was awarded through WBHO, based on GAST's record of 11 500 successfully completed projects and its accreditation from the United Nations and the World Bank.

The Kusile Geosynthetics project, which is entering its closing stages, has been seen as one of the largest and most complex geosynthetic projects in the Southern Hemisphere. This is owing to the volumes and intricacies of providing an environmentally friendly geosynthetic solution and secure platform for Kusile Ash and Coal over the 6 ha site.

GAST Group CEO, Kevin Gast explains that, "Geosynthetics has become the standard solution in relation to environmental protection in the past ten years in South Africa, taking guidance from International Standards and the hard work of organisations like the Geosynthetics Interest Group of South Africa (GIGSA). GAST, as one of a handful of entities specialising in this field, is proud to have been involved with such a significant project.

Over the past four years, GAST has supplied and installed a significant number of advanced geosynthetic solutions to help minimise the

Kusile Power Station is under pressure to be operational by 2018 in order to start contributing much-needed power to the South African economy.



environmental impact of the power station. Geomembranes, geotextiles and various drainage layers were required to help create a barrier between the environment and Kusile's multiple ash dumps and dirty dams.

GAST employed over 50 community members during this project thus transferring skills in a specialised field. As new legislation calls for

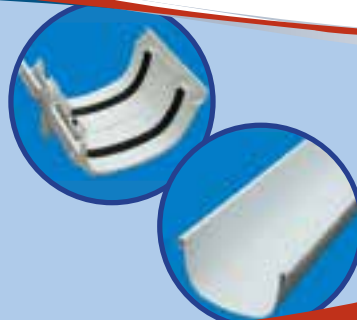
geosynthetics in most environmental protection systems, the Kusile Ash Dumps have provided a much needed springboard for future job creation.

"Kusile was a complicated project from a technical perspective and from a commercial perspective. We are looking forward to handing over the keys to Eskom on this R180 million project in due course" says Gast. ■

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ENTRIES FOR CMA AWARDS



An awards entry book has been published electronically on the CMA's website. The book provides details about the competition and its categories, and documents some of the country's most prestigious precast concrete construction projects.

Chairperson of the Awards committee, Monique Eggebeen says that the standard of this year's submissions was extremely high. "It is quite clear that the use of precast concrete is growing rapidly across diverse applications, offering ease of installation as well as high standards of finish and durability."

First staged in 1985, the Awards have since become the undoubted highlight of the precast concrete industry's calendar. They provide an excellent vehicle for southern African designers and project developers to establish themselves as trendsetters across several disciplines and gain national recognition. The CMA is proud of the superior attributes of precast concrete, which are on a par with international standards.

"This year's entry categories comprised the following: Aesthetics Commercial; Aesthetics Residential; Community Upliftment; Technical Excellence; Innovation and, for projects older than 10 years, Precast for Life," says Eggebeen.

As anticipated, the Aesthetics

The 2016 Concrete Manufacturers Association NPC, (CMA) Awards for Excellence competition has drawn a bumper crop of 123 entries, which is a substantial increase on the 77 entries of the previous competition.

Commercial category attracted by far the most entries, reeling in an impressive 50 projects. Other category submission included: Aesthetics Residential 12; Community Upliftment 9; Technical Excellence 26; Innovation 15; and a further 10 entries in the Precast for Life category. Some projects were entered for two or more categories.

Entries closed on October 16th 2015 and judging took place on November 23rd at the Johannesburg offices of PPC Cement, the main sponsor of this year's event. The five judges, all leading professionals in the field of construction, comprised: landscape architect, Antoinette de Beer; architect, Hugh Fraser; civil engineer, Malcolm Pautz; civil engineer, Abe Thela; and quantity surveyor, Bert van der Heever.

There are six trophies and up to three commendations per category. The results of the competition will be announced at a gala dinner ceremony at Summer Place in Johannesburg, on April 23rd 2016.

Eggebeen concluded by saying that the CMA is grateful to this year's sponsors – PPC Cement, AfriSam, BASF, Chryso and Lafarge – without

whom the awards could not take place.

In the Community Upliftment category Aveng Infraset entered a fully subsidised government housing project at Nellmapius Extension 22. The Gauteng Department of Human Settlements project specified Aveng Infraset's Sunset precast concrete roof tiles for 1 000 houses and six apartment blocks, in Pretoria, Gauteng. The development is due for completion in June 2016.

The residential development demonstrates how concrete roof tiles can transform bland dwellings into houses of which the owners are proud of. The concrete roof tiles are aesthetically appealing with the astute use of colour variation on the masonry and roof tiles.

The beneficiaries will also benefit from the superior thermal insulation and low maintenance.

The team includes: Architect: Magelela Architects; Engineer: Lekwa Consulting Engineers; Quantity Surveyors: R&G Consulting, Main Contractor: Vharanani Properties; Sub-contractor: Stefanutti Stock Housing; Manufacturer of precast concrete elements: Aveng Infraset. ■



Langa's first multi storey

Topfloor, a subsidiary of the Echo Group, has supplied over 16 000m² of pre-stressed hollow-core concrete flooring slabs for the construction of the first multi storey residential project at Langa, in the Western Cape.



The City of Cape Town project includes 18 residential rental blocks each comprising 25 units, 35m² apartments with two bedrooms, kitchen, lounge, bathroom and balcony.

The main contractor, Power Construction Group specified the load-bearing reinforced concrete masonry, which forms an integral part of the project. The project located in the city's oldest township on the Cape Flats has recently been completed. The apartments have insulated roofing and solar heating to meet the new energy efficiency legislation and these will reduce the cost of living for occupants.

In addition to hollow-core concrete flooring slabs, Topfloor also provided precast staircases as well as high-strength concrete blocks, modular precast concrete door frames and windows, and poly-fibre balcony railings.

According to Power Group Manager, Johnny Moore, precast hollow-

core slabs were a vital part of the structural design criteria and saved months in construction time.

"No shuttering was required nor curing time for wet concrete, which meant that other services could begin work as soon as the slabs were installed. Further time-savers were the smooth soffits and rough finishes on the upper sides of the slabs. This enabled the soffits to be painted without the need for skimming and made screed bonding on the top sides hassle-free," says Moore.

All of these time-saving advantages meant substantial cost savings for the client," says Moore.

He adds, "Topfloor was involved in the primary and secondary planning stages and helped resolve details such as the staircase/slab interfaces and pull-up bars for the reinforcing of the walkway balustrades."

The Langa residential buildings have been designed to comply with seismic codes and this meant that Topfloor had to provide pre-cut openings

for seismic-stress connections. In addition, Topfloor supplied cut-outs for plumbing ducts.

Topfloor General Manager, Wessel Prinsloo, says another advantage of using hollow-core flooring is its superior thermal and sound insulation properties. "Moreover, hollow-core slabs are produced in a well-managed factory environment which ensures high and consistent quality levels."

The professional team led by Dieter Boessow from Architect Associates created the design concept. Working with Power Construction's project engineer and consulting engineers, Aurecon; and independent construction consultant, Günter Koch; they succeeded in setting a new standard and establishing a new trend in cost-effective economic housing delivery in the Western Cape.

Moore concluded by saying that the fiscal benefits gained with this project point the way forward in labour-intensive skills development and job-creation potential. ■

CAPE BRICK'S NEW SCADA SYSTEM

Cape Brick recently launched a retaining wall block aimed at builders and supply chain merchants. A special feature of the new VR18 retaining wall block is that it is reversible, with different finishes on either side.



STEM

The product has been in the planning for a few years, says Anthony Gracie, Managing Director of Cape Brick. He explains that it was a difficult mould to make. Leading manufacturer of concrete block, brick and paving machinery, PMSA, assisted with the mould and recently installed a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system at the Philippi facility to serve the mixing and block plants on an integrated platform.

The SCADA system displays visual, animated graphics of machine operation, machine parameter control and data capture. "It has proven to be a tool that we cannot run without, as its advanced and interactive efficiency increases daily manufacture by between 10% and 20%," comments Cape Brick Director Jacques Tresfon.

Another innovative PMSA concrete

solution included the FL Ludwig wall scraper mounted probe. This tool ensures a highly-consistent water dosing in the mixture, which ultimately results in more predictable concrete.

Established in 1938, Cape Brick is the longest-established manufacturer of quality concrete masonry in operation in the Cape. "Our comprehensive product range includes standard masonry products such as all sizes of bricks and blocks, as well as retaining wall blocks and decking blocks," says Gracie. "In October 2009 we introduced our range of wet-cast paving products, featuring over 300 different modules in a wide variety of colours and textures. Cape Brick operates a brick-and-block facility at Philippi and Blackheath and a wet cast operation producing slabs and cobbles. PMSA equipment in operation at Philippi includes a VB4X block

machine, a P1500 mixer and an insulated racking system, among others."

Tresfon adds, "We typically make up to 600 t of product a day in a double shift at Philippi, and 180 t to 200 t in a single shift a day at Blackheath." A unique feature of Cape Brick is the wide scale use of recycled material in its production.

"We have an extensive crushing operation that prepares about 300 t to 400 t of aggregate a day in order to supply our facilities. While it is easy to use 10% to 20% recycled material, once you go beyond 30% to 40%, there is generally a drop in quality." The company developed systems to increase the recycled content by 70%.

Tresfon emphasised the role that PMSA has played in the company's development and the relocation of the plant from Salt River to Philippi. "We basically rebuilt the plant. We retained the VB4X block machine and switched from a P1000 to a P1500 mixer. We fully automated the mixing and installed a new moisture control system, and rebuilt the entire racking system."

Cape Brick is now able to handle 4 200 pallets in the factory, as opposed to 3 000 previously, which continues to give it an edge in the highly competitive and quality-conscious Western Cape market. "We supply the affordable housing market in the region." The investment in the latest technology from PMSA has allowed Cape Brick to focus on its mandate of providing the best quality products. "Our strategy is that quality is non-negotiable, our customer service has to be the best, and our pricing has to be competitive."

The use of recycled aggregates does mean more abrasion and friction on the equipment, but overall the production costs are lower. "In order to be able to incorporate recycled aggregates effectively, you need to have a major crushing network. That by itself is a major investment.

"We are now at the point where these moulds are giving us the lifespan, durability and efficiency that we require. Our relationship with PMSA has been fantastic. They always provide the necessary back-up and support, and are ready to provide a solution for any specific requirements. That has been of immense benefit to us," Gracie concludes. ■



MANITOU SUPPLIES 17 MACHINES

Manitou recently supplied 17 machines to long-standing client West End Clay Bricks in Westonaria. The range of forklifts and rough terrain telehandlers is fully supported by a team of Manitou technicians.

Manitou offers a five year rental contract on machinery and, to ensure maximum uptime, a dedicated Manitou technician is provided and remains on client's site for the duration of the contract.

West End Clay Bricks has relied on Manitou machinery for the past 14 years for lifting and transporting raw and saleable materials in its manual operation. These applications include moving bricks from extrusion lines right through to loading palletised loads onto trucks. The company produces 350 000 bricks each day.

"We had to pair the lifting requirements of West End Clay Bricks (which varies from one to six tons)," says Eric de Wet, Area Sales Manager, Manitou Southern Africa.

"Not only can our machines handle both the various lift and reach requirements, they are also equipped with hydraulic load balancing systems and load sensing charts to ensure maximum levels of safety."

In addition, some machines are equipped with double-pallet forks to increase the load capacity of each trip.

"These machines work flat-out

throughout both day and night shifts in very dusty and muddy conditions to achieve our high output targets," says Francois Aveling, Operations Director, West End Clay Bricks. To address these rough terrain conditions, Manitou has equipped the entire fleet with double filters and double fuel filtration systems.

Apart from regular service and maintenance, Manitou's technician, together with West End Clay Brick operators, conduct a 36-point check every morning to ensure the machines are working to spec before operation commences. These checklists, which cover everything from brake lights to torque convertors reduce downtime and add to operator's accountability.

In line with this, Manitou equipped each machine with AMS 2000 engine management and driver identification software. This software enables both Manitou and West End Clay Bricks to manage and monitor driver and machine performance through real-time analytical reporting.

With the AMS 2000, each operator is assigned an identification tag that is paired to certain machines. On the operator side, the system adds



accountability enabling managers to track the way each operator drives the machine, how long it idles each day and which routes were taken. From an engine performance perspective, the system monitors critical performance elements. If the machine is low on oil, for example, the system will automatically shut it down and no one but the site foreman can reset it after re-filling the oil. This innovative software and driver identification system is drastically reducing downtime for West End Clay Bricks.

Manitou also provided a three-day training course with SABS certification for all 23 operators. This training ensures that the operators are confident when driving the machines in the real-field conditions at West End Clay Bricks. The training reduces



From left to right: Shaun Roodt (Mine Manager), (Manitou Area Specialist) and Francois Aveling handover of West End Clay Bricks' new fleet of

TO WEST END CLAY BRICKS



machine damage and downtime and familiarises the drivers with the machines' capabilities with a full-load of bricks. "As we are a manual operations plant, everything gets handled by forklifts, telehandlers or loaders. Without them, our production comes to a standstill," concludes Aveling. "The quality of Manitou machines and the exceptional service and support we receive are the reasons why we have relied on them for over 14 years."

West End Clay Bricks employs 250 people at the site in Westonaria. The new Manitou fleet includes: three MHT-X 780 and four MT-X 625 rough terrain telehandlers, five MX 50-2 and six MX 30-2 rough terrain forklifts as well as four MI-35 conventional forklifts in their existing fleet. ■



Douw Roux (Workshop Manager) Eric de Wet (Operations Director) shake hands at the Manitou machines.

Corobrik's quality assurance systems

Corobrik has proved itself a leader in quality assurance and sustainable environmental practices with the further attainment of a number of world-class operating standards at several factories.

Forming an integral part of Corobrik's philosophy of creating an environment of zero harm in all operations, five more factories have attained the OSHAS 18001 management system. This international occupational health and safety management system specification aims to minimise risk to all employees.

The five Gauteng factories - Lawley, Springs, Driefontein, Rietvlei and Midrand - have all received the OSHAS 18001 management system. This has increased Corobrik's accredited factories to nine out of 15, the remainder will receive accreditation by June 2016.

"After the initial introduction of the ISO 9001, OSHAS 18001 and ISO 14001 quality assurance systems, Corobrik factories have quickly attained the certificates and retained them through dedication and high levels of performance," explained David Matlou, Corobrik's Manufacturing Director.

"This is why we are the leading brick manufacturer; our operations are world-class and we insist on maintaining the highest level of

professionalism in all spheres."

Polokwane and Odendaalsrus factories both received the ISO 9001 accreditation, which is a quality management system, aimed at addressing customer focus and continuous improvement. "We are proud to have 14 of our 15 factories accredited with the stringent ISO 9001, with eMalahleni soon to receive it," said Matlou. "This system - which is a global quality benchmark - has been instrumental in guaranteeing that we consistently deliver value to our customers by providing quality products that conform to specifications."

Nine factories have ISO 14001 environmental management system accreditation. Matlou explained that the company's aim is to minimise its environmental impact. "Our factory employees are extensively trained on environmental issues. This ensures that they all willingly contribute to reducing carbon emissions and address the threat of global warming by controlling the environmental impacts and guiding continuous improvement in environmental performance." ■

SEALANTS FOR CAVENDISH

Structural glazing sealants supplied by a.b.e. Construction Chemicals were selected for the refurbishment of the towering atrium at Cavendish Square Shopping Centre in Claremont, Cape Town.

According to Glen Bower, a.b.e Construction Chemicals Western Cape, Cavendish Square's 40 m high atrium at the 20 year old shopping centre required refurbishment as the old glass panels had started delaminating, resulting in leaks.

Bower says, "Cloud Nine Skylight Solutions removed the old glass panels and aluminium framing and fitted new powder-coated aluminium frames as well as high-performance NC 55E glass panels."

The new glass panels weigh up to 200 kg each, and are made from 13.6 mm thick toughened glass. The panels were fixed to the aluminium frame at angles of 30 degrees on the roof, and up to 80 degrees on the façade. This challenging installation called for an exceptionally strong structural bond, which is why Dow Corning was specified.

As the local distributor of international brand, Dow Corning structural glazing products, a.b.e. Construction Chemicals, supplied the specified Dow Corning sealants for the upgrade.

Dow Corning 895 structural silicone is an odourless, neutral cure product, which exhibits excellent stability through a wide range of temperatures (50 degrees to 150 degrees). The cured product has exceptional weathering characteristics with a high resistance to ultra violet (UV) radiation as well as humidity. It can adhere to a range of substrates including powder coated aluminium; enamelled or reflective glass; polyester coated aluminium profiles; and stainless steel profiles. All substrates are extensively tested for adhesion, staining, etc by Dow Corning laboratories in Belgium prior to project start and, if successful, written approval is issued to the glazier.

Dow Corning 813C, which was used at the Cavendish Square refurbishment project as weatherproofing sealant, is a one-part, neutral curing, low modulus sealant suitable for interior and exterior applications, such as weather seals, expansion joints, and perimeter joints in buildings and other types of structures. It has a joint movement capability of +50%, -50% and provides strong, un-primed adhesion to various surfaces, including glazed surfaces, concrete, masonry, brick, wood, and some plastics. The silicone sealant was subsequently applied as external weather seal on the atrium façade. In total, Dow Corning sealants were applied to about 800 linear metres of surface area.

Cape Town-based Cloud Nine Skylight Solutions has extensive experience in the application of Dow Corning sealants and is an approved DC applicator, currently in the process of finalising DC Quality Bond Membership; a stringent process that can take up to five years to achieve. "Dow Corning guarantees that Quality Bond members provide a level of workmanship and application that meets the company's demanding requirements for safety and durability. Quality Bond applicators are audited annually to have their certification renewed," states Bower. ■



MBA NORTH'S NEW CHS-IT SYSTEM

Master Builders Association North has developed a Construction Health and Safety Information Technological (CHS-IT) system aligned to the requirements of the government's new Construction Regulations.

Lea Smith, Past President of MBA North, who is the driving force behind the new system announced that the new product will be launched this year.

"Under the new Construction Regulations, more stringent health and safety obligations have been placed on a wide range of parties involved in construction work. This includes the client, sub-contractor, designer and principal contractor," says Smith.

"The regulations clearly specify

that all stakeholders must be involved in the implementation, maintenance, monitoring and enforcement of the Construction Regulations' legislative requirements. This includes legal appointments, regular health and safety audits, medical certificate of fitness for all employees, and the Construction Work Permit and Construction Notification. All these must be in place before any construction work can start."

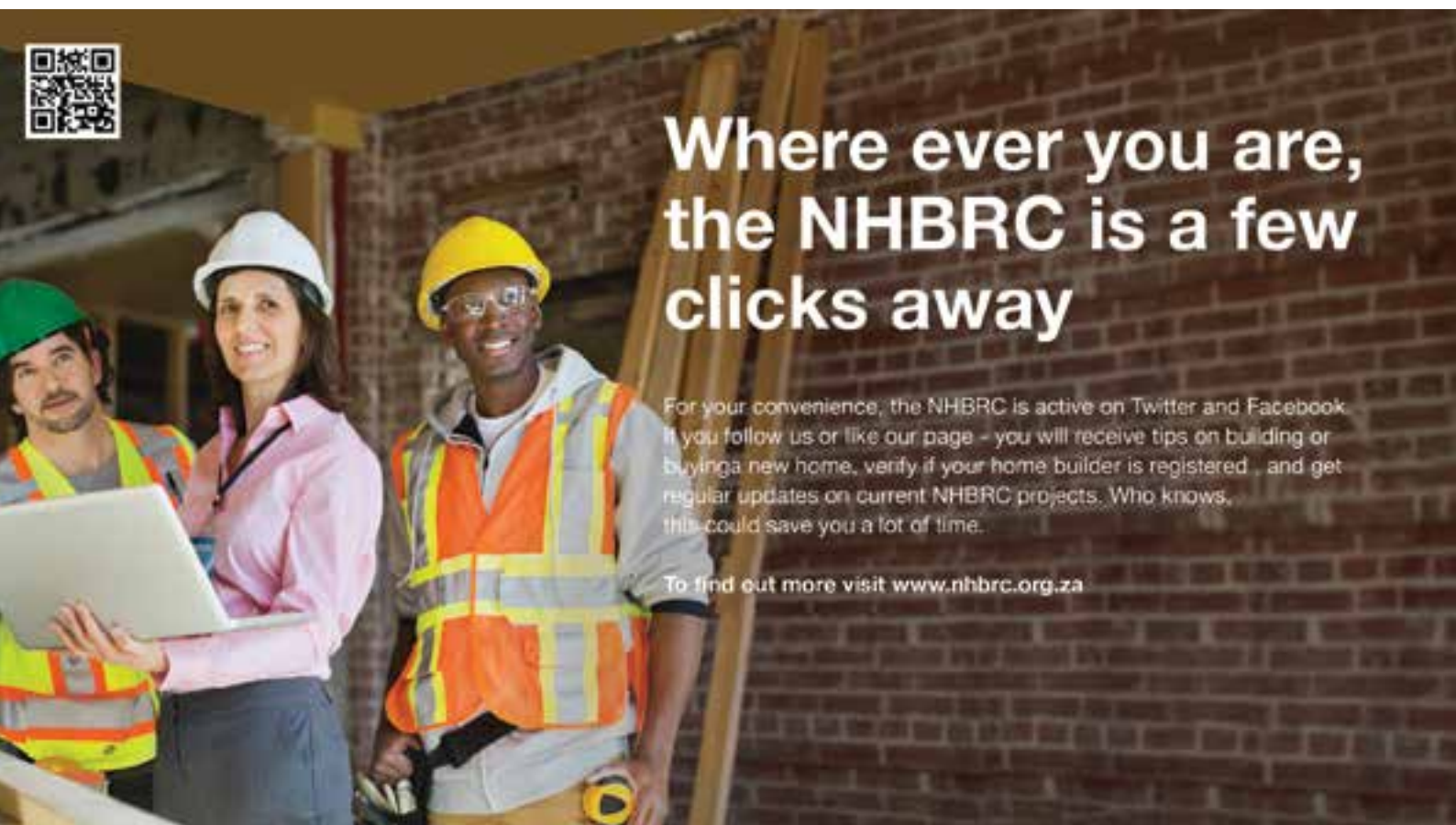
At the 2015 Department of Labour Conference, the Department's Chief Inspector, Tibor Szana, appealed to the building industry to reverse the 'intolerable loss of life' in the industry. The challenge was to step up inspection and enforcements.

With this in mind, MBA North developed the CHS-IT system. "The system is a proactive online solution to help implement, monitor and enforce the Construction Regulations in

real-time, across multiple construction sites, conveniently from any smart device or personal computer," says Smith.

Benefits of the system include ease of use, time-saving, accessible from any 'smart' device, real-time monitoring and reporting, recording of health and safety audit information, storage of health and safety documentation, automated audit reports, and monitoring of contractor compliance in real-time. The CHS-IT system also has an online automated work permit and construction notification submission, saving time and money.

"It is a secure Cloud-based system making accessibility to the information quick and easy. When internet connectivity is poor or unavailable, information will be stored in the CHS-IT App and automatically uploaded when connectivity is restored," Smith adds. ■



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CITY OPTS FOR ELECTRIC BUSES

The City of Cape Town will issue a tender for the procurement of electric buses for the MyCiTi service, in line with the city's commitment to lowering carbon emissions.

The City of Cape Town Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille says that the inception of the MyCiTi service in 2012 has significantly improved the quality of life of residents through access to affordable, decent and safe public transport.

Approximately 38,5 million passenger journeys have been recorded to date, and in November alone over 1,5 million passengers used the service.

De Lille says that as the city extends the footprint of the MyCiTi service, "We also have a responsibility to lower our carbon emissions and the impact of pollution on the urban environment. Cities across the world will soon reach a point where alternative

fuel for public transport is no longer a choice but a prerequisite. And, the City of Cape Town has decided to expand its current fleet of diesel buses with electric ones."

A tender for the procurement of a fleet of 12-metre electric buses will be advertised in February 2016. The city is also considering electric double-decker buses for longer distance trips as they have more seating. The tender specifies that the electric buses should be able to travel a distance of 250 km in traffic before the batteries need recharging. Apart from the buses, the successful bidder must also provide the city with the charging stations for the buses and the necessary training for the bus drivers and mechanical engineers.

Researchers have made great advances in the development of electric buses over the past decade, some of which were presented at the African Union of Public Transport Workshop, hosted by Transport for Cape Town last year. De Lille says, "If all goes according to plan, Cape Town will be the first municipality in the country to benefit from the latest alternative

fuel technology and we will be the first city in Africa to use electric buses for public transport."

Apart from electric buses being eco-friendly with zero carbon emissions and the use of solar power charging stations, a green fleet offers numerous advantages. The operational cost of electric buses is significantly lower – not only in terms of fuel, but also in relation to maintenance as there are fewer parts to service.

This initiative directly supports the city's commitment to the Paris Pledge for Action at COP21 and, as a member of the C40 Cities to take progressive action and lead the way in reducing energy consumption and emissions. The City's Energy 2040 Strategy sets carbon targets and projects like this will help to ensure they are reached.

Transport for Cape Town has researched and is exploring the most appropriate mechanism for the procurement of solar technology to offset the energy required for the electric bus fleet, thereby further reducing emissions. This is in addition to the carbon credits the city will earn. ■

Servicing tools guarantees performance

Buying quality tools that perform optimally is an investment that will allow industry professionals to achieve high-quality results within specified deadlines.

Even the best quality tools require regular servicing and maintenance in order to address wear-and-tear and eliminate the risk of costly tool failure. Bosch Power Tools South Africa has three dedicated service centres in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Bosch Service Centre (BSC) Johannesburg Manager Patrice Marrier says that power tools require the strictest care and maintenance to detect minor problems before they escalate.

“By regularly servicing tools, users are guaranteed reliability and prolonged service life. It is also a cost-effective way to ensure less down time and higher productivity,” he explains.

Marrier points out that service centres have a team of qualified specialists who are able to repair faulty tools quickly and reliably. “All Bosch power tools come with a 12-month warranty that excludes wear and tear components. All tools repaired in a service centre carry a three-month warranty on spares replaced.”

To ensure quality service after every repair, a safety check is completed

at the respective BSC before the tool is returned to the owner. Contractors can expect tools to be returned in excellent condition within three to five days. While some high-end industrial tools have service indicator lights to remind the user when it needs servicing, many other tools do not.

Marrier says that it is imperative for the owner to schedule in regular servicing. “An example is motor brushes. When they are worn to cut-out and require replacement, the tool should be serviced at the same time, if it is involved in large-scale work. If involved in smaller contracts, the tool should be serviced after every second brush change.”

To keep tools working at optimal performance, Marrier advises that power tools be used only for the applications that they are designed for. “This prevents over-exertion and associated damage. Manufacturer-approved accessories are essential, as inferior accessories limit the tool’s functionality. Regular cleaning and day-to-day care is also imperative – simply blowing dust out through the air vents prevents premature erosion



of the components,” he concludes.

To find out more about regional Bosch Service Centres, contact BSC Johannesburg on (011) 493 9375 or email: patrice@bsctools.co.za ■

Precast products will ease economic challenges

As emerging market currencies take a pounding on world markets and the Rand drops to new lows against the US\$, it is prudent for the local construction industry to find more efficient way of rolling out infrastructure and housing. Executive Director of the Concrete Manufacturers Association NPC (CMA), Frans Minnaar, says that the construction sector can weather the storm by ensuring faster more efficient building methods are employed.

He explains, “Government has to deliver on a fair number of development projects and it is not unreasonable to believe that many of these projects will have to be completed soon, irrespective of economic climate. This will no-doubt lead to fierce competition in the industry.”

With the expectation of tighter



budgets and shorter delivery times, the answer to sustainable construction will lie in the use of quick, efficient products.

While traditional building product suppliers may be in for a tough time,

Minnaar says that precast concrete product suppliers will fare better than traditional building products as contractors come under pressure to meet tight construction deadlines.

A move to precast products improves quality of workmanship as products are manufactured in controlled conditions. Rather than sacrificing quality for speed, contractors will then have the opportunity to address government’s need for improved quality as well as speed and lower costs.

“It is also well known that the use of precast concrete products creates short term jobs for local communities during the installation phase.”

For further information contact the Concrete Manufacturers Association on 011 805 6742, or email: director@cma.org.za ■

Uniclox completes its first Bodet installation

When it comes to running a business the key to profitability is the judicious management of the company's resources, particularly its employees.

Careful management of time and attendance, productivity and keeping track of annual leave and sick leave is key to guarding the bottom line.

"Many businesses are waking up to the fact that punched time cards were the backbone of many industrial businesses, but do not necessarily provide the level of timely and accurate reporting. Human resources and line managers need to ascertain an employee's productivity and performance," says Uniclox Derek Udemans, Marketing Manager.

Uniclox Technologies solutions-based resource management has recently completed its first Bodet Software-Uniclox installation, since a partnership deal was signed in 2015. Bodet Software is a French subsidiary of the Bodet Group, a European leader in time and attendance management. Uniclox is a landmark South African company that celebrated 70 years in business in 2015 and was asked to assist with a new state-of-the-art management system for Gestro Casting and Machining.

The latter acquired a 60 year old foundry in Benoni and set about refurbishing and modernising the premises. This included the casting line and the purchase of new furnaces to increase capacity from 120 tons to 200 tons per day. With a staff complement of 300 people, Uniclox installed 17 Bodet Kelio Prio V2 Proximity card readers, eight terminals for access control and a further nine time and attendance points throughout the building.

The terminals are controlled using Kelio Integral R2 software. This offers the client three shift auto detection, a full real time system, as well as visitor's access control.

"We are happy to report the system is already in use and running smoothly and is being monitored by three dedicated human resources personnel. Our systems interface with up to 41 different payroll systems, so no matter what your requirements are, we can find a solution," says Udemans.

For further information please visit www.uniclox.com ■



American lumber exports

The American Hardwood Export Council says that exports of lumber and veneer to South Africa for the first three quarters of 2015 reached 7 422 cubic metres, worth US\$5,4 million.

The council aims to ramp up demand in South Africa. Statistics released by the United States Department of Agriculture show that direct exports of American hardwood veneers to South Africa increased by 35% between January and September 2015, compared to previous years.

A closer look at the statistics reveals that white oak continues to dominate shipments, but a wide mix of other hardwood species was also exported. With one aim of raising the profile of American hardwoods in South Africa, the council has announced plans to target the 'timber chain', including specifiers (architects and interior designers), end users (furniture and joinery manufacturers) or importers and distributors.

The council will organise seminars and workshops on the wide variety of American hardwood species as well as their important environmental credentials.

"The council is committed to the promotion of American hardwood as a leading material of choice for the region's interior designers. We are currently implementing key initiatives that aim to raise awareness of American hardwoods; enabling designers, architects and consultants to learn more about the advantages and benefits obtained from using them," said Roderick Wiles, AHEC Director for Africa, Middle East, South Asia and Oceania."

For more information, please visit: www.americanhardwood.org ■

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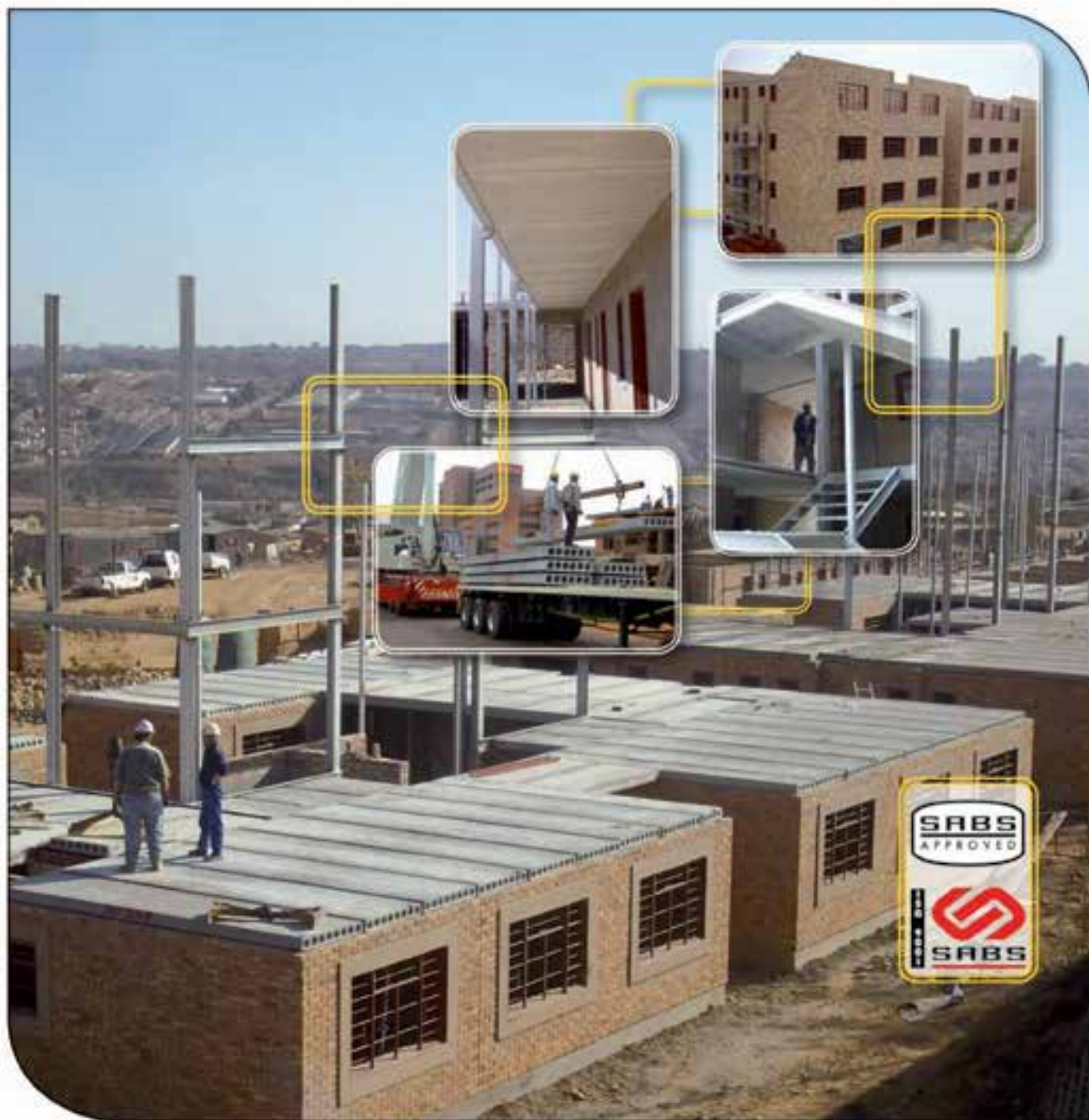
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