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CONTENTS

NEWS

- 2 Ed's Notes
- 4 Energy Saving Devices
- 4 Steady Interest Rate
- 5 Water Loss
- 6 Sisulu Empowers Youth Build
- 6 Growth in Construction Sector Muted
- 8 GIBB PRT Team's Housing Solution
- 9 FNB BER at Six Year High
- 10 City's Eco Project
- 10 ArcelorMittal Wins Award

HOUSING

- 11 Standard Bank's Affordable Reach
- 11 Reebokfontein Village
- 12 The Promise of Cornubia
- 16 Residential Building Statistics
- 16 Comcorp and Red-i Join Forces
- 18 Government Rethinks Housing

CEMENT & CONCRETE

- 20 Stop Corruption
- 20 AfriSam Acquires a Stake in CLF
- 21 ASPASA Pledges to Assist with 1,5 Million Houses

BUILDING EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES & TRANSPORT

- 22 Telescopic Handlers
- 23 Brick Easy's Precision Tool

INFRASTRUCTURE & MIXED USE

- 24 City's R2 Billion Economic Spinoff
- 25 Free Wi-Fi in Cape Town

INDUSTRY BUZZ, EVENTS & PRODUCTS

- 26 Software Bids for Treasury Project
- 26 MBAN Honours Barrow
- 27 New Team at Hellopeter
- 27 Africa's Power Agenda
- 28 7 000 LEDs Illuminate the Sistine Chapel
- 28 Skills Upgrading



January 2015

HOUSING
in Southern Africa

ED'S NOTES

What we have to look forward to...

Unlocking the National Department of Human Settlements allocated budget to deliver 1,5 million housing opportunities.

This news bodes well for the sector, women contractors and the entire value chain.

The go-getting Minister of Human Settlements, Lindiwe Sisulu has promised that her department will deliver and has allocated a Deputy Director General to deal with complaints of government's payment delays to developers and other sector stakeholders.

The City of Cape Town continues to expand its service delivery by offering free Wi-Fi in city precincts and provincial buildings. Perhaps Johannesburg will follow suit.

Nico Pienaar, from the Southern Africa Readymix Association and the Aggregate and Sand Producers Association of Southern Africa, hopes to encourage everyone in the sector to stop corruption, report infractions and step up and just say no to corruption in line with ethical practices.

The MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works in KwaZulu-Natal, Ravi Pillay, says it will take a considerable period to address the huge housing backlog in eThekweni. But the MEC has a plan and he is forthcoming about all the challenges that have stalled the roll out of the massive R25 billion integrated human settlement at Cornubia.

Pockets of the development have attracted massive buy-in from the private sector. Investec plans to roll out the Cornubia Shopping Centre, an 85 000 m² retail development, which is due to open by the end of 2017. The recently opened Cornubia Business Hub, 85 000 m² of mixed commercial use development, has a number of companies on board. Cornubia Industrial and Business Estate, a 70 ha area predominantly for warehousing, logistics and light industrial, has already provided 7 000 jobs for residents in the area. Cornubia's proposed six star green rated school will be built during Phase One.

KZN's inspiring plan for Cornubia and beyond will roll out over the next 20 years and there is a concerted effort to push for thousands of

housing opportunities ahead of the next national general election.

Soula Proxenos, Managing Director at International Housing Solutions global equity fund, offers an insight into government's rethink of housing, its approach and ways to turn beneficiaries' shelter into a functioning asset. Recognised as a key player in her sector, Proxenos often heralds in new ideas, concepts and workable programmes for affordable housing.

National Treasury has published a multi-billion rand request for proposals to upgrade systems and support that will link all government departments. This will eventually streamline operations at every tier of government; national, provincial and local levels could definitely assist with fast tracking housing throughout the value chain.

On that note, drop me an email and tell me what you find encouraging going forward in 2015...



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Energy saving devices

With Eskom warning of rolling blackouts owing to the collapse of one of its coal silos, it would be wise for sectional title schemes to consider installing power saving devices, says Mandi Hanekom from Propell, a levy management company.

Hanekom says that installing equipment such as prepaid meters, solar panels, heat pumps, solar powered outdoor lighting, LED or movement activated lighting in units and common areas, will reduce electricity consumption, and increase property values in the scheme.

Solar panels and heat pumps will save approximately 40% on overall electricity bills, apart from reducing the impact the development has on the environment. These energy saving systems usually pay for themselves within two to five years, after which the residents will continue to enjoy the reduction in their electricity bills each month.

This type of installation can be



listed as a special project. Trustees or managing agents may have been putting off carrying out this exercise because of a lack of funds, or a reluctance to raise a special levy, to cover the costs.

Propell enables schemes to fund the installation in full and, in most cases, the monthly saving on the municipal account could cover the repayment instalment each month, said Hanekom.

Once the loan has been repaid, the saving will help the body corporate's cash flow and reduce the need for future increases in levies or the need to raise special levies for other projects.

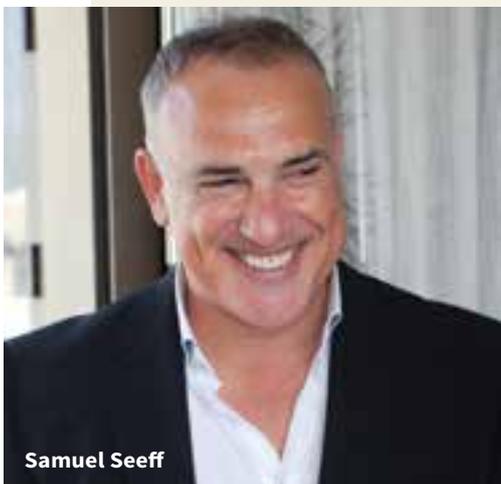
The surplus will allow the body corporate to build up a reserve, which will be required when the Sectional Title Schemes Management Act comes into force.

Propell offers project finance to assist managing agents and trustees get the job done with minimum fuss and without having any of the trustees sign surety for the loan," said Hanekom.

"The facility can remain in place indefinitely and only incurs costs when used. The managing agent is, therefore, able to do his job properly, which ultimately is to ensure the scheme is run efficiently." ■

Steady interest rate

The announcement by Reserve Bank Governor Lesetja Kganyago that the repo rate has remained unchanged at 5,75% has been welcomed by home owners and prospective buyers according to Seeff Chairman, Samuel Seeff.



Samuel Seeff

While the recent credit downgrades have been disappointing, there are some encouraging signs on the economic front. The inflation rate has remained flat at 5,9% for the past two months, there are early signs that some stability is returning to the mining sector and, although still weak, the currency is holding relatively steady.

While the property market has largely shrugged off the economic challenges this year, it needs to be borne in mind that it is not entirely immune to economic volatility. Rising home loan rates will not only dent affordability, but are likely to dampen

buyer confidence, especially at the middle and lower ends of the market.

For the first time since 2007/8, there is now real upward movement in the housing market and this benefits the economy significantly, says Seeff. It encourages new development and much needed infrastructure upgrades, again adding vital economic benefits, not least of which are jobs. Seeff says that we are finally ending a year on a cheerful note and that we head into 2015 with a housing market on solid ground. There is good balance between demand and supply, tilting somewhat up on the demand side in favour of sellers on the back of almost country-wide stock shortages," he says. With market confidence on a five-year high Seeff believes there is still plenty of pent up demand to keep sellers in the driving seat in 2015. ■

Water loss

A recent report on the country's water loss has estimated that water wastage through leaking pipes and inefficient systems is between 50% and 60%. Much of this wastage has been attributed to infrastructure that has not been upgraded and modernised," says Klaus Gruebl, Managing Director of Sensus SA.

Gruebl says, "The need for water infrastructure upgrades and conversions has been debated for a long time. The current situation can be addressed easily if water and network utilities upgrade to more modern and accurate measurement technologies."

He says that new metering systems can identify and fix problems and reduce water loss by 15% to 20%.

Sensus SA has advanced water meter technologies with a proven track record of reducing operational expenditure through effective water network management through its bulk water meters and its advanced iPerl offerings.

The company's Automated Meter Reading applications (AMRs)

and Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) enable data to be split into two parts, billing and management. Sensus SA believes an interim solution is to opt for the cost-efficient newer generation volumetric meter which has been "smart meter enabled". "Typically this entails a volumetric meter employing the latest construction materials, which are lighter, more sensitive and offer better wear resistance, but more importantly,



can be fitted with an 'intelligent' RF module. The module replaces the old and unreliable reed switch, with an accurate, high resolution inductive interface and ensures accurate billing. It allows water supply authorities to warn consumers of possible leaks and excessive consumption in near real time." said Gruebl. ■



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Sisulu empowers youth build

Human Settlements Minister Lindiwe Sisulu says government's responsibility is to empower and educate young people so they can provide for themselves.

Sisulu told delegates at the National Human Settlements Youth Brigade Summit at Gallagher Estate, "Our responsibility as government is to empower young people, educate and provide work experience, opportunities and jobs."

The summit also aimed to identify opportunities in the private sector for young people to participate in the implementation of the Social Contract for the Development of Human Settlements. She told the youth, "We would rather sufficiently empower you to build houses for the state and to build your own houses." The summit was held ahead of the launch of the National Human Settlements Youth Brigade Programme at Savanna City in Walkerville, Johannesburg.

"The idea of a Youth Brigade does not just seek to avail opportunities to youth in the construction sector, it seeks to engender a certain form of work discipline, work ethic and an appreciation of doing things for oneself," said Sisulu.

Last month, 76 houses were built by 100 young men and women volunteers. The houses were handed over to families at Lindelani Informal



Settlement and contributed to the restoration of the dignity of the community.

Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Buti Manamela, challenged the youth to be drivers and agents of change and ensure that they are not passive recipients of government services. "All over the world, youth are driving social change and innovation, claiming respect for their fundamental human rights and freedoms, and seeking new opportunities to learn and work together for a better future."

Minister of Small Business Development Lindiwe Zulu encouraged young people, who are running

businesses, to have the necessary skills and fully understand what their businesses are all about. Young people who need assistance should contact the call centre on 086 1843 384. Meanwhile, chairperson of Legacy Group, Bart Dorrestein, encouraged South Africans to do it themselves, saying that importing was not a sustainable solution. "South Africans have great potential, but only if we go out and do something about it." During the summit, representatives from various companies shared information on internship programmes offered by companies and how to apply for them. ■

Growth in construction sector muted

Activity in South Africa's construction sector is likely to remain constrained; however, among the largest listed companies, opportunities outside of South Africa should continue to support growth.

According to Eyal Shevel, Head: Corporate Ratings at Global Credit Ratings (GCR), "With the substantial write-offs incurred in past years now largely through the system, the larger listed construction companies, such as Murray & Roberts and Group 5, are financially sound. The challenge in sustaining growth relief is expected to come from the domestic environment and construction companies in Africa." In fact, Shevel notes that

order books among the larger companies are mostly from projects emanating from outside South Africa. For example, around 70% of Murray & Roberts' revenues come from projects in Australia and South East Asia, with the South African order book winding down. Although Group 5's order book is more concentrated in South Africa, future prospects in Africa include Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique.

"Earnings growth is unlikely to be as fast as it once was but we do expect to see positive momentum," says Shevel. He notes that the smaller construction companies are likely to struggle more than their larger listed

counterparts in the current environment. A number of smaller-size companies have been forced into liquidation over recent years as a result of payment delays." Shevel says that while the Infrastructure Development Plan projects that the South African Government will spend close to R1 trillion over three years on key infrastructure projects, there is concern over whether this will actually happen. "Government wants to invest in such critical projects but there isn't sufficient capital to spend at the moment. Forecasts for economic growth have been continuously downgraded over the past 12 months and there is not the fiscal to fund them." ■

REDEFINING HOUSING: A JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABLE QUALITY HOMES



The dawn of a democratic South Africa brought with it optimism and a new found pride amongst its citizens. For the millions previously confined to substandard housing conditions, what dampened this sense of belonging was the dire need for housing. The newly elected government addressed the need by enshrining in the Constitution, the Right to Shelter. Concomitantly, rising protests and violence over quality and standards in the home building environment demonstrated that there were serious challenges to overcome. Unscrupulous home builders cashed in on the need for housing, constructing defective homes for customers who had no recourse for their grievances and thereby setting in motion the establishment of a central housing authority to oversee standards in the home building environment.

The Housing Consumer Protection Measures Act (Act 95 of 1998) came into being and gave birth to the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC). The NHBRC is a statutory body whose role is to protect the interests of housing consumers and to regulate the home building industry. In line with the Housing Consumers Protection Measures Act, all home builders must be registered with the NHBRC and all new homes must be enrolled at least, 15 days prior to construction. Along with the legal framework, an enrolment affords the housing consumer with benefits such as a 3-month warranty cover against minor defects, a 1-year warranty cover against roof leaks and a 5-year warranty cover against major structural defects.

In 1998 the NHBRC started with a paltry builder registration of 20 builders. Today the organisation regulates over 15 000 builders at any one time, it has trained in excess of 22 000 emerging home builders on the basics of building and regulated industry standards and is a leader, through strategic partnerships, on building technological solutions. Dr. Awelani Malada, head of Strategy and Planning for the NHBRC believes that the organisation's success can be measured by the consistently increasing number of home inspections and enrolments in both the subsidy (Government assisted) and non-subsidy sector.

A footprint in all 9 provinces enables the NHBRC to conduct regular home inspections and in instances where builders are found to be in contravention of regulated building standards and the Housing Consumers Protection Measures Act, the NHBRC is able to instigate its legislative powers. Notwithstanding the regulatory role that the NHBRC has in the home building environment, it is more than just a regulator and enforcer of building standards.

Mr. Mnyani adds, "We also encourage and support technology and innovation in home building as this is what is going to take us into the future. Any builder who comes up with new materials or methods – and is certified by Agrément SA – can come to us to further their ideas." In 2005 the NHBRC established the Eric Molobi Housing Innovation Hub in Soshanguve, with the aim of testing innovative (or alternative) building solutions and to support the development of aesthetically pleasing yet affordable housing solutions for new homes.

The Hub also boasts a materials-testing laboratory and a training college for builders. The head of the NHBRC's Centre for Research and Housing Innovation, Dr. Jeffrey Mahachi, is part of a collective within the organisation that believes that the NHBRC can facilitate holistic solutions where building methods are quick to implement, environmentally friendly and can create a social system which affords low income earners the same quality homes as their middle class counterparts. In a country with inherent social gaps and a housing backlog of over 2 million housing units, we need that. Here's to the next 20 years...

"We have come a long way. The challenge now lies in meeting the housing demand, denting the current housing backlog and improving turnaround times so that those in need can be assisted faster and more effectively," **NHBRC CEO, Mongezi Mnyani.**

THE NHBRC AT A GLANCE:

- A housing agency under the auspices of the National Department of Human Settlements, which was established in 1998
- Employs over 480 employees in all 9 provinces
- A lead Africa member of the International Housing and Home Warranty Association (a global warranty organisation)

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Assuring Quality Homes



GIBB PRT team's housing solution

South African black-owned engineering consulting firm GIBB is the lead consultant in the most recent GDHS Gauteng PRT programme tender. Each PRT is a consortium of multi-disciplinary professionals whose mandate is to assess development feasibility, planning and design.

The PRTs also manage the delivery of appropriate housing interventions through concentrated deployment of resources in identified precincts, providing housing solutions that are responsive to the real needs of the community and ensure sustainability.

The GIBB PRT aims to contribute to the strengthening and enhancement of the process of creating sustainable human settlements, in line with the National Department of Human Settlements Breaking New Ground strategy.

Vusi Radebe, GIBB Technical Executive: Integrated Infrastructure said, "Breaking New Ground is an initiative for the roll-out of integrated and sustainable human settlements in South Africa. The emphasis of the initiative is to radically transform the apartheid spatial legacy by ensuring there is viable and real social and economic integration of the previously marginalised sectors of our society."

He added that integrated human settlements challenge all government departments and stakeholders to think and plan differently regarding

In an effort to expedite and improve the delivery and quality of infrastructure in the province, the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements (GDHS) Gauteng Professional Resource Team (PRT) programme is at the forefront of providing much needed integrated human settlements solutions.

the location and time of socio-economic amenities and services. The focus is on social and economic inclusion as well as to secure affordable tenure options. The bulk of beneficiaries are the previously disadvantaged masses of people who for the first time in their lives find themselves on the property ladder.

"Innovation and state-of-the-art technology is always 'top-of-mind' in project design reviews," said Radebe.

"For example, in the Mapetla Hostel Upgrading project, solar energy for water heating and the use of polymer plastics in place of copper (which attracts thieves selling to the metal scrap market) is specified. These initiatives protect assets and lower heating and maintenance costs respectively. This project post implementation will completely transform the Soweto's Merafe Railway Station precinct by enabling the development of a high density mixed used node."

Programme appointments are renewed every three years in line with the GDHS's procurement regulations. The strategy behind the PRT

framework agreements programme is recognition by the Department that the PRT's are an important delivery mechanism to build and strengthen the technical capacity of the GDHS and also ensure a steady stream of well-planned and designed projects.

The framework agreement approach is intended to make a significant contribution to the vision of economic, social and multi-cultural development of the province's urban landscape.

More than 6600 housing units are included in the current GIBB PRT project portfolio and each project has its own unique time-frame which is local area dependent.

"Planning parameters of new housing projects try to address the legacy of apartheid, where new housing developments are calculatingly being brought closer to economic activity, reducing commuters travel time and costs, whilst promoting a more integrated society where infrastructure can benefit many people," said Radebe.

Radebe believes that involvement in the delivery programme for the past six years has created a position of expertise for the GIBB-led PRT. "In addition to a satisfied client, team members receive great satisfaction in being a part of this positive transformation of society," concluded Radebe. ■



BER at six year high

Confidence in the building sector, as measured by the FNB/BER building confidence index, jumped to 60 points in the fourth quarter of 2014, according to FNB Property Analyst, John Loos.

The current level of the index indicates that more than half of respondents are satisfied with prevailing business conditions. The pace of growth in residential building activity quickened unexpectedly during the quarter, boosting work across the rest of the building value chain.

Overall, the recovery in the building sector gained noticeable momentum in 4Q2014, following the mild increase in activity recorded last quarter.

After edging up to 45 points in third quarter of 2014, the FNB/BER building confidence index increased by 15 points to 60 in fourth quarter. "This is the highest level of the index since the beginning of 2008 and confirms that the building sector is in the midst of a revival," said Loos.

The current level indicates that more than half of the respondents are satisfied with prevailing business conditions.

The rise in confidence was broad-based with four of the six sectors included in the index registering higher confidence. In the remaining two sectors confidence was unchanged.

Main contractor confidence jumped to 66 index points in fourth quarter of 2014, from 53 last quarter. Confidence of both residential and non-residential contractors rose by double digits during the quarter. However, according to Loos, "Although confidence in both sectors improved, the residential market is looking far more buoyant than the non-residential market, a trend we picked up last quarter." The growth in residential building activity accelerated nicely in the last quarter 2014. This in turn boosted overall profitability.

In contrast, non-residential building activity weakened. "Confidence was higher on the expectation that



building activity and profitability will improve in 2015," said Loos.

Sub-contractor confidence rose by three index points to 50 in fourth quarter of 2014.

The continued improvement in the residential market has boosted activity in other building related sectors. Retail sales and orders of building material remained robust. As a result, the confidence of retailers of hardware was unchanged at a high 74 index points. Loos noted that "while other retailers are still under pressure, retailers of hardware have benefitted from the recovery in the building sector." Continued growth in domestic manufacturing sales and production lifted the confidence of manufacturers of building material.

Looking ahead, the amount of work conducted by architects and quantity surveyors was generally higher during the quarter. As a result, architect business confidence remained at just under 50 index points while that of quantity surveyors rose to 60 index points in the fourth quarter of 2014. "The increase in pipeline activity supports further growth in building activity in coming quarters," said Loos. According to the survey, the recovery in residential building activity recorded in the third quarter gained noticeable momentum in the last quarter. This boosted work along the rest of the building value chain. However, non-residential building

work slowed further.

Furthermore, the rise in activity along the building pipeline suggests that the current recovery is sustainable. However, impending interest rate hikes may halt this fledgling recovery before it can gain more significant traction.

The FNB/BER building confidence index can vary between zero (indicating an extreme lack of confidence) and 100 (indicating extreme confidence). It reveals the percentage of respondents that are satisfied with prevailing business conditions in six sectors, namely architects, quantity surveyors, main contractors, sub-contractors (plumbers, electricians, carpenters and shop fitters), manufacturers of building materials (cement, bricks and glass) and retailers of building material and hardware.

In contrast to the RMB/BER BCI, which includes only main contractors, the FNB/BER building confidence index covers the whole pipeline, from planning (represented by the architects and quantity surveyors), renovations, additions, owner builders, the informal sector (represented by building material and hardware retailers) and production (manufacturers of building materials) to the actual erection of buildings by main contractors and sub-contractors.

The fieldwork of the fourth quarter survey was conducted from mid-October to mid-November 2014. ■

CITY'S ECO PROJECT

According to the City, more cost effective building technologies and materials contribute to delivering Gap housing in greater numbers.

The City's Pelican Park Gap housing project situated near Zeekoevlei will include more than 2 100 subsidised houses, 696 single-storey semi-detached Gap houses, and 63 double-storey units including residential and commercial space allowing residents to operate small businesses.

"We are excited about this project, as it will provide houses to 3 200 families in one of the first integrated housing projects in Cape Town. Home ownership is one of the most significant economic achievements for an individual" said the City's Mayoral Committee Member, Tandeka Gqada.

Local manufacturer, Eco-Insulation, was contracted to install ceiling insulation to comply with SANS 10400 XA specification. According to Eco-Insulation General Manager, Richard Ellis, this meant

The City of Cape Town aims to offer incentives to encourage the private sector to supply housing units at lower prices, and to encourage low income, employed, individuals to build their own homes.

that product had to be pumped into the ceiling of each residential unit to a thickness of 135 mm. The units varied in size between 48 m² and 74 m² and were constructed in compliance with the SABS Energy Efficiency codes of practice.

Made from SABS-approved recycled cellulose fibre, Eco-Insulation is an established green brand giving developers and project managers seamless service on site and 100% coverage inside the roof. The product offers the convenience of a highly efficient process of installation, by professionally accredited teams of fitters, to clients. Each home owner is issued with a certificate of warranty, which means there is no flame spread.

"Specifiers, project managers and quantity surveyors are advised to

appoint insulation contractors carefully. It is not uncommon for insulation to be laid at below the minimum specified thickness in order to make it cheaper," says Ellis.

SANS legislation requires minimum thermal performance standards, so installers who support this practice are not only flouting the law but also doing property owners a disservice. Cellulose insulation such as Eco-Insulation offers the lowest carbon footprint of all insulation types available. This is key to providing sustainable green solutions to the built environment for the foreseeable future. Eco Insulation's products are available nationwide and Botswana.

For further information visit www.tiasa.org.za or go to www.eco-insulation.co.za ■

ArcelorMittal wins award

The South African Wind and Energy Association (SAWEA) and the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) recently hosted the fourth annual Windaba. At this year's event, themed 'Power2 the people: Improving lives through Wind Energy', ArcelorMittal South Africa was acknowledged as the best contributor to local content in the wind energy sector.

Jan Kotze, Product Manager, Plate and Renewable Energy Projects at ArcelorMittal South Africa says: "The team is proud of this accolade as it clearly demonstrates our commit-

ment to the growing wind energy industry, as does our effort to upgrade the Plate Mill to increase supply of the heavy plates required by the industry. However, there is a serious threat regarding the value of steel plate being imported from China for wind tower manufacturing and still being deemed as local content."

"Utility scale wind energy is already boosting economic development in South Africa. Industry and government is committed to ensuring that these benefits are realised by



small businesses and local communities across the country," says Dipolelo Elford, Chairperson of SAWEA.

"Our goal in 2015 is to explore potential for public-private partnerships with government to take advantage of the 24 000 tonnes of annual potential orders," adds Kotze. ■

Standard Bank's affordable reach

Although government has broadened access to housing through subsidised schemes, millions of South Africans are still unable to achieve the dream of owning their own homes.

According to Nolwazi Nzama, Head of Affordable Housing at Standard Bank, "The reasons vary, but are mainly due to affordability and availability constraints. Although most banks offer home loans for the affordable housing market and are willing to provide finance to those who qualify, there are limited properties available in this range. And, due to their scarcity, the prices are high."

She explains that the biggest shortfall of properties is for households earning a combined income of between R3 500 and R15 000 a month. There are only a limited number of properties within the R100 000 to R500 000 price band in South Africa. Fortunately, the Department of Human Settlement has recently removed the R300 000 cap on what it used to consider 'affordable housing', allowing more options to alleviate the housing backlog.

"Public-Private Initiatives (PPIs) can go a long way in addressing these

The Department of Human Settlements recently revealed that the housing backlog is rising. In 2001, the backlog was approximately 1,8 million houses; by 2011 it had risen to 2,1 million and is still rising.



challenges, in order to reduce costs and pave the way for more lower-income entrants to the housing market. An example of this initiative is the Finance Linked Subsidy Programme (FLISP), in which Standard Bank is the leading partner with government, as the largest lender in the Affordable Housing market," says Nzama.

"The FLISP subsidy programme provides assistance to households to access mortgage finance for

residential property. It is aimed primarily at assisting first-time qualifying householders with a gross monthly income of between R3 501 and R 15 000."

"Initiatives such as FLISP do not only increase the number of customers in the affordable housing market; but also fulfil the dreams of countless people who assumed that their wish of owning their own homes would never be realised," concludes Nzama. ■

Reebokfontein Village

Visual International Holdings has signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) for Reebokfontein Village, a new 2 000 unit residential affordable housing development in Klerksdorp.

The JSE AltX-listed company is in discussions to develop the North West 83 ha Klerksdorp site, which will be based on Visual's successful mixed-use suburb Stellendale Village development in Cape Town. The project will provide different housing typologies such as apartments, lifestyle suites and houses for the affordable housing sector.

Charles Robertson, CEO of Visual International Holdings comments, "Visual has a long-term vision and we pride ourselves on delivering quality properties that also offer good living as well as pleasant shopping, working and recreation. Our properties are developed around people and communities. We are excited about creating a new suburb in Klerksdorp that

will offer residents affordable, good quality living." The development has already been approved; however the transaction is subject to ensuring that the development can effectively fulfill Visual's vision for the project. It is also subject to one or more of the larger companies in the vicinity entering into an agreement to provide employees with housing incentives and or financial investment for rental stock. The roll-out and release of property will be based on demand.

The property holdings development and services listed company has identified that self-contained suburbs for the middle income market are the fastest growing property segment in South Africa.

Its award winning flagship Stellendale project in Cape Town is a mixed use residential suburb located near the Stellenbosch Arterial in Kuils River. The 22 ha site will provide 1 500 affordable housing options on completion. Robertson says:

"While creating quality housing that meets market demand, Visual strives to provide our stakeholders with a positive and sustainable investment experience. We have plans to take our tried-and-tested model into other regions with a growing middle market driving demand for housing." ■





THE PROMISE OF COR

**Cornubia,
KwaZulu-Natal's
multi-billion rand national priority
project, is located on the northern
economic corridor of Durban and
within 7 km south of the King Shaka
International Airport.**



NUBIA

The new integrated human settlement site is on one of the few large vacant tracts of land strategically located in the rapidly developing northern part of eThek-wini. The 1 300 ha greenfield site will provide mixed use, mixed income, development incorporating industrial, commercial and residential.

The joint project is a collaboration between the National and Provincial Department of Human Settlements, eThekwini Municipality and Tongaat Hulett Developments. The project will create a new town centre and 100 000 job opportunities and government will contribute R20 billion with the private sector adding R5 billion. The development will roll out over 20 years and householders will be exposed to a range of better quality housing typologies, including Gap, social, fully bonded, free standing, walk-ups and high density units for householders with combined earnings of up to R16 000 per month.

According to MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works of KwaZulu-Natal provincial government, Ravi Pillay, "Cornubia is about creating sustainable human settlements and an improved quality of household life." Address-

"The R25 billion project will create a new town centre and 100 000 job opportunities."

ing media and delegates at the National Human Settlements Indaba at the Sandton Convention Centre, Pillay said that the current housing delivery patterns indicated that it would take a considerable period to address the huge eThekwini backlog.

The land belongs to a number of stakeholders in the area including Blackburn Land Holding 19 ha, the South Africa Sugar Association 62 ha, eThekwini Land Holding 664 ha and Tongaat Hulett 586 ha. With all tiers of government endorsing the project Phase 1A consists of 482 units and in Phase 1B a further 2 187 units will be developed. This includes double storey, semi-detached, duplex, three and four storey walk-ups and multi storey units, which forms part of the city restructuring, including regional integration and development of the Northern Urban Development Corridor (NUDC).

Cornubia has the potential to accommodate 28 000 housing opportunities and house 120 000 people.

Almost 10 200 units will be

subsidised, 5 100 units will cater for householders earning between R3 501 and R15 000 per month and the remainder will be private sector bonded units.

The planned public transport system will create 43 000 permanent jobs, 387 000 during the construction period for the Bus Rapid Transport system, which will link Cornubia to Umhlanga, Phoenix and Dube Trade-Port in the north. The development will improve the rates base for the city over time bringing in millions in rates revenue per annum for eThekwini Municipality.

Targets and timeframes have been allocated for serviced sites, 2 187 sites by July 2015; 3 745 by January 2016, 4 208 sites by October 2016; and 1 625 by July 2018.

The initial phase will create a walkable residential precinct structured around courtyards and well defined streets as basis for building a sense of community. The development is based on a new approach focused on social facility clusters. The frame-

works has provided for school facilities within a five minute walk of the residential areas. It has been estimated that R237

million will be collected in rates revenue, R1,5 billion in VAT, income tax in the region of R1,43 billion, per annum. The close proximity to King Shaka International Airport and Dube TradePort will increase work opportunities for housing beneficiaries. According to Pillay this will ensure that housing is used as a strategy for employment creation. To date, 39 750 people have been employed, of these 57% are youths and 20% women. Apart from these formidable investment and employment benefits, the most significant benefit of Cornubia is that it offers us a rare opportunity to build a future city premised on: Providing for an equitable city; enabling social integration across communities; providing newer forms of integrated human settlements, and changing the lives and fortunes of the people of eThekwini. Priority will be given to beneficiaries with special needs, senior citizens, the disabled, child headed households, relocations from Transit Camps, informal settlements in close proximity to Cornubia

Continued ►►►

January 2015

HOUSING
in Southern Africa

and demographic representation.

Development cost contributions include the national and provincial government and eThekweni R10,4 billion, Tongaat-Hulett R14,3 billion, the South African Sugar Association (SASA) R1,1 billion, bringing the total to R25,8 billion. For the development costs in Phase 1 - 659 ha of land was acquired with over half a billion rands ring fenced – R669,4 million was approved by Province and R511,6m was paid from the province to eThekweni Municipality. So far, the private sector has invested R350 million.

There are challenges says Pillay. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Transport and the City, which determines the cost sharing percentages is still under discussion. Also, the agreement for funding and cost sharing to build the bridge over the N2, which is a key linkage and forms part of the Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network, has still to be finalised. The eThekweni Transport Authority has indicated that there is an opportunity to include this into the M41/N2 contract with SANRAL. The design has been finalised and will provide a significant link to Cornubia via Gateway opening up this portion of the site for housing

development.

Poor geotechnical ground conditions, which could not be determined prior to the implementation stage, increased the costs. The wetland drainage line occupies 28% of the site and added an additional R46 million with the accommodation of imported fill material and spoiled materials. It also meant a three month delay in construction. To comply with municipal bylaws and stormwater management, a further R17,5 million was required to provide 2 187 units

‘The initial phase will create a walkable residential precinct structured around courtyards and well defined streets as the basis for building a sense of community.’

with gutters and downpipes. Funding for bulks, such as roads and cost sharing agreements that were not concluded increased the extra costs. Lengthy Supply Chain Management processes, appeals and litigation delayed the roll out by up to eight months. Demand for housing exceeds the planned supply. Ensuring integrated delivery also meant including temporary schools for scholars.

Another challenge was the Noise Contour Restriction on use of land for residential development as a large portion of the land falls within

eThekweni and was zoned for general business and light industrial use.

To qualify for the Densification Subsidy developers will need to maximise their investment on the Bus Rapid Transport routes, which will make the transport node more viable with the higher densities.

Pillay says that one of the lessons learned was to identify potential beneficiaries at an early stage, since delays in providing documentation often meant that houses could not be handed over and were left unoccupied for an extended period of time. He says, “Allow for adequate financial authority to manage the variations, as obtaining additional authority is a lengthy process.” It is

important to consider the separation of top structure and civil works, the framework on employment opportunities and multi procurement strategies.

The private sector will develop 10 000 units, bulk will be provided for affordable housing catering for households earning less than R18 000 per month. There is an opportunity says Pillay to pilot an Employee Assisted Housing (EAH) scheme within the next few years using various subsidy programmes such as FLISP.

There will be various social



‘There is an opportunity to pilot an Employee Assisted Housing (EAH) scheme within the next few years using various subsidy programmes such as FLISP.’

facilities and 20 primary schools, 10 highs and a number of related pre primary and crèche facilities. The Social Sustainability and Innovation Programme (SSIP) is aimed at facilitating economic opportunities for residents in the greater Umhlanga area. “So far so good, but our backlog remains significant,” says Pillay.

Beyond Cornubia

The newly planned development of Cornubia North will more than double the current housing yield being delivered at Cornubia, by creating a further 30 000 additional housing opportunities. Tongaat Hulett will oversee infrastructure support,

framework planning and the environmental impact assessment stages.

According to Pillay this will create 330 000 permanent jobs, require investment of R215 billion, provide 160 000 housing opportunities across the affordability spectrum, offer 1 100 ha of industrial space, 1 200 bed hotel/resort, 10 new schools, social facilities and 4 000 ha of open space. The rates revenue is expected to exceed R3,4 billion annually.

In 2001 the population of eThekweni was 3,09 million and grew at an average annual percentage of 1,13% per annum to reach 3.44 million in 2011 (Statistics South Africa). ■

eThekwini Backlog

- Informal Settlements: 262 000 households
- Backyard Shacks: 49 000
- Traditional Dwellings: 97 000
- Estimated Total: 408 000 households



Residential building statistics

Growth in the planning phase of residential activity continues, but the construction phase contracts unabatedly, says Jacques du Toit, Property Analyst at Absa Home Loans.

The first nine months of 2014 saw continued year-on-year growth in the planning phase of residential building activity in the South African market for new housing, as reflected by the number of building plans approved by local government authorities. However, the contraction in the construction phase of residential building activity, i.e. the volume of housing units reported as completed, continued unabatedly up to the end of the third quarter of the year. These trends in residential building activity are from data published by Statistics South Africa in respect of private sector-financed housing (see explanatory notes).

The number of new housing units for which building plans were approved increased further in September this year, by 12,8% year-on-year (y/y) to a cumulative total of 43 350 units in the first nine months of the year. This resulted in growth of 13,4% y/y in the period January to September. The segments of smaller-sized houses (<80m²) and higher-density



flats and townhouses, with a combined share of 70,3% of the total, remained the major contributors to the improved level of plans approved up to September.

The construction phase of new housing has contracted on a year-on-year basis for the sixth consecutive month in September, by 6,2% in volume terms. However, the third quarter of the year saw construction volumes increasing by 18,8% from the second quarter to a total of 9 569 units, with a continuous growth in the planning phase that could have played a significant role in the strong quarter-on-quarter growth.

The real value of plans approved for new residential buildings increased by 10,3% y/y, or R2,54 billion to R27,09 billion in January to September from R24,55 billion in the corresponding period last year. The real value of residential buildings reported as completed was down by 4,7% y/y, or R793,2 million, to R16,17 billion in January to September from R16,97 billion in the same period last year. These real values are calculated at constant 2010 prices.

The average building cost of new housing constructed averaged R5 778

per square metre in the period January to September this year, resulting in an increase of 13,2% y/y from R5 106 per square metre in the same period last year. Building costs are affected by factors such as building material costs, labour costs, transport costs, equipment costs, land values, rezoning costs, and developer and contractor holding costs and profit margins.

Building activity with regard to additions and alterations to existing houses showed a marginal improvement in terms of building area in the first nine months of the year compared with the corresponding period last year, whereas the total building area completed was down by almost 39% y/y over the same period.

This might be an indication of financial strain experienced by consumers, eventually leading to neglected maintenance of existing houses.

Trends in residential building activity will continue to be driven by economic factors, household finances, the affordability of new housing and changing lifestyles, which will impacted the demand for and supply of new housing. ■

Comcorp and Red-I join forces

Comcorp Mortgage Software, a specialist in bond origination and tracking software, and RED-i (Real Estate Development Interactive) have integrated systems from each company to revolutionise property development sales management, bond application, approvals, transaction and tracking processes.

The two specialist companies have created a platform of convenience to push and pull critical information to each system in order to allow for the seamless communication of real-time

information, says Marcel Zeier of Comcorp and Andrew Kumm of RED-i.

In 2000, Comcorp revolutionised the mortgage bond application process in South Africa by introducing the first electronic home loan application system for banks and bond originators. BondTrak is its front end data application, which is used by bond originators and developers to submit validated loan applications to multiple banks. The software also allows users to track the status of loans, receive decisions and view

management reports. SmartDoc is the imaging front end, which allows users to submit documents electronically, thereby eliminating lost and unclear documents.

Affordable housing has been a major focus for both RED-i and Comcorp. "The margins are extremely tight and it is important for these developers' projects to run efficiently. Their business model works on volume, and time delays and errors therefore need to be removed or minimised if they are to be successful," said Kumm. ■



THINKING OF INVESTING INTO AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING IN GAUTENG?

CONSTRAINED BY **FUNDING** CHALLENGES?

The Gauteng Partnership Fund (GPF) is the ideal partner for companies seeking to develop affordable housing.

Who Are We - Mandated by the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements to accelerate the provision of affordable housing, the GPF has leveraged over R2.2 billion in private sector funding for developers and investors in the affordable housing market. The GPF seeks to share financing risks with debt funders and developers for affordable housing projects.

GPF OFFERS:

Rental Housing and Student Accommodation Fund

This fund enhances debt/equity ratio for entrepreneur driven projects to enable them to raise commercial funding.

Entrepreneur Empowerment Property Fund Programme (EPPF)

This is an incubator programme designed to promote participation of HDI owned companies in the affordable rental property market. *(This programme is limited to prospective participants invited on public tender annually.)*

Social Housing Fund and Institutional Subsidies

This fund aims to reduce the cost of capital for projects, to allow for lower affordable rentals and assist Social Housing Institutions (SHI's) to fund their growth.

Strategic Partnership Projects (Banks and DFI's)

GPF also facilitates the sustainable entry of Banks into the affordable housing market through sharing financing risk. This is also open to other financial institutions.

Sustainable Housing Fund (Integrated Housing Developments)

GPF shares financial risk with financial institutions in debt/ equity funding for sustainable integrated housing projects.

PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBER 0015 WHEN SPEAKING TO A GPF REPRESENTATIVE.

For more information about the GPF product range or to apply for funding please contact:
Tel: 011 685 6600 or
Email: info@gpf.org.za
www.gpf.org.za



GAUTENG PROVINCE
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





Soula Proxenos



GOVERNMENT RETHI

Free housing must become the first rung on the ladder, not the end-point and title deeds must be given to housing recipients to enable wealth creation.

Soula Proxenos, Managing Director at International Housing Solutions, a leading global private equity investor in affordable housing, says this renewed enthusiasm for solving SA's housing challenges is very welcome, as it could herald in an era of dramatically increased access to housing and wealth creation among SA's lower-to-middle classes.

"Access to housing is like a ladder. If any rung is broken, it becomes impossible to traverse up and down. It is critically important to think about housing holistically and it is very encouraging to hear Ministers Nhlanelhla Nene and Lindiwe Sisulu do just that," said Proxenos.

Finance Minister Nhlanelhla Nene

The South African Government's recent pronouncements on the provision of housing are welcome signs of it moving in the direction of real and sustainable long-term solutions to the problem.

reportedly warned that the Treasury wouldn't be able to subsidise the inefficient financing of low-cost housing for much longer. The current backlog of state housing is 2,3 million – a figure that continues to grow every year.

Earlier this year, Human Settlements Minister Lindiwe Sisulu said that Government should not continue to provide large-scale housing for the poor, as it created a syndrome of dependency.

"The current approach has solved many problems, but is not sustainable and it needs to be refreshed, as both Minister Sisulu and Minister

Nene suggest. The critical missing element is to start treating housing not only as shelter but as an asset. With this mind set, the ability to partner with the private sector becomes more possible, helping to harness what each sector is best at achieving. This partnership gives us the real potential of addressing the housing hangover of Apartheid," says Proxenos.

She says that while subsidised housing is key in South Africa, it needs to become an efficient first rung on a ladder – not just the end point for lower income families.

"If RDP/BNG housing can be



NKS HOUSING

thought of as not just shelter but an opportunity to create wealth and employment, then the investment that government is making into housing will return good dividends. But this can occur only if the title deeds to government subsidised housing are given to incumbents.”

According to research undertaken by the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, of the estimated 2.94 million subsidised housing units delivered by 2010, only 1,44 million were on the deeds registry – about 50%. This 50% comprised 24% of the total SA residential property market.

“If the other properties were formally registered, government subsidised housing stock would comprise 38% of the SA residential property market. Many of these units are now older than eight years, and so able to be sold in the resale market. This

is significant resale market supply, which could provide the equity that low income subsidy beneficiary households could use to climb up to the next rung of the ladder,” says Proxenos.

“For markets to work efficiently, there needs to be housing that ‘graduating’ subsidy beneficiary families can afford to buy, by selling their RDP/BNG houses and using this profit as a down-payment to a bigger house.” But Proxenos says there are two barriers to this occurring. “The one is that the selling price of RDP/BNG units is depressed – for a number of reasons, including low churn rates and the fact that the cost of the house, land and services is not transparent, i.e. the value is unknown. Also, for the properties that are not yet formally registered, the incumbents can’t sell for an optimum

price because the buyer can’t get finance – they have to buy with cash or a microloan, and this keeps prices down.”

Proxenos notes that because these ‘informally sold’ houses are not part of the formal system, they undermine their own value as well as the value of the neighbourhoods in which they are located. She says the second part of what needs to be in place in order to fix the housing ladder, is the availability of housing that ‘graduating families’ can afford.

“This will allow previous RDP units to be made available for sale to lower income families, by the families who have moved up the housing ladder.”

But Proxenos says it is vital that the private sector is willing to extend mortgages and build for this market. “Private capital can and does play a role here. IHS is a perfect example of how private Institutional capital is investing in moderate income housing for sale and for rent,” she says.

IHS, the pioneer in large-scale affordable housing provision in South Africa, recently launched its second fund after the success of its first fund, the SA Workforce Housing Fund (SAWHF). Close to R2 billion in investments by the SAWHF meant that more than 28 000 affordable homes, with a combined total value of more than R8.6 billion, could be constructed.

Owing to the massive demand for stock in this middle market, which caters to people who earn too much to qualify for free government housing, but too little to find housing in the traditional market, which caters mostly to middle-to-higher income buyers, IHS launched its second fund this year.

IHS Fund II will seek to raise R3 billion from institutional investors following attractive risk-adjusted returns for investors in its first fund, and has already secured significant commitments from a range of investors realising the economic and social value of this sector.

Proxenos says that should Government address its housing strategy as outlined, the market will expand organically to address the demand, which will further lead to new avenues of economic growth.

“But we need to get the ladder to work with all its rungs in place, and with families able to move using their appreciation from starter houses to fund their next house. If we don’t, we’ll remain forever with the same problems we have today.”

STOP CORRUPTION

The aggregate and Sand Producers Association of Southern Africa (Aspasa) has called on its members to help eradicate corruption at all levels within the quarrying and construction industries.

According to Nico Pienaar from Aspasa, "Whether corruption is experienced at the point of mining minerals, or to procure business for the building of infrastructure or other large-scale projects, these dishonest business dealings put a strain on the country's economy. Corruption also has the potential to derail any meaningful efforts to build sustainable and competitive industries in future."

As a result, Aspasa is advising members to report incidents of corruption to Government oversight authorities directly, or to make contact with the association to decide the best course of action to deal with the problem.

"Illegal mining is a major issue that we are dealing with and in instances where our members believe



that corrupt dealings are preventing the course of justice from running its course we would like them to contact us so that we can ensure the authorities can investigate and take action if needed."

"Where corrupt procurement of sand and stone is suspected, we also recommend that our members take a stand and act against these people. Dishonest dealings such as these not only prevent legal, honest operators from making a living, but also encourage bribery and counter-bribery in future," said Pienaar.

He added that Aspasa continues to work closely with the Department of Mineral Resources, the Chamber of Mines and other mining-related action groups to stop illegally obtained sand and aggregates from entering into the

market, and to prevent corruption. Recently, the association signed a pledge to the Department of Human Settlements to help stamp out corruption in housing related industries.

"We are committed to ending corruption affecting our industry and appeal to any of our members who suspect dishonest dealings, to take decisive action. As an association we want to set the groundwork to make it extremely difficult for anyone to be involved in corrupt dealings. That is why we need to join hands and become active members of the association and begin to act on behalf of everyone within our industry," concluded Pienaar.

For further information contact Aspasa on 011 791 3327, or email: nico@aspasa.co.za ■

AfriSam acquires a stake in CLF

Leading construction materials group AfriSam has acquired an equity stake in specialist concrete solutions company Concrete Laser Flooring (CLF), with an option to increase its shareholding over the next two years.

The acquisition will extend AfriSam's product and service offering beyond the supply of construction materials, and afford it an advantage to build closer relationships with its customers.

"The acquisition fully aligns and supports AfriSam's growth strategy to partner with well managed entrepreneurial companies to achieve vertical integration advantages," says Stephan Olivier, Chief Executive Officer of AfriSam.

He added, "Our partnership enables both companies to leverage synergies and enhance value-delivery



**Stephan Olivier
and Peter Norton**

to our customers."

"CLF has gained a strategic alliance with a leading supplier of the materials that form the foundation of our business. This is an exciting prospect for

CLF and I look forward to the potential benefits our company will derive from a partnership with AfriSam," says Peter Norton, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of CLF. ■



ASPASA PLEDGES TO ASSIST WITH 1,5M HOUSES

Minister Sisulu has called on all involved in the sector to work together to build 1,5 million houses within the next five years. In order to do this, the Department has committed to addressing a number of key issues, which have stood in the way of closer cooperation in the past and has taken various steps to unite the industry.

These include working more closely with financial institutions to obtain loans for home owners, to procure land, establish a dedicated unit to ensure payments are made on time, establish an office of an Ombudsman to deal with disputes, create forums to deal with bottlenecks, use the Cuban model of a youth brigades to train young people to build houses and partake in the economy, and speed up the issue of granting title deeds.

In response, the Aggregate and Sand Producers Association of Southern Africa (Aspasa) and the Southern Africa Readymix Association (Sarma), representing companies that supply sand, stone and readymixed concrete, produced a combined list of pledges on behalf of members. According to Nico Pienaar, a director on the boards of both associations, they support the initiative of the Minister of Human Settlements to let all South Africans have a home of their own and uplift the dignity of the entire population.

“While Aspasa quarries are regulated by the Department of Mineral

Industry stakeholders, developers and the private sector have thrown their weight behind Minister of Human Settlements, by signing a number of pledges on behalf of members.

Resources, there is no such oversight on the side of Sarma members. That is why the association plays such an important role in self-regulating the industry and ensuring that we uplift the standards and quality of readymix concrete delivered in South Africa.

“Already our members are subjected to annual audits for safety, health, road transport, environment and quality. This means that they have their eye on quality and high levels of service delivery. As a result the pledges that we are making are not a distant aspiration, rather they can (and will) be achieved with the cooperation of the Government and other role players,” Pienaar said.

The association has made a number of pledges and some of these include striving toward supplying quality aggregate, sand and readymix concrete to Human Settlements Projects and to work with the provincial Departments of Human Settlements to reduce payment delays for material supplied to the industry to ensure companies are paid within 60 days. Once payment and issues of transparency within the Department have been resolved, the association has pledged to support and lead issues

and advise on plans that are drafted to build more houses. To work with the National Home Builders Regulatory Council (NHBRC), thereby ensuring that quality, professionalism and standards are met; to involve local communities where individuals or non-profit organisations want to assist individuals to build their own homes with quality materials and to serve on an advisory group to achieve the 1,5 million housing goal.

Sarma and related organisations could assist with training related to concrete, while engineers, developers, planning professionals and others in the industry could be offered training in the use of readymix concrete, thereby ensuring that sustainable, quality projects would be completed in future.

“As suppliers of key building materials our members are committed to working with government and to meet the needs of the population. We also wish to deliver quality materials so that our people, many of who have waited so long for houses, can have houses they are proud,” concluded Pienaar. For further information contact Aspasa on 011 791 3327 or go to www.aspasa.co.za ■

TELESCOPIC HANDLERS

Bobcat has launched its middle lift telescopic handlers; the models are part of the new generation of telescopic handlers from Bobcat.

Advanced features include the Panoramic Cab which has a large parabolic windscreen providing panoramic visibility, especially useful when handling loads at height. In the cab, the dashboard offers digital display and ergonomic controls including a joystick with integrated forward/reverse (FNR) control for improved productivity and safety.

State-of-the-art electronics in the new telescopic handlers are based on CAN bus technology allowing smart machine management and monitoring of the main components for easier maintenance. Based around a 100 l/min gear pump, advanced hydraulics feature an active diagnostic system which ensures that in case of hydraulic failure, the machine always remains within safe limits.

Available in versions for markets with non-regulated or regulated emissions, high performance is ensured, respectively, by the 74.5 kW (100 HP) 410 Nm Perkins Stage IIIA or Deutz Stage IIIB diesel engines, providing plenty of power and torque even in the most difficult ground conditions. The new telescopic handlers have a hydrostatic transmission offering a maximum travel speed of 30 km/h, complemented by an inching function for smooth driving and precise positioning. The T36120SL incorporates stabilisers and the frame-levelling system while the T35105L features the frame-levelling system.

For construction and rental applications, the telescopic handlers feature an auxiliary hydraulic line and are supplied with a 1.12 m wide foldable pallet forks carriage with backrest and 1 200 mm pallet forks as standard. An important safety feature is the Aggravating Movement Arrester (AMA) system which cuts off all aggravating movements to ensure safe use within the working envelope,



whatever attachment used or type of load (palletised or suspended) being lifted.

The T35105 and T35105L telescopic handlers both have a maximum lift capacity of 3.5 tonne. The working envelope has a maximum lift height of 10.29 m and a maximum forward reach of 6.88 m. The T36120SL telescopic handler has a maximum lift capacity of 3.6 tonne. The working envelope has a maximum lift height of 11.87 m and a maximum forward reach of 8.20 m.

Overall, the new cab is designed to provide an exceptional work environment and a new higher level of comfort for the operator, reducing fatigue and improving safety and performance on site.

On the new dashboard, the digital display provides the operator with an easy to understand and quick overview of machine performance, with important information displayed such as total and job operating hours, rpm, boom angle and a continuous readout of the frame levelling angle. When the levelling function is activated, the readout on the display screen changes automatically, to show the angle of the machine to one side or the other, so that the operator is always fully aware of the working conditions. The boom angle value showing the inclination angle of the telescopic boom is also available on the LCD screen to promote precise movements and faster work cycles for repetitive tasks. Contributing to the fast work cycles is the top speed of 30

km/h, which allows the new models to move quickly between locations, cutting down on travel time. The telescopic handlers are supplied as standard with road lights and turn signals.

The operator is provided with an ergonomic array of machine controls, all within easy reach of their comfortable mechanical or optional air suspension seat, including the new all-in-one joystick with integrated FNR control and an adjustable steering wheel column. FNR control on the joystick ensures operators have maximum control at their fingertips, allowing the driving direction to be selected at the touch of a button while still keeping a grip on both the steering wheel and the joystick for improved safety and productivity.

Semi-automatic wheel alignment provides automated assistance to the operator ensuring the wheels are always aligned when changing between the three steering modes of 2-wheel, 4-wheel or crabbing. Maximum Drive speed (creep mode) and auxiliary flow control are easily and precisely controlled via the joystick.

The easy-to-use compact stabilisers ensure that the full capabilities of the telescopic handler can be utilised in the most confined working areas and close to walls (minimal loss of reach).

In addition, optimal steering capabilities with minimum external turning radius (3.76 m at tyres) make the machines extremely manoeuvrable and easy to position at any job site. ■



Brick Easy's precision tool

The Brick Easy system has been developed to facilitate the laying of all bricks, including face bricks. The precise precision tool produces an even surface, exact mortar level and a professional finish.

The professional brick laying steel frame and mortar box system increases productivity and enhances the performance of semi-skilled and skilled brick laying on site. The profile is the main protagonist in this system, its firm and immovable position gives the bricklayer the role of an operator on an assembly line, where everything is optimised to maintain a high level of productivity. The sliding steel frame system can be lengthened and heightened and erected to fit the project requirements.

The patented mortar box profile fits and slides parallel to the steel frame. The mortar box profile efficiently distributes the mortar evenly on the surface as the box slides along the profile. This prepares the mortar base for the brick layer to place the bricks on top. When each section has been placed in position, the mortar box profile is then continually refilled with mortar.



This offers a quick, easy and efficient surface preparation system. As each level of brick has been completed, the steel frame is then raised easily and effortlessly by rotating the level on either side of the frame for the next level of bricks to be laid. The bricklayer, in this case, has no alternative but to follow the profile's exact shape at every stop and starting point, and around every corner. There is therefore no need for any other guide. The operator has simply to raise the profile to the next level by the use of the Brick Easy's patented and easy-to-use system. This is why a higher productivity can be achieved. Industrialisation and a level of automation ensures bulk production.

"Brick Easy's innovative method of bricklaying will ensure higher productivity. It will also alleviate the hard work of the bricklayer, for example, the system makes it possible for three semi-skilled bricklayers to average one brick every five seconds. This is an average of laying 500 bricks per hour.

With the backlog of affordable, social and subsidised housing, this product can assist to fast track quality, affordable housing and improve capacity," says Brick Easy founder and patent holder, Giuseppe Dalla Torre.

For further information contact Brick Easy on 083 305 5191, or email: gadallatorre@telkomsa.net ■



CITY'S R2BN ECONOMIC SPINOFF

The City of Cape Town played host to a number of large international events in the 2013/2014 financial year. The economic spin-offs have been significant, with six of those events injecting more than R2 billion into local coffers.

The direct economic impact through visitor and organiser spend is estimated at over hundreds of millions of rands per event. "Our support is part of our strategy to attract big events to the city and to position Cape Town as the events capital of Africa.

Events are also a catalyst for providing outstanding visitor experiences in a unique and incredibly beautiful setting. Year-round events also help to address seasonality, especially in the low winter period," said the city's Acting Mayoral Committee Member for Tourism, Events and Economic Development, Johan van der Merwe.

Cape Town's success in hosting events of various sizes and types has

earned it the enviable reputation of an events destination of choice on the continent. Statistics on the impact of annual major events held in the city, supplied by event organisers, include:

The Cape Town International Jazz Festival created R553 million for the local economy, 2 723 jobs were created, 34 000 visitors attended the festival and 22 countries were represented at the event.

The Cape Town Cycle Tour added R450 million to the economy; there were 42 684 entries and 72 000 visitors.

Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon received 30 000 entries, created R266 million for the economy, 50 000 visitors attended the expo and 83 countries were represented at the event.

Absa Cape Epic generated R300 million for the economy, 45 000 spectators watched on the route, 600 teams entered, 175 countries watched the television spectacle and 80 nations were represented.

The Mining Indaba created R500 million for the local economy, 7 800 delegates attended the event and 1 500 international companies were represented.

The Design Indaba contributed R326 million for the economy, 40 000 visitors attended the Indaba and 2 500 delegates from around the world visited the event.

Lion of Africa Cape Town Open grossed US\$ 7,5 million and a further R2 million on line. The event attracted 156 professional golfers.

The ITU World Triathlon Series attracted an audience of 4.38 million over 35 networks, 24 countries were represented and 1 913 triathletes participated.

The Volvo Ocean Race had an audience of 1,55 billion globally with 8 million YouTube viewers, 41,6 million website visits and, 6,7 million race official live streaming channel viewers.

Van der Merwe says, "The economic benefit of large events that attract international participants to the city has been incredible. The ripple effect by way of job creation during the events and after, the increased spending at our attractions and across the hospitality industry, coupled with the need for local associated services that benefit directly from these events, are all a welcome injection into the local economy." ■

FREE WI-FI IN CAPE TOWN

The City of Cape Town has claimed that it is leading the way in digital inclusion on the African continent. By the end of June 2015, free Wi-Fi will be provided at 61 City buildings across the metro, says City of Cape Town Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille.

Wi-Fi will be provided inside public buildings, via the 102 Smart Cape Computer facilities, and externally via 61 public access hotspots including clinics, administration buildings, traffic departments, fire stations and public transport interchanges in areas such as Langa, Nyanga, Uitsig, Valhalla Park, Athlone and Atlantis. Each access point will cost the city between R60 000 and R100 000 to install. The 102 internal public access facilities are situated inside the city's libraries, where currently there are 679 729 registered users.

In December, public Wi-Fi services became operational at the Bellville Clinic, Hillstar Administrative Building, Mitchells Plain Switching Centre, Nyanga Switching Centre, Plumstead Administrative Building, Robbie Nurrock Clinic, and Site B Youth Clinic in Khayelitsha.

The city has also partnered with MWEB, Internet Solutions and Orange

service providers to expand internet connectivity to previously disadvantaged communities throughout the metro.

The partnership with Orange is a first in South Africa for the Paris-based international telecommunications giant in South Africa, the provider will offer a free 200 MB data bundle per day. Internet Solutions will provide a free data bundle of 50 MB per day. MWEB will provide an uncapped data bundle for the trial period.

"We are currently investigating the option of providing Wi-Fi on MyCiTi buses and are in the process of conducting a pilot project. We will also be accelerating the digital inclusion project by providing broadband access through the Bandwidth Barn at Lookout Hill."

This digital inclusion project forms part of our overarching objective of becoming the first truly digital city in Africa. Our brand new Wi-Fi provision

has been made possible by the city's investment in broadband fibre optic networks in line with its city's Universal Broadband Network strategy, which is geared towards rolling out broadband infrastructure throughout the metro.

This forms part of the City's R1,3 billion programme to complete the roll-out over the next seven years. In doing so we will realise our vision of facilitating access to high-speed internet in order to support economic development and expand opportunities to our residents.

De Lille said, "The public Wi-Fi project demonstrates that the city's fibre optic network has reached the point where it is robust and extensive enough to be leveraged off by the private sector, and can significantly benefit those areas that are currently poorly served with broadband connectivity.

Broadband connectivity and digital inclusion are fundamental to creating an enabling environment for business development, economic growth and social cohesion. Our new public Wi-Fi provision is a prime example of how the private sector, government and the public can make progress possible, together." ■



Software bids for Treasury project

National Treasury has published a multi-billion rand request for proposals for the provision of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, including ongoing upgrades and support. This will link all government sites and departments.

The revised proposal has been directed at Bidders who are Tier 1 ERP COTS Original Software Manufacturers (OSM) for acquisition of Tier 1 ERP COTS software, including ongoing upgrades and support for this software.

The detailed technical and pricing requirements as well as the compliance requirements for bidders responding to this RFP have been included in bid documents, which are available to all potential bidders on the SITA website. The project is expected to roll out over the next five years.

National Treasury has invited service providers to bid for the provision, lead site implementation, maintenance and support of the IFMS ERP system.

Accountant General Michael Sass says, "In keeping with global trends, the South African government is continually improving the way it manages public resources through the regular refinement of financial management and human resource management policies and procedures. In order to support policy environments and governance upgrades, government has decided to upgrade the financial management systems

to replace the Legacy Systems currently in use."

He says, "Programmes such as the National Treasury's Financial Management Improvement Programme (FMIP), the upgrades of human resource and supply chain management policies and processes are part of a general programme to improve service delivery through better resourcing, reporting and accountability."

Primarily, the IFMS solution is expected to overcome policy implementation constraints experienced due to ageing and legacy systems and to support the Public Service in the following ways:

Financial accountability framework – directing the way government finances are to be governed, controlled and managed;

Budgeting framework – directing the way government activity is to be resourced;

Appropriation framework – authorising expenditure from the consolidated revenue fund;

Cash management framework – controlling and managing the funding required to enable government business to operate;



Financial reporting framework – reporting on financial results;

Performance reporting framework – evaluating performance;

Human resource management framework – regulating how human resources in the Public Service are managed.

IFMS will support the business imperative of transforming of financial management practices by providing centrally hosted and integrated financial, supply chain management and human resource (HR) management systems. This includes: accommodate ongoing financial management reforms; modernise ageing systems with new technologies; reduce expenditure of maintaining ageing systems; achieve economies of scale and elimination of duplicated IT systems; enhance operational effectiveness by standardising and automating processes as well as reducing unnecessary tasks and activities; enhancing operational effectiveness. ■

MBAN honours Barrow

Barrow Construction topped the list of long-standing members of the Association who received special recognition at the Master Builders Association North's recent Presidential Dinner in Bryanston. Barrow has been a member of the MBAN for 110 years.

The family-owned and managed business had by far the longest membership.

Other long-standing members who received framed commemorative certificates from MBA North's current president, Lea Smith, included: JW Taylor Construction – 75 years; Pace Construction, Frascot, and Corobrik – 50 years; Kevin Bates Flooring & Car-

peting; and Tiber Bonvec – 45 years; Dudley & Sons, and Industrial Plumbers – 40 years; MV Denny Painter – 35 years; Tekweni Centurion Ceilings; Mouldcor; W. Voigt; The Roofing Guarantee; Shurprops 1039; Tronkon; Carpet & Décor Centre; Neat Builders; and Phala Sanitary – 30 years.

MBA North Executive Director, Mohau Mphomela, paid tribute to the loyalty of the long-standing members who received awards and said the Association relied on individual input for its collective strength.

"Your loyalty has played a major role in strengthening and sustaining the MBA. Every individual's contribution helps the MBA to attain the re-



Nico Maas, founder of MBA North member Gauteng Piling, received the award on behalf of Barrow from Lea Smith.

spected status it holds in the building industry and the community today," he stated. ■

Hellopeter's new team

Peter Cheales the founder of Hellopeter, the biggest customer website around the world, has handed it over to a new team of entrepreneurs, who are ably assisted by Peter's trusted team.

The Hellopeter site was established in 2000 and, according to Cheales, the word 'blog' had not been invented, there was no such thing as Facebook or social media. The Hellopeter website became renowned as a 'go to' for consumers to check out companies and for companies to get on board and deal with consumers on the site who had complaints about services or products.

Those companies that stepped up and dealt with dissatisfied customers were well rewarded as potential clients used the Hellopeter website to assess which company would get their business.

The invaluable consumer service site will continue to grow under the new management, Cheales says that "It is time for fresh blood, more energy and new life. My trusted team headed up by Linda and Monique will remain on the site, led by a dynamic new team of entrepreneurs. They will



drive the site forward, and I wish them every success in the future. I know that my baby will continue to grow from strength to strength."

Cheales intends to follow his passion for writing and to carve out a niche for himself as a speaker for conferences and events.

He says that after spending fifteen years on Hellopeter, a farewell letter would be remiss without gigantic thanks to all who have been involved in the success of the site. "My first right-hand person, Shelley, who was always so optimistic when I was ready to pack up and go home. Linda and Monique, who keep the ship on course. Grant and his brilliant development team; Dom, the numbers man and The Media. A special thanks to John Robbie, George Mazarakis, Darren 'Wackhead' Simpson, Redi

Tlhabi and Gareth Cliff. To the fabulous companies who respond, wow you have been unbelievable. The way you embraced the concept from the outset. I could not have wished for more supportive companies who were prepared to take the flack and respond."

He added that his biggest thanks goes to the customers. "Without you, there is no site. You have written great reports, you have been polite and courteous, and I hope that you've got the results you so deserve. I will continue to watch from the sidelines. The site will always be a part of me.

I wish you all the success and happiness in the world. I hope your days will be filled with wonderful service, love and all things truly beautiful."

Follow Peter Cheales on Facebook or Twitter. ■

Africa's power agenda

POWER-GEN 2015's expert advisory board has identified integration of renewable energy into the traditional power ecosystem, universal access to power, and funding and sustainability as key issues for Africa's upcoming premier power sector event. These crucial issues facing sub-Saharan Africa's power sector will be discussed at POWER-GEN Africa 2015 in Cape Town in July 2015.

The Advisory Board includes the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA), the Southern African Alternative Energy Association

(SAAEA), Eskom, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission and CEFA Tanzania stakeholders and academics.

Nigel Blackaby, POWER-GEN Africa Event Director & Conference Director said that regulators and the utility sector were facing similar challenges, in terms of sustainability and service delivery. In addition, many were tasked with an integrated power generation and distribution function, which had prompted PennWell to co-locate POWER-GEN Africa with

DistribuTECH Africa, to allow the growing numbers of pan-African delegates to attend both events. Key themes include funding and investment, as there has been an uptake of renewable energy since the cost of generation models and pricing structures has dropped. Investors are increasingly looking to projects in Africa; Google and a consortium recently launched a 96 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) Jasper Solar Plant near Kimberley. For further details about the PennWell Corporation event, visit www.powergenafrika.com

7 000 LEDs illuminate the Sistine Chapel

The Sistine Chapel painted by Michelangelo is an extraordinary piece of art history, which is now illuminated by more than 7 000 LEDs.



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The installation in Rome has been put in place over the last few months. It has been designed to protect the artworks while enabling much improved lighting and at the same time, will use up to 90% less electricity than the previous installation. According to Dr Klaus Patzak, Osram's Chief Financial Officer responsible for the Luminaires & Solutions, "Osram developed an LED lighting solution that sets standards in terms of technological strength, quality and innovation. It's the first such solution in the world and paves the way for completely new possibilities for our clients. We will now rapidly turn this potential into reality."

Professor Antonio Paolucci, Director of the Vatican Museums explains that, "The Sistine Chapel contains the most extraordinary works ever conceived and is Michelangelo's masterpiece. We want to honor the 450th anniversary of Michelangelo's death

by providing new lighting for his work." Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the European Commission and responsible for the Digital Agenda for Europe adds, "Art exists to inspire us and illuminate our minds. Now that we have illuminated the Sistine Chapel with LED, Michelangelo's art can fulfil this role even more than it has up until now throughout history."

The lighting of the Sistine Chapel is a pilot project with the working title of LED4Art, supported by the European Funding Program for Information and Communication Technology within the Framework Program for Competitiveness and Innovation (PSP-CIP). The aim of the subsidy programme was to demonstrate new possibilities for LED technology with regard to energy efficiency and improved quality of light, and thus to achieve more rapid market penetration for the new technology. Other partners on the project included the Pannonian University in Hungary, the Institut de Recerca en Energia de Catalunya in Spain and the planning offices of Faber Technica in Italy. ■

Skills upgrading

A .b.e. Construction Chemicals production staff members recently graduated after successfully completing Chemical Operations (Chem OPS) training provided by the Institute for Quality's Education Training and Development department.

The chemical construction company forms part of the Chryso Group, Brian Matthee, General Manager: Human Resources and Organisation, says that the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level One training was provided by a.b.e. as part of the group's commitment to BB-BEE. This includes a substantial investment in learnerships and upgrading of staff skills. The Chem OPS training holds Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA) accreditation.

Four a.b.e. production staff members were capped and received their certificates at a special graduation Chem OPS ceremony, Nathaniel

Manganye and Jabulani Dlamini successfully completed Chem OPS Level 1 training in Warehousing and Logistics; and Mapule Mokoena and George Ndhlovu both completed Chem OPS Level 1 training in Production. "We had also enrolled another a.b.e. Boksburg factory staff member, Liberty Sibiyi, who completed the training, but sadly passed away before the graduation ceremony," said Matthee.

The Chem OPS Level 1 students started a year-long, on-the-job training with the emphasis on theoretical and practical production aspects.

"The candidates attended weekly four-hour voluntary training and were selected after assessment by a.b.e. Their visible improvement in production expertise as well as general enthusiasm inspired colleagues. This resulted in 11 more production staff members, and five Chryso production staff enrolling for the 2014 Chem OPS Level 1 course," added Matthee. ■

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