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CAPE Business News

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R7bn for new port facilities

TNPA has allocated R7bn to grow the ocean's economy.

2

A harvest of exceptional quality

The Western Cape grape season was gripped by drought that affected final crop estimations, but the quality has been exceptional.

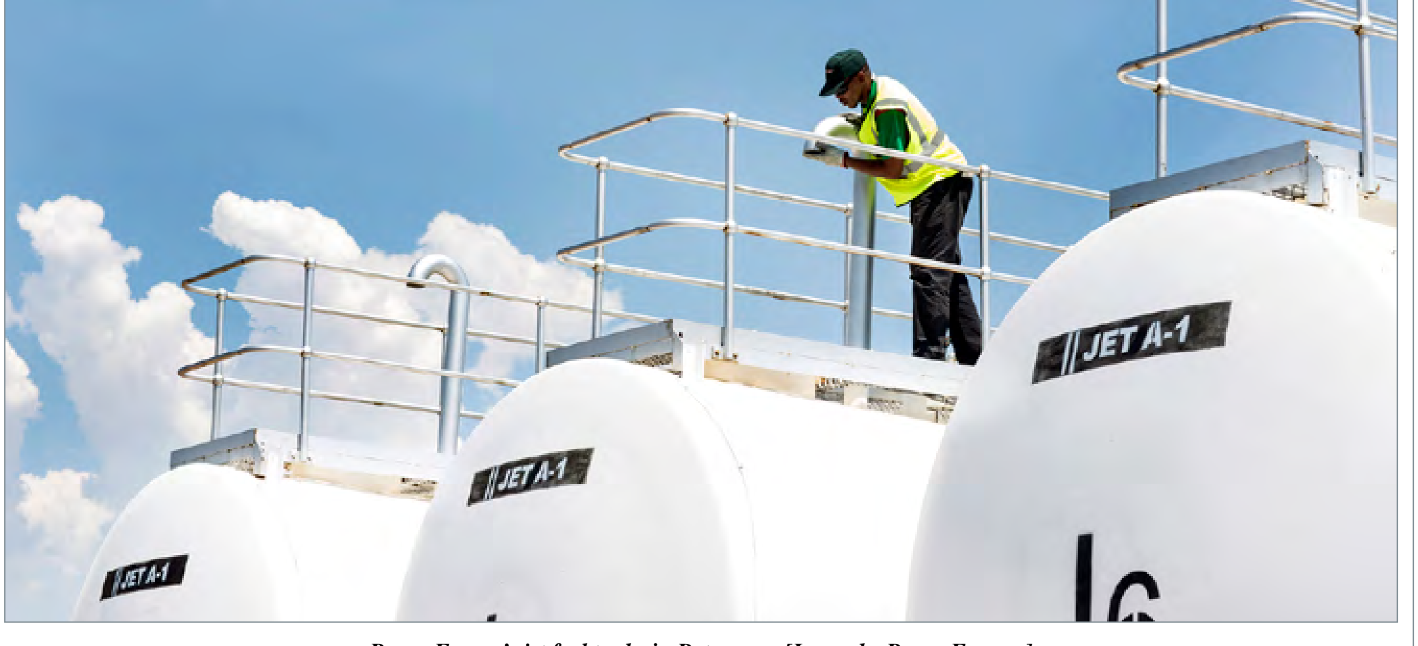
17

In cider trading

Distell's spirited growth in the last 15 years has been underpinned by its successful cider segment.

28

Caltex on the block?



Puma Energy's jet fuel tanks in Botswana. [Image by Puma Energy.]

IF there was a suspicion that oil giant Chevron was calling a bluff when it suggested it could sell its 75% stake in its South African holdings, then a rumoured emergence of a potential buyer might change opinions. Persistent reports that Chevron planned to sell its assets - including what Capetonians know as the Caltex refinery and storage depot - have in recent months been discounted. This is largely because the weak crude oil price and less than optimistic outlook for oil prices in the medium-term, which would preclude Chevron getting top dollar for high quality energy industry assets.

But matters have now taken a serious twist with suggestion in certain media circles that a niche oil company is seeking opportunities in southern Africa. Specifically cited in a hunt for oil storage capacity in Southern Africa was Puma Energy — an international fuel distributor owned by Angola's state oil company Sonangol Holdings and Netherlands-based global commodity traders Trafigura.

Business Day reported that Puma Energy, the international fuel distributor owned by global commodity traders Trafigura and Angola's state oil company Sonangol Holdings, was targeting organic growth and acquisitions in SA to match its expanding energy storage capacity in Southern Africa.

Last year Puma Energy snapped up Kwa-Zulu-Natal based Drakensberg Oil and a controlling stake in Cape Town-based Brent Oil, which holds logistics and storage facilities as well as branded fuel stations. Puma now owns over 129 petrol forecourt sites, but would rank as a small local player … even in the retail space.

Chevron would be a major deal for Puma – a bit like the minnow swallowing the whale. Chevron's Caltex refinery produces gasoline diesel, jet fuel, liquefied gas and other products for South Africa and exports to other African countries. The refinery boasts a capacity of 110,000 barrels per day.

Although the Caltex refinery has been a landmark industrial node in Cape Town for generations, Chevron has not been a happy camper of late …

Chevron had previously expressed strong resistance to a new fuel storage facility in the Cape Town harbour planned by Burgan Cape Terminals.

Chevron originally argued vehemently that the new depot could close its Cape Town refinery. Chevron's resistance appeared to fade after the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) raised concerns about competition in the Western Cape, but one suspects the development does dramatically alter the viability of maintaining such a large Western Cape presence.

Burgan looks a serious player - controlled by Dutch company VTTI with Tehebe and Jucaro as empowerment partners. CBN reported recently that Burgan Cape Terminals officially broke ground for the construction the new, independent fuel storage and distribution facility. The development sees a R650m investment in the first two years. At the time Burgan Cape Terminals CEO Muziwandile Mseleku said the facility would ensure security of fuel supply by adding greater flexibility and choice to a strained provincial storage market.

"It will also play an important role in opening up a previously closed market for emerging, black-owned independent fuel suppliers."

In the next few months it will be interesting to gauge whether Chevron – which has reportedly invited bids for 75% of its operations in SA – gives indications of a short list of interested parties. The price bid for Chevron's local assets will also be interesting to see – should that number be revealed.

CBN, though, reckons Chevron will probably be smart enough let any bid process unfold slowly so that there is the possibility of the crude oil price firming. The combination of a weak oil price and increased competition in Cape Town is hardly conducive for Chevron dangling a big price tag on its local assets.

(Finally) taking stock in the Cape

DURING the eighties a good number of punters in the local investment community were more than a little serious about setting up a Cape Town Stock Exchange that would either rival or complement the well established Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE.) The premise was that there were so many great Cape-based companies – recalling names like Wooltru, Trencor, Pepkor, BoE, Boland Bank. Norwich, Oceana, I&J, Protea Assurance, Seardel, Rembrandt and Pick n Pay (to name a few) – that a separate bourse in the Mother City was more than justified. Such an ambitious - and dare we say divisive project – never took root, and the last efforts at any kind of stock exchange was a half-baked plan by Milnerton-based venture capital company Capital Commitments to start an exchange for emerging companies under the guise of the SASDAQ.

The Cape Town stock exchange idea might not have died out completely, though. In this regard it is interesting to note that the JSE has finally – after being in existence for 125 years - established an official presence in Cape Town.

Cape Town, of course, has often been seen as the home of investment – boasting an impressive grouping of wealth managers like Sanlam, Old Mutual, Allan Gray, Coronation, Foord, Prescient and more recently Sygnia.

Last month it was reported that because Cape Town was now an increasingly important hub of South Africa's financial services industry, the JSE was opening a new office in

Continued on P4

IN THIS ISSUE

15 Harvest 2016

18 Power Transmission & Geared Drives

19 Power Solutions & Energy Efficiency

21 Building & Construction

24 Civil Engineering / Mining & Quarries

25 Wire, Rope & Sling

26 Food & Beverages

31 Transport Industry

32 Offshore Mining & Drilling

33 Facilities Management

34 Process Control

36 On the Contrary

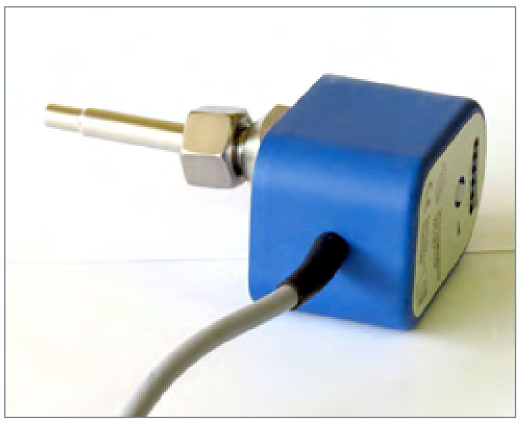
36 The Other Side of the Coin

CAPE Business News

EGE plug and play solution for flow monitoring

THE compact plug and play EGE SNS 450 thermodynamic flow sensor provides ease of flow monitoring with low maintenance benefits.

According to Gerry Bryant, managing director of Countapulse Controls, sole southern African agent for EGE's full range of flow sensors and controllers, the innovative screw-in adapter on the EGE thermodynamic flow sensor allows for universal use in a variety of applications.



The EGE sensor, which includes an LED display for ease of use, can function in temperatures from between minus 20°C to plus 80°C .

The adapter is screwed into a T-piece or a welding sleeve and the probe is then secured in this adapter using a union nut. Users are reassured of the integrity of the connection, which is sealed up to 100 bar.

The EGE sensor, which includes an LED display for ease of use, can function in temperatures from between minus 20°C to plus 80°C and is suitable for controlling the flow of fluids such as water, glycol mixtures and chemicals. Ingress protected to IP67 standards the design of the sensor, which features no moving parts, is focused on elimination of failure that would typically be caused by oxidised bearings, torn impellers or deflector deformation.

With a robust construction the EGE flow sensor is resistant to corrosion and is ideal for use in both liquids and air, as well as in hazardous environments. "This is a welcome addition to the Countapulse Controls product line-up and complements the company's existing range of sensing solutions; all geared around reliability and longevity combined with uncompromising accuracy," says Bryant.

Countapulse Controls offers a comprehensive range of sensing, measurement, counting, switching, monitoring and positioning instrumentation, with customer support provided through a round-the-clock technical advisory service hotline.

Has Woolies really lost its mojo?

INVESTORS made a rather dour pronouncement on prospects for Cape Town-based retailer Woolworths despite the company releasing sturdy interim results to end December 2015. At the time of writing Woolworths shares were well off the R106 high seen on the JSE in November last year.

Woolworths, however, posted sterling results with revenue increasing 17% to R35,5bn and pre-tax profit up 16,5% to R3,4bn. Directors also showed their confidence in the robustness of the business model by hiking the dividend a hefty 38% to 133c/share. It was also encouraging to see that the core Woolies offering in South Africa remained strong in the interim period.

CEO Ian Moir reported that clothing and general merchandise had a much improved half with operating profit increasing by almost 15%. He said the results were driven by a good performance from core womenswear and menswear categories and a strong improvement from kidswear. The Food division again delivered a strong performance with sales up 12% and operating profit up by almost 18%.

Moir said the supermarket strategy was proving successful – noting that Christmas sales were strong. He maintained that despite the tough trading conditions, the businesses continue to perform well ahead of the market.

"Through our positioning as a leading Southern Hemisphere retailer, we are able to leverage our scale and global sourcing strategy to deliver quality products at

Continued on P3

R7bn for new port facilities

TRANSNET National Ports Authority has allocated R7bn to build new port facilities to grow South Africa's ocean economy. Two hundred jobs have already been created in new port facilities. Over the last 12 months, existing ports were refurbished and maintained, the Economic Sectors, Employment and Infrastructure Development cluster said in a statement.

The cluster held a media briefing in Cape Town, which was chaired by Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti. The cluster said work to grow the ocean economy is gaining momentum.

"Through the public-private partnership to establish Saldanha Bay as an oil and gas hub, an investment of R9,2bn has been realised, which will be utilised over the next five years.

"With 14 licences issued for oil and gas exploration, drilling of two exploration wells for potential oil and gas finds will take place along the South African coast. The investment in gas infrastructure has commenced and will contribute to the energy security," said the cluster.

Work on the offshore supply base has already commenced, which will see Saldanha Bay attracting oil rigs for maintenance and repair. This will create secondary job opportunities for surrounding communities.

According to the cluster, the boat building sector has been revitalised, leading to 500 direct jobs and 3,000 indirect jobs.

"An amount of R353m over the next three years has already been unlocked in the ports of Durban and Cape Town for boatbuilding infrastructure through incentives provided by government. Further investments in boat building - catamaran production, workboat ferries for the navy, two offshore mining vessels and tugboats for the ports authority - and a fuel storage facility amount to approximately R3,6bn," the Economic Cluster said.

For the 2016/17 financial year, R80m has been allocated for the rehabilitation and maintenance of pro-

Continued on P7

Accenture: allow private sector to take part in utility projects

“I’D like to see an increased uptake of As-A-Service models as this allows utilities to leverage private capital to achieve service delivery outcomes by allowing private players to share in the risk and reward related to projects” – this is according to Melusi Maposa, Accenture’s Managing Director: Resources.

Accenture is a returning platinum sponsor at the upcoming African Utility Week, taking place from 17 to 19 May at the CTICC in Cape Town, gathering more than 6,000 power and water professionals.

Says Maposa, “Projects such as metering for both water and electricity, water network operations including infrastructure refurbishment (reservoirs, treatment works) all lend themselves to Private-Public-Partnership (PPP) contracting models. Although complex to execute, PPP engagements offer an incredible opportunity for utilities to jump-start service delivery.”

Maposa continues, the company is “very excited about the work we are doing with municipal utilities to drive better insight and efficiencies around capital project executions. We have helped drive increased expenditure, with very clear correlation to service delivery outcomes.”

He adds, “The lack of capacity, both financial and human, remains a challenge for most of our clients. However, better leveraging of analytics and As-A-Service delivery models – where service providers execute processes on behalf of customer – offer opportunities to plug skills and funding gaps whilst aligning with the objectives of utilities and their partners.”

According to Maposa, Accenture’s feedback from their participation at last year’s African Utility Week has been “extremely positive.”

“We have increased our level of participation and involvement with AUW and target audiences have picked up on this. In addition to being a platinum sponsor, provide speaking and conference moderators, we facilitated a very successful CEO Forum where we shared insights from our annual Digitally Enabled Grid survey. The insights gleaned from this global survey, which also included respondents from South Africa, was thought provoking and well received by the attendees.”

An impressive list of 250 technology and service providers to the energy and water sector on the continent will showcase their solutions at the 16th edition of the annual African Utility Week and Clean Power Africa conference and exhibition. Some 6,000 engineers, stakeholders and solution providers from around the globe will gather for the Cape Town event. The trade exhibition will be free when registering in advance and feature hands-on demonstrations and CPD-accredited technical workshops on the exhibition floor. The event will also feature technical site visits and the coveted industry awards gala dinner.

Has Woolies really lost its mojo?

Continued from P2

competitive prices for our customers.”

So what exactly spooked investors so badly?

Perhaps it was Moir’s admission that economic conditions were expected to become tougher, particularly in South Africa where interest rates are also likely to increase. But he did note that trading for the first six weeks in the second half of the financial year remained robust.

He expected the upper income consumer in both regions to remain relatively resilient. But there would be a concerted push to attract younger, more modern, black customers while maintaining the older, very loyal, more classic customer.

More specifically Moir expected clothing and general merchandise price movements to be in the 8% to 9% range for the rest of the year, while food price movement should be between 6% and 7%. And it can’t be all doom and gloom if Woolies anticipates full year growth in space to be 5% for clothing and general merchandise and almost 10% for the food segment.

More importantly, gross profit margins in the clothing section should be “broadly maintained” – although Moir said there would be some “price investment” in the food segment.

Over the years Woolies has shown an ability to adapt profitably to fickle trading patterns in the retail sector – which has been borne out in a series of strong profit performance in the last decade. In that regard, there will certainly be no resting on laurels in the second half and Woolies’ strategic focus will indeed be sharpened – especially on technology driven improvements.

Moir said the company would focus on building stronger and more profitable customer relationships, drive synergies and efficiencies as well as embed sustainability throughout the business. He believed customer insights and data will drive and inform all Woolies’ business decisions.

“This will shift us from being a customer centric business to a customer driven group.”

Moir explained that Woolies was intent on building a single view of its customers – enabling them to be recognised and rewarded in real time with delivery of personalised, seamless service across channels. This would require an effort to “digitally transform” stores by improving connectivity that would allow staff and customers to engage differently.

He concluded there would also be an increased focus on mobile commerce with investigations underway to establishing the potential for a single e-commerce platform across the company.

Western Cape shows largest regional y/y decline in hiring intentions

by Helmo Preuss

SOUTH African employers in the Manpower survey of 752 representative employers report conservative hiring plans for the second quarter time frame with 13% of employers forecasting an increase in staffing levels, 8% expecting a decrease and 77% anticipating no, resulting in a Net Employment Outlook of +5%.

This means hiring prospects are unchanged when compared with the first quarter 2016, but decline by six percentage points year-over-year (y/y) with the Western Cape the largest decliner with a nine percentage point drop. The survey in South Africa has been conducted since the fourth quarter 2006.

Staffing levels are forecast to grow in all five regions during the second quarter 2016. Employers in Kwazulu-Natal report the strongest hiring prospects with a Net Employment Outlook of +9%. Some payroll gains are anticipated in both Eastern Cape and Gauteng, where outlooks stand at +6% and +5%, respectively. Western Cape employers expect a modest hiring pace, reporting an outlook of +4%, while the outlook for Free State stands at +1%.

On a national sectoral y/y basis, Manpower reports that outlooks decline in six of the 10 sectors. The most notable declines of 17 and 14 percentage points are reported by employers in the agriculture sector and the transport, storage and communication sector, respectively.

Considerably weaker

Continued on P11

(Finally) taking stock in the Cape

Continued from P1

the city to "enhance its service to clients, build and strengthen relationships and provide accessible support to the market."

JSE Capital Markets director Donna Oosthuyse said Cape Town was a major centre for global and local institutional investors as well as listed companies.

"Being the second largest economic hub of South Africa, and the head office base of many institutional clients and an increasing number of member firms and brokers, an office in the city is a logical part of the JSE's client strategy."

The JSE will be represented by senior Capital Markets specialist Maryke Vreulink, and will be used for all JSE-related activities and events held in Cape Town. Although the JSE is one of the top 20 exchanges in the world in terms of market size and operates as an effective monopoly in South Africa, some sceptics are arguing that the sudden desire for a Cape presence is to head off efforts by entities intent on starting up rival stock exchanges.

Last year a number of financial services players sought stock exchange licences – some led by former JSE executives and respected players in the investment sector. These would include A2X, ZAR X and 4 Africa Exchange. Although these bourses would probably do their best not to compete directly with the JSE, any 'disruptive ploys' – like reduced fees and more user friendly trading platforms – might be perceived as a longer-term threat.

None of the alternative bourses have opened for business yet. But perhaps the JSE's office opening suggests that perhaps one of the newer stock exchanges might well be headquartered in the Mother City.

The elephant in the room

RIGHT off the bat, let me tell you that, when it comes to business, mobility tools are the way of the future. The boundless technological changes caused by the digitalization of social and economic life and its significant effect on traditional business processes has brought us to the brink of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Adopting new technology is critical for businesses to stay profitable nowadays and sales mobility is part of the best new business optimization systems. There are, however, still a few flaws with most big, off the shelf, mobility solutions being adopted by businesses in Africa. Arguably the most important flaw, being a lack in offline capability. These systems are often reduced to very limited functionality or even rendered useless in regions with weak or no internet connection. The problem, therefore, exists that the sales force cannot access valuable information in the field.

Africa still has vast areas plagued with little or no internet connection and therefore, what businesses must look for is a system with advanced offline capabilities to ensure that their sales force has access to the right information whilst operating in the field. These capabilities may include offline order capturing, offline location awareness, or offline access to client information and history, for example.

Field Office provides business optimisation intelligence and mobility tools, believing that managers and field workers alike should be free to focus on what really matters: growing their business and building meaningful relationships with their clients. Its flagship product, Honeybee, is a mobility solution that simplifies sales and business processes with functions such as order capturing, location awareness and time tracking.

Fabrinox supports local agricultural innovation

AGRICULTURE is one of the oldest human undertakings and has come a long way since stone tools and ox-powered machinery. Automation is the name of the game on the modern farm – and is on the increase – allowing farmers and agri-processors to standardise operations and utilise costly manpower in the most efficient ways. The ROI on this is best seen in the toughest years, when drought and even fires necessitate maximum efficiency in every step of the agricultural process.

In full view of the Stellenbosch and Boland mountains, Paarl-based Fabrinox is ideally placed to support agricultural equipment manufacturers with innovative solutions for stainless steel, mild steel and aluminium. This support includes batch manufacturing, bespoke project management and technical and manufacturing insights from professionals in the field, as well as a delivery service to its local customers.

The company offers customers a one-stop manufacturing solution with precision engineering services such as, cutting, bending, welding (including robot welding), surface finishes (polishing, bead blasting, spray painting), to name but a few.

Fabrinox operates a production area of around 5,000m² with an additional 4,300m² facility for large assemblies, packaging and distribution nearby – with a global workforce of almost 200 highly skilled personnel, specialising in sheet metal component manufacturing, sub-assemblies, under licence manufacturing and global installations, all within an ISO 9001 and ISO 3834 environment.

The Fabrinox team of project managers can assist clients from the design stages, giving design input and compiling the data pack, to manufacturing (including electrical control panels and installations,) installations and commissioning of equipment.

Andre Visser, Managing Director and co-founder of Fabrinox.

The company has aggressively grown its business in recent years, investing heavily into the equipment and the processes it can offer its clients, while ensuring its efficiency.

Fabrinox just finished installing a Trumpf LiftMaster 2040 to handle the material requirements for its Trumpf TruLaser 5040 Fiber L47 machine. The basic building blocks of the LiftMaster is the suction frame, made up of suction cups that transport the raw sheets, and rakes to clear the processed sheets.

"The LiftMaster takes over the strain of loading and unloading the machine, therefore speeding up production and increasing worker safety," says Ben Steenkamp, who has been a key part of the Fabrinox team since 1998.

At the end of last year, Retecon Machine Tools installed a new Trumpf TruBend 5230 S press brake (230 ton) in the Fabrinox stable. This fully CNC-controlled machine has a bending width of four meters and up to six CNC-controlled backstop axes.

Retecon also installed a Weber PT1350 DP6D deburring machine in December 2015. The Weber PT is a universal grinding machine of a new generation for deburring, rounding, descaling and surface grinding of both thin and thicker gauge materials.

"It gives us access to up to four grinding stations that allow for different machining applications and workpiece thickness of between 1.6 to 100mm."

In 2009 Fabrinox commissioned its first Motoman robotic welder. This robot is equipped with both MIG and TIG welding applications.

"We found it necessary to purchase the Motoman robotic welder to clear the bottlenecks we found forming in this area," explains Steenkamp.

The company also contracted First Cut to install a BLM Elect 80 tube bender in 2013. This fully CNC-programmable machine can bend up to 80mm OD by 2mm wall thickness and 73.03mm by 3.05mm wall thickness in stainless steel and mild steel tube. It operates in a push and pull bending sequence, with a long radius roll.

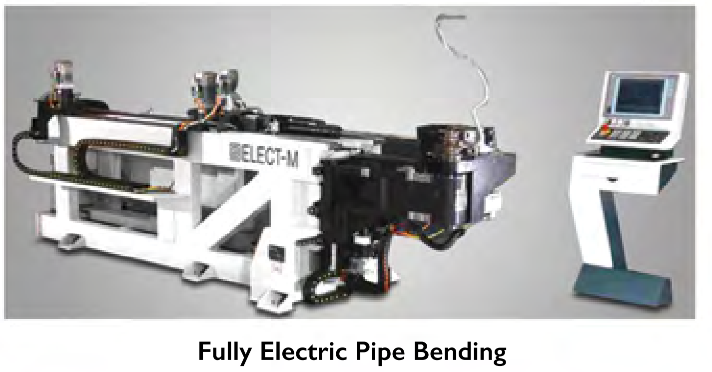
According to the company, its ACF Multiflex corner former machine is the first of its kind in the Western Cape. The machine uses a cold process to form corners and is significantly more cost effective for control cabinets. It eliminates the need for welding, grinding and finishing the corners of cabinet doors, panels and baking trays.

"The machine can form corners on various metals, including mild steel up to 4mm, stainless steel up to 3mm and aluminium up to 5mm."

"Nothing is new about the demands driving the bends in roll bending. Four roll plate bending rolls are largely considered the most versatile, precise and user-friendly plate rolls."

Fabrinox chose the two meter Faccin CNC 4HEL202 four roll model, supplied by Talmac Machine Tools. This model is ideal for heavier thicknesses and the challenges that the new metals and material with higher yield strengths pose today, and can form various shapes.

Fabrinox also operates a stainless steel bead-blasting booth that uses glass beads, which is customised for stainless steel and ensures the finish to be up to the standard and quality that Fabrinox both demand from itself, and promise its customers.



Tru grit?

THERE has been a most intriguing sideshow unfolding at iconic Cape Town fashion retailer Truworths. In early December the company issued an announcement that top rated French retailing expert Jean-Christophe Garbino had “decided to resign as an executive director of the company and as chief executive officer (designate.)” So far no official explanation has been given for Garbino’s decision to walk away from a plum job – a job that, by all accounts, he was very enthusiastic to take up. In any event, long serving CEO Michael Mark – a legend in fashion retailing circles – will now extend his tenure as boss of Truworths until at least the end of 2017.

The resignation of Garbino is not entirely surprising since a number of fashion industry wags had commented cynically on the prolonged stint the Frenchman endured as CEO designate. According to reports from last year’s AGM, Garbino was briefly introduced to shareholders, but played no role in the meeting (and apparently sat with the assembled shareholders and not at the table of top executives.)

In truth, there won’t initially be too much fuss about Mark remaining in the hot seat. Mark’s long-term track record is enviable … perhaps only matched in local retailing by Shoprite’s Whitey Basson. But there have been questions around whether Garbino’s mysterious resignation effectively compromises succession planning, and robs Truworths of a fresh perspective on its enlarged global operations.

Only time will tell whether a CEO with more than two decades of executive experience at the company will reward shareholders better than having an internationally renowned CEO overseeing the global growth of the company. Most Cape Town-based retailers – including Woolies and Pick n Pay – have seen regular changes to leadership. But it would be far fetched to claim that shareholder returns could be linked to whether companies sought enduring leadership or pursued regular changes in the guard.

In the meantime Truworths’ interim results to end December 27 are the only tangible evidence that can be gleaned in determining whether all is still well at the fashion retailer.

There is also the Truworth board’s confirmation that confirms that the group’s strategy of pursuing organic growth and acquisition opportunities will continue under the leadership of Mark.

In the interim period Truworths’ sales jumped 36% to R8,5bn with encouraging cash sales growth of 85% and credit sales growth of 16%. But if the retail sales reported by the recently acquired UK-based Office Retail Group Limited (Office,) Earthchild and Naartjie were excluded, then retail sales increased by 15% to R7,2bn with cash sales growth of 16% and credit sales growth of 15%.

Looking at comparable store retail sales for the period, the increase in sales was 10% (with product inflation averaging 9%.)

The comparable store sales figure is a key consideration since a net 46 stores were opened across all brands while the retail footprint was boosted by the above mentioned acquisitions (which added 224 stores.)

Still, the sheer scale of the new look Truworths organisation is staggering with 932 stores. However, it is important to note that the company’s gross margin decreased to 54,2% (2014: 55,3%) due to the acquisition of Office, which operates at a lower gross margin.

Mark, though, reassured that the gross margin was still within the current target range of 54% to 57% (set before the acquisition of

Continued on P7

R7bn for new port facilities

Continued from P2

claimed harbours in:

- Gansbaai
- Saldanha Bay
- Struisbaai
- Gordons Bay
- Lamberts Bay

Three new harbours will also be built in:

- Boegoebaai in the Northern Cape
- Port St Johns in Eastern Cape
- Hibberdene in KwaZulu-Natal

This will provide opportunities for local and rural economic development.

The aquaculture sector has unlocked investments of more than R400m across 10 aquaculture farms, which are already in production.

The community of Hamburg in the Eastern Cape has seen its first harvest of dusky kob (kabeljou) and the Siyazama Aquaculture Cooperative in Hamburg has sold its first harvest of dusky kob to the Cape Town Fish Market at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town.

The cluster said the expansion of aquaculture projects to inland and other coastal areas in support of SMMEs will create 3,200 jobs and contribute R500m to the gross domestic product (GDP) over the next year.

The first two bulk carrier vessels have been registered in Port Elizabeth, and a third tanker in Cape Town, providing opportunities for South African Cadets (trainees) boarding these vessels.

Tru grit?

Continued from P6

Office.) He said if Office was stripped out of the interim numbers then the gross margin was level at 55,3%. The enduring Mark's biggest challenge ahead is that the South African trading environment is expected to remain challenging for the rest of the year with further interest rates on the cards. He contended that Truworths was well-equipped to deal with environmental challenges.

He pointed out that Truworths had extensive experience in managing the risk of its mainstream 'better-end fashion.' through proven merchandise design and buying processes. He added that managing credit risk through ongoing application of strategies and best of breed sophisticated systems would ensure a healthy debtors book.

Happily for Mark, he could at least report that Truworths retail sales (excluding Office) for the first six weeks of trading in the second half of the financial year increased by around 17%.

GEA Heat Exchangers becomes Kelvion

GEA Heat Exchangers was purchased from GEA Group by Triton in April 2014. Triton is a private equity investment firm investing in medium-sized businesses in northern Europe, Italy and Spain.

All legal issues were finalised by the end of October 2014. Since then a branding project was rolled out and the old GEA Heat Exchangers Group was split into three autonomous groups one after the other:

1. DencoHappel (HVAC and filtration)
2. ENEXIO (wet cooling towers, dry cooling systems, ash handling systems, components for water treatment)
3. Kelvion (shell and tube heat exchangers, plate heat exchangers, finned-tube heat exchangers, modular cooling towers and refrigeration heat exchangers)

The biggest group, Kelvion, pays tribute to Lord Kelvin, a pioneer of thermodynamics. As a premium brand in heat exchangers, Kelvion addresses a customer group that demands reliability. Now, as before, Kelvion brings what it calls the best of thermal engineering technology to the market. The company will continue to provide the products that customers, from a varied range of industrial sectors all over the world, have learned to trust over the decades: plate heat exchangers, finned-tube heat exchangers, shell-and-tube heat exchangers, modular cooling towers and refrigeration heat exchangers.

Both the South African companies which formed part of GEA Heat Exchangers have now become part of Kelvion. GEA Aircooled Systems (Pty) Ltd has been renamed to Kelvion Thermal Solutions (Pty) Ltd. GEA Nilenca (Pty) Ltd has been renamed to Kelvion Services (Pty) Ltd.

Cape Town shipbuilder secures significant build project for Ivory Coast

CAPE Town shipbuilder, Nautic Africa, a Paramount Group company, has signed a significant agreement with Citrans to build the first ferries in a series of vessels for the Ivory Coast worth R347m. The deal forms part of a Presidential infrastructure project that aims to reduce urban congestion in Abidjan.

Phase one of the project, which will deliver 18 vessels by September 2016, highlights Nautic's ability to design and build to the specific requirements of the international market. A focus on vessel stability, comfort and competitive costing has resulted in a twin-hulled design concept for the newbuilds.

Due to operate in shallow inland waters, the 27m long ferries are designed with a maximum water draft of just 1m and air draft of 4m. The catamaran-styled vessel design is guided by the International Association of Classification Societies' (IACS) rules to keep passengers safe and comfortable.

With operating speeds of up to 12 knots, the ferries will be fitted with various seating arrangements in 200-seater and 240-seater versions. Configurations for economy as well as business class seating will see some of the vessels catering either for business or economy class completely or for a varying percentage of both.

Highlighting the importance of safety in vessels focused on passenger transport, Nautic confirms that each vessel is to be delivered with life saving safety equipment as well as a variety of alarms and sensors. Passenger comfort is ensured with toilets and air conditioning throughout the vessels. In addition, four boarding ramps provide quick and efficient access onto and off the vessel.

The ferries will benefit from Nautic's commitment to building to the highest specifications using the latest technology for an end product that is efficient and robust to ensure an extended service life.

Nautic Africa's CEO, James Fisher, believes that the company's focus on vessel life cycle will be an advantage to the long-term partnership between themselves and transport provider in Cote d'Ivoire, Citrans.

Powered by fuel-efficient twin Volvo Penta D5 propulsion systems, the ferries will deliver operational effectiveness, reliability and cost efficiency.

"This is a critically important project for Abidjan that will contribute positively to the economic and social success in Cote d'Ivoire," says Jacques Brummer, CEO of Southern Power Products, a Nautic Africa Group company.

Highlighting an agreement with the in-country Volvo Penta distributor to provide five-year maintenance and support infrastructure, he says, "Our agreement with SMT in Cote d'Ivoire will ensure maximum efficiency and uptime of the ferry fleet."

Committed to delivering a standard and uniform platform across the fleet of vessels due for delivery over a 21-month period, Nautic will ramp up three production lines to meet CITRANS's required delivery schedules. The full scope of the final project is set to deliver between 42 and 50 vessels by 2020.

More industrial parks on the cards

GOVERNMENT has announced plans to upscale the revitalisation of local industrial parks to 20 locations.

Chairing a media briefing of the Economic Sectors, Employment and Infrastructure Development cluster, Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti said the roll out of the industrial parks will be a further boost to sectors such as clothing, textiles, footwear and agro-processing, which have been showing signs of recovery in recent months.

The announcement forms part of government's progress and programme of action in implementing the Nine Point Plan.

"Going forward, we will upscale the revitalisation of local industrial parks from four to 20 locations. All these industrial parks are located in former homelands or are adjacent to large townships," the Minister said.

He said from inception of the Clothing and Textiles Competitiveness Programme in 2010 and March 2015, a total of R3,7bn was approved to support private sector investment.

The programme has helped to save 68,000 jobs as well as in creating 6,900 new jobs. Minister Nkwinti said 22 new factories in the leather and footwear sector have been opened.

The sector has been successfully stabilised and is steadily regaining domestic market share and is growing in terms of exports.

Nkwinti said the rolling out of more industrial parks is good news for township businesses.

"This intervention will unlock economic activities and link small township businesses into established domestic and global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) supply chains.

"It will also focus particularly on labour intensive sectors such as clothing, textiles, footwear and agro-processing," he said.

SA attracting investment in automotive sector

The Minister said, meanwhile, that government's commitment to reindustrialise the economy was bearing fruit and that South Africa has provided policy certainty time and again by timeously reviewing the Automotive Production Development Programme.

He said the success of the programme was demonstrated by over R25bn in private sector investment, which has been leveraged over the last five years.

"Investments of this scale are approved only after rigorous feasibility studies by private sector investors and these investments need to be profitable, not just in the short-term but critically in the medium- and long-term.

"These partnerships are with the private sector, the IDC [Industrial Development Corporation] and state-owned entities," Nkwinti said.

In the second half of 2015, major new investments were announced by Beijing Auto Works amounting to R12bn, BMW to the tune of R6bn and Volkswagen amounting to R4.5bn.

He said this showed that global multinationals had confidence in the South African economy and its advanced industrial capabilities.

Nkwinti said government has developed strong partnerships with the private sector in renewable energy generation.

These partnerships have unlocked private sector investment in excess of R194bn.

"Our insistence on local content within the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme (REIPPP) has ensured that contracts of over R21bn have been allocated to local suppliers.

"A further R65bn is expected to be contracted from local suppliers in the next two years."

In order to strengthen South Africa's potential in rail manufacturing, the African Union has designated the country as the rail production hub for the continent.

The Department of Trade and Industry has partnered with Grindrod for the production of locomotives with 80% local content.

Goscor Lift Truck Company and Bobcat combine their strengths in Mpumalanga and surrounds

GOSCOR Lift Truck Company (GLTC) and Bobcat have combined their collective strengths under one roof with the establishment of a new fully equipped office and workshop in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, improving service levels and bringing products, parts and services closer to their customers.

Nelspruit is the closest business town serving this vast region and this strategic position presented the perfect location from which both customer-centric companies can meet the requirements of their large and widely spread customer base as well as address current and expected growth in the region. The facility opened its doors on 1st October 2015 and is under the capable management of Japie Maritz supported by six well-trained staff members. Tinus Gibson and Jean Botha have relocated to Nelspruit to head up sales for GLTC and Bobcat respectively.

Goscor Lift Truck Company and Bobcat have combined their collective strengths under one roof and establish a new fully equipped office and workshop in Nelspruit.

GLTC, part of the Goscor Group of Companies and a specialist in forklift and warehousing solutions, determined that most materials handling companies service their customers in these outlying regions from Johannesburg.

"As a service-driven company, we seized this unmistakable need in the market for localised services that come with a host of value adds for our customers," explains Gibson. "Through the efficient supply of products and parts, backed by solid after-sales service from our new Nelspruit hub, we are able to improve our service levels to our current customers who are spread right up to the borders of Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Mozambique. We are also now in the position to service all our equipment, from Nelspruit to Polokwane with technician's based in both towns."

Gibson adds that, with a response time of between two to four hours, they are confident of growing market share in the surrounding areas. "We are perfectly positioned to take advantage of the massive opportunities presented by the mining and agricultural industries in the area."

Botha affirms that in addition to a broadened footprint across the region, this depot also provides Bobcat, a market leader in compact equipment, with a firm foothold in the Lowveld area of Mpumalanga, across a large part of Limpopo and into Mozambique.

The spacious 298m² depot comprises a 250m² yard and workshop and presents ample room for stocking a comprehensive range of Bobcat machines including skid steer loaders, track loaders, mini excavators and telehandlers as well as a variety of attachments.

"We also offer customers the larger excavating equipment supplied by Sany, which gives us the edge in competing in a wider segment within the earth moving market," adds Botha.

The GLTC product portfolio includes new sales of electric and diesel forklifts, three- and four-wheeled counter balanced trucks, pallet trucks and stackers as well as used equipment.

Free fleet evaluations and site surveys also form part of the GLTC's service offering.

"A forklift is only as good as its back-up service and that is why rapid service to customers in remote locations is critical," states Gibson.

The depot also stocks all parts and is equipped to provide short-term rental services for both companies.

According to Gibson and Botha, the Nelspruit facility is affirmation of the companies' ongoing commitment to meeting their customers' requirements and to continue improving service levels.

"Customers in this region are now able to fully benefit from our comprehensive materials handling solutions that comprise a wide range of new and used equipment, rental machines, fleet packages, parts, spares, and equipment maintenance."

From plastic bag to plastic plank

ABOUT 120,000 household plastic packaging containers a month are now being diverted from going into landfill. These are mainly bottles and other packaging materials made from HDPE, PP and LL/LDPE plastic types, and which are now thankfully ending their lives as a garden bench or an outdoor table, as a chair or waste-bin and even as grandstand seating in schools and sports clubs or decking and walkways, rather than as litter or to be buried in the earth.

"At NewLife Plastics, we pride ourselves in manufacturing eco-friendly products such as tavern tables and benches for gardens, schools, clubs or staff rest areas, picket fencing, decking and walkways, pallets, planks, poles, etc. from **100% recycled packaging**. Materials used are of the highest quality ensuring our products are long-lasting and **maintenance-free**. We only use plastic packaging waste and do not use any fillers such as sawdust and wood which means our product will last well over 60 years – a lifetime," says the company.

Buying cheap products from wood is not always a saving; wood needs regular maintenance and will eventually need to be replaced. New Life Plastics products are maintenance free and according to the company will not rot or decay.

"Plastic is durable and long lasting, stronger and denser than wood as well as being suitable in HACCP areas with no moisture absorption, which means no bacterial grown as well as being impervious to corrosive chemicals."

In simple terms – the company is using your plastic shopping bags, bottle caps, milk bottles, cosmetic tubes, jars, etc. to recycle up into a product that will last a forever.

"Not only are you doing something constructive for the environment, you are investing in products that look as good as traditional wooden products, but without the maintenance."

"More importantly, by purchasing our products, you are mitigating your personal or company's consumption of plastic packaging waste."

Western Cape Funding Fair 2016 application deadline extended

APPLICANTS who wish to pitch their businesses for funding at the Western Cape Funding Fair, in partnership with Deloitte and the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT,) have until 24 March 2016 to apply. Now in its second year, the project application date for the Fair has been extended for a further three weeks following a significant interest in the initiative from Western Cape businesses.

The initiative aims to connect businesses that require funding of between R2m and R20m, as well as R20m plus, with suitable investors, and educate applicants on best practices to follow to turn ideas into bankable business plans. The Western Cape Funding Fair will be held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre on 25 May 2016 and shortlisted applicants will be announced on 19 April 2016.

Deloitte's Marius Alberts and Western Cape Minister of Economic opportunities, Alan Winde.

"Due diligence is often overlooked by businesses that require funding. However, this is a vital step in the application process. As such, the Western Cape Funding Fair's shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an exclusive, free workshop on 4 May 2016, hosted by Deloitte and DEDAT in conjunction with the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (GSB) and Knife Capital, to learn how to get their business funding-ready," says Marius Alberts, Deloitte Western Cape leader.

The workshop will contain both theoretical and practical learning in investment selection, due diligence, intellectual property protection, valuation principles and legal closing. Applicants will learn to appreciate the scaling opportunity presented by early-stage, high-growth ventures and the processes and control mechanisms required to realise the potential of their businesses. They will also gain access to various players in the Southern African entrepreneurial eco-system and obtain a number of investment- and draft legal templates.

"The knowledge gained from the workshop will equip attending applicants to propel their businesses forward, even well after the conclusion of the 2016 Western Cape Funding Fair," says Alberts.

Premier of the Western Cape, Helen Zille, recently emphasised local government's commitment to creating an enabling environment for growing businesses in her State of the Province address by mentioning that the province has invested over R50m in 300 enterprises in the last three years.

Similarly, South Africa's Finance Minister also emphasised the national agenda of supporting small business development in the Budget speech, recently delivered in February, reprioritising R475m to the Department of Small Business Development for assistance to small and medium enterprises.

Alan Winde, Minister of Economic Opportunities says, "The creation of opportunities for jobs and growth is our number one goal in this province. We know that entrepreneurs are important job creators, employing around 500,000 people in the Western Cape. Our strategy is to create an enabling environment that is supportive of businesses and entrepreneurs. This is why we have prioritised initiatives such as red tape reduction and securing a reliable and affordable energy supply.

"Funding remains another key issue for small businesses. To this end, we support the Western Cape Funding Fair, a unique private and public partnership that creates opportunities for businesses to gain pitching skills and access to potential funders."

The Western Cape Funding Fair will also consist of a topical speaker programme and exhibit, open for free to the public.

Western Cape shows largest regional y/y decline in hiring intentions

Continued from P4

hiring prospects are also reported by employers in the manufacturing sector, with a decline of 13 percentage points, and in the wholesale and retail trade sector, where the outlook is 11 percentage points weaker. Elsewhere, hiring prospects improve in three sectors. A considerable improvement of 12 percentage points is reported for the mining and quarrying sector while the restaurants and hotels sector outlook is 5 percentage points stronger.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is conducted quarterly to measure employers' intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforces during the next quarter. Manpower's comprehensive forecast of employer hiring plans has been running for more than 50 years and is one of the most trusted surveys of employment activity in the world.

For the global second quarter 2016 survey, Manpower interviewed over 58,000 employers across 42 countries and territories. This showed that job gains are expected in 39 of the 42 countries, with the three exceptions being France, Italy and Brazil. However, despite little indication of labour market contraction, hiring intentions in most countries and territories continue to remain modest. In fact, some key labour markets, such as Germany, France and Italy, are clearly struggling to gain traction amid the current economic uncertainty. Faced with the slowdown in China and ongoing turmoil in commodity markets, most employers across the globe appear to be taking the measured approach of adding staff only when needed.

Fluke's TiX super-large LCD touchscreen takes IR forward

The TiX560 and TiX520 feature a 14.5cm responsive LCD touchscreen

TiX560 and TiX520 Infrared Cameras offer a full 180° articulating lens and premium in-field viewing with the only 14,5cm responsive LCD touchscreen in its class

Sometimes the most critical infrared images needed are those that are almost impossible to take. With a full 180° articulating lens and 14,5cm touchscreen, the new Fluke TiX560 and TiX520 infrared cameras allow thermographers to easily navigate over, under and around objects to preview and capture images with ease. The cameras are ideal for predictive maintenance and utility applications where flexibility and higher resolution are essential to the success of the task.

The TiX560 and TiX520 feature a 14,5cm responsive LCD touchscreen — the largest in its class with 150% more viewing area compared to a 9cm screen. The large screen enables thermographers to quickly identify issues while still in the field as well as easily edit images directly on the camera – eliminating time in the office; time better spent solving the problem.

SuperResolution mode boosts resolution four times so the normal 320 x 240 (76,800 pixel) resolution of the images captured increases, to 640 x 480 (307,200 pixels) revealing even greater detail to better identify problems that might have been missed with lower resolution cameras. Optional telephoto and wide-angle lenses add versatility to meet a wide variety of applications.

Out of focus images may produce inaccurate temperature measurements that can be off by as much as 20°, making it easy to miss potential problems.

To ensure consistently in-focus images, the cameras feature LaserSharp Auto Focus, exclusive to Fluke, which uses a built-in laser distance meter to pinpoint the target, and accurately calculate and display the distance.

The cameras also feature Fluke IR-Fusion technology with Picture-in-Picture, full visible light, and AutoBlend modes for easier identification and reporting of problems. On-board advanced analytics allow users to adjust or enhance images right on the camera without additional software. Also included is Fluke SmartView software, which provides a suite of advanced tools to view, optimize, annotate, and analyse infrared images, and generate fully customizable professional reports.

Steinhoff makes waves with European bid (again)

STELLENBOSCH-based Steinhoff International has made a GB£662m bid for electrical retailer Darty, the second stealth play in as many weeks, cementing its reputation in the European market as a "notably disruptive figure" in would be corporate mergers. The offer – made by Steinhoff's Conforama – puts a lower competing share and cash offer from Groupe Fnac on the line, despite the agreement being in place since November 2015.

This move comes just two weeks after Steinhoff's sneaky GB£1.4bn offer to buy the UK's Home Retail Group trumped UK-retailer Sainsbury's GB£1.3bn offer for same.

Conforama's 125p per share, all-cash offer saw the Darty shares rocket 13% in intraday trade, seeing shares selling as high as 129p.

Darty boasts more than 400 stores, more than half of which are in France. The group also operates online retail platforms such as Mistergooddeal.com.

Business Day reports that Steinhoff may have to rely on its reputation for being an opportunistic and astute dealmaker to win over those who do not see the rationale of a furniture retailer buying an electrical goods retailer.

It goes on to quote Andreas Riemann, analyst with Commerzbank who said he could not see the immediate rationale behind the bid for Darty, but conceded that the group had a good track record with acquisitions.

"Operating margins did not suffer from acquisitions in the past," Riemann said.

Mark Hodgson, an analyst at Avior, said Steinhoff's size was an advantage as it was bigger than both Sainsbury's and Groupe Fnac. At a market value of EUR20,4bn, it is around four times the market value of Sainsbury's, and 20 times that of Fnac.

So why wait until now to make it's move on both Darty and the earlier Home Retail Group deals?

The UK's Telegraph reports that Steinhoff's dual Johannesburg-Frankfurt stock exchange listing was finally agreed in December – the culmination of four year's work. No small feat in such a volatile market. This listing gives Steinhoff exposure to more European opportunities.

However, with the Frankfurt listing secured, Steinhoff's French subsidiary Conforama was given the all-clear by the board to ramp up preparatory work on a Darty bid.

The Telegraph states that with EUR2,8bn of cash sitting on its balance sheet Steinhoff can easily afford to buy both Argos and Darty and is unlikely to stop there.

Concealed connection box for modern bathroom design

PIPING and drainage installations under a washbasin are not the most attractive features of the modern bathroom – that is until now, as award winning, concealed cisterns, drainage, piping and fittings specialists Viega has developed a concealed connection box where all valves, pipes and drainage disappear completely into the wall but are easily accessible through a chrome-plated cover panel.

Viega's universal concealed connection box comprises a compact plastic housing, which is ready for hot and cold drinking water connections and drainage pipes in DN 40 or DN 50 can be connected to the box. The installation kit includes corner valves, a chrome-plated drainage elbow and the connections needed for the washbasin fitting.

The concealed connection box can be connected directly to the supply and disposal pipes. Connections to the tap fittings and the drain from the washbasin complete the installation.

A chrome-plated cover is simply positioned over the drainage elbow covering the entire installation.

Flexibility is maintained

The clever design of the connection box allows the fitter flexibility in installation.

The concealed connection box can be shortened in depth to fit the wall structure during the preliminary works and aligned to the height of the washbasin.

After the detailed assembly, the washbasin drain has a vertical tolerance of 20mm.

The installation of electronic fittings is also possible due to a separate cable inlet.

Where digital construction connects the industry

IN association with the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) Africa the endorsing partner to Construction IT Summit and Expo, the digital construction summit is looking to connect you with top Construction IT professionals and industry experts at the Construction IT Summit and Expo taking place at the Gallagher Convention Centre on 10 to 11 May 2016.

Delegates will be presented with the Next-generation information technology control systems

Delegates will be presented with the Next-generation information technology control systems and new approaches to the deployment of BIM solutions in construction.

"We have created this summit for you to take advantage of the market opportunities within the construction IT industry."

This annual event will be the first summit to showcase an effective environment for enhancing and promoting information technology business solutions and activities.

Co-located with the prestigious African Construction Expo / Totally Concrete Expo you can start your travel towards understanding construction solutions that fit your business.

Join us in understanding Building Information Modelling and the opportunities related to the efficiencies, processes and protocols that can match your business requirements in an increasingly digital construction environment.

In addition to the IT Summit in May, the BIM conference to be held in Sandton in mid-March will focus on a collection of software vendors and industry practitioners demonstrating how their tools, software and knowledge can be combined to benefit users outside of the design applications.

Reasons to participate:

- A uniquely curated one day summit program focused on case studies and software solutions for the industry
- Access to information you won't find anywhere else: this is the only event of its kind in Africa - where international thought leaders and professionals come together in the same place at the same time to discuss technology
- You can tap into the collective wisdom of international and local delegates, speakers and experts
- Exclusive access to BIM collaboration tools and resources: you can connect with other executives before, during and after the conference. You will receive a networking list with all participant details and electronic access to all content
- Meet selected sponsors and partners: the conference hosts leading technology and service providers so we can review all the best and solutions tools in one place.

Key international speakers include:

- Dr Eitan Karol, CEO, Louis Karol Architects
- Casey Rutland, Associate Director, Arup Associates, United Kingdom
- Nathan Doughty, COO, Asite, United Kingdom
- Krista Lambert , Director, Engineering and Construction Strategy, Oracle Primavera, United States

Conference facts and figures:

- Nine sessions and 16 industry expert speakers over one day
- Exceptional sessions by leading experts and thought leaders on Building Information Modelling, Risk Management and Contract Management, digital construction solutions
- Accreditation of CPD HOURS from ASAQS and CIOB
- 15 hours of industry discussions in the IT Lounge area of the expo floor

Insulated traffic door makes an impact

The Apex SR 9000 insulated impact traffic door has gained popularity as a door that will give years of dependable service and still look good.

THE Apex SR 9000 insulated impact traffic door has gained popularity as a door that will give years of dependable service and still look good. This fully gasketed, heavy duty, impact swing door is locally manufactured to customers' specific requirements. Lightweight, but robust, the Apex SR 9000 door is engineered to withstand heavy traffic and impact, while maintaining an attractive appearance with minimal maintenance needed, according to the company.

The door's patented "honeycomb" framework and flexible urethane foam insulation ensures optimum stability. Superior soundproofing qualities are achieved by injecting high density non-CFRC urethane core into the hollow shell of the door. High bumpers are also fitted to the door panel to further absorb impact from manridden vehicles and carts. This also reduces stress on hardware and mount assemblies.

The perimeter edges on the door panels are bull nosed with a minimum radius of 8mm preventing excessive wear on the edges. The seal complements the insulated core reducing energy flow between environments, another plus factor on this locally made door.

The rugged 3mm ABS outer facing of the Apex SR 9000 door is available in a variety of colours and it is impervious to moisture, acid, petroleum products, salt solutions, animal fats and insects. It retains its physical properties in temperatures as low as minus 40°C and it will not chip dent, peel, pit or corrode.

All Apex Strip Curtains and Doors products are manufactured in accordance with international standards using materials that comply with stringent hygiene and safety criteria.

Integration for end of line optimisation

THE global FMCG sector is constantly under enormous pressure. Regulators and consumers demand full product traceability across the supply chain, while retailers insist on quality stock on demand at profitable prices. For producers and manufacturers, the focus is on ensuring that production environments are lean and highly efficient.

Two of the underpinning principles of lean manufacturing – a company's ability to produce more value through less work – include standardisation and flow. Standardisation removes the possibility of errors while flow ensures speed and optimised output.

Where there's human involvement on a production line, there's always a possibility of mistakes being made. Even if production lines boast automated machinery, many manufacturers rely on operators to manually input important data into the system.

Negating the opportunity for human error, as well as reducing packaging costs, optimising product coding activities, and meeting industry regulatory requirements, can be ensured by integrating machinery networks.

Besides its vast portfolio of coders that are exclusively distributed by Pyrotec PackMark in South Africa, Markem-Imaje also supplies CoLOS software applications that are engineered to complement its coding equipment.

"CoLOS software allows our customers to integrate equipment networks throughout the production line into one central system. By standardising data input, human error is reduced. This saves time, improves production flow, and drastically reduces long-term costs," says Brandon Pearce, Pyrotec PackMark's General Manager.

"CoLOS consists of a number of software options to meet every end-of-line production requirement. These include options for packaging coding, message design, the management of complex labels and codes, and the ability to operate multiple printers from one platform," adds Pearce.

What's more, CoLOS provides real-time data about production processes by linking production plans to individual printers on the line. It also monitors the productivity and efficiency of each machine, and automates the selection of data for printing, reducing the need for human intervention. In turn, this reduces the risk of operator errors and provides accurate performance reports.

There are many ways to create an efficient production line and operate a lean manufacturing environment. This seamless integration system from CoLOS is an ideal option for diverse industries and it supports all production control systems.

Seven Canon designs win iF Design Awards

Canon's XC10 4K camcorder

CANON announced that seven Canon designs were recognised by iF International Forum Design GmbH and received prestigious 2016 iF Design Awards. Notably, Canon's XC10 4K camcorder was selected for the iF Gold Product Design Award 2016, the highest honour in the product category.

iF Design Awards went to the EOS 5DS / EOS 5DS R digital SLR cameras, the EF 11-24mm f/4L USM ultra wide-angle zoom lens, the EOS M3 Compact System Camera, the PowerShot G3 X superzoom camera, the PIXMA MX490 Series inkjet printer and the i-SENSYS MF220/210 Series laser multifunction printers.

Established in 1953, the iF Design Awards are recognised as one of the most respected awards within the field of design. This year, 5,295 entries from 53 countries and regions were judged by internationally renowned design experts across seven categories. These included product, packaging, communication, interior architecture, architecture, service design and professional concept.

This year marks Canon's 22nd consecutive year of winning iF Design Awards. Encouraged by the recognition of the company's design excellence, Canon will continue striving to realise products that combine the highest levels of performance and design.

Harvest time is upon you

"WE have recently seen an uptick of interest in our products that support agricultural type business," says John Valentine, Director at Real Telematics. "It started with farmers and affiliated industry taking our Real FMX forklift management system, and then asking if it could be adapted to tractors, skidsteers and other machinery. We found that not only is it adaptable, but it's also very effective and a lot cheaper than traditional systems associated with those machines types. Primarily because Real FMX is already modular, we did not have to do any costly developments because Real FMX already had these features in play," says Valentine.

"In simple terms, the farmer chooses the features he wants and that's all he pays for. However, there's nothing to stop him upgrading with other features later on - plug and play. He can go from a standalone unit with only mechanical protection to the full scale product that gives reporting, alerts, mechanical, electrical and other protection as well as data analytics and mapping."

> "The farmer chooses the features he wants and that's all he pays for..."

"There's a lot of mis-information that circulates about GPS and how to use it, often repeated by sales people trying to make quick Commission and walk away. Unfortunately this means that the customer often ends up with a product he did not ask for and does not do what he needs," says Valentine. "We prefer a different approach. Rather than fit and forget, we want an ongoing relationship with our customers and prefer to recommend products that fit the application best, rather than what we can sell. For instance, although GPS is a very effective outdoor management tool, it is not always as effective indoors and can cause inaccurate reporting depending on the nature of the device. This is why we question our customers thoroughly on their needs before making recommendations. GPS is used predominantly for positioning and zoning, GPRS (cellular) is used predominantly to transfer data information. At Real Telematics, we use both technologies to their particular strengths i.e. with forklifts the vast majority of use takes place indoors making GPRS more suitable, but forklifts operating outdoors and/or tractors, for instance, find GPS very useful," comments Valentine.

"We also found that farmers really like the fact they could see their forklift and tractor operation in a single view, and that engine protection (oil and water monitoring) as well as other features could be applied to their tractors as well as their forklifts. This protects the machines from damage, but also ensures that the drivers do the checks as they are supposed to do. Often this machinery is worth

Continued on P16

Allied Distributors specialists in closing, marking and coding

ALLIED Distributors is a service orientated business whose mission is to assist the customer in finding the best option for their end of line needs.

The management has more than 100 years' experience in the coding, marking, stapling and strapping field.

It stocks a wide range of on-line contact and non-contact coders with accessories. Allied Distributors are the agents for Tiflex range of Coders, Foenix range of ink jet printers, as well as the B.V. Korthofah range of hot foil printers and hot coders.

Diagraph MSP, a leader in stencilling equipment is also represented by Allied Distributors. The company likes to keep a range of specialised inks for marking all surfaces for hand and automated lines.

In addition to the marking equipment, the company stocks a wide range for carton stapling machines for many different applications.

It stocks the Josef Kihlberg range of staplers.

"The range of cartron staplers are unmatched in the country and we build machines to suit a particular application if necessary, as well as staples. We carry a full range of spares for the machines," says Allied Distributors.

Allied Distributors is a service driven company where we pride ourselves on attending to your personally and assisting Companies wherever possible. We are also represented in Durban.

Yieldpro yields 25% in fuel savings from same Deutz-Fahr

SWITCHING from a competitor OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) to Same Deutz-Fahr (SDF) tractors supplied by Eqstra Industrial Equipment ("EIE") has proved to be a highly successful commercial decision for South African contract farmer Yieldpro.

"As diesel consumption is the highest cost item, the exceptional fuel efficiency of the SDF tractors has meant huge savings for our clients," says Yieldpro owner, Christo van Niekerk, who purchased ten SDF tractors from EIE at the beginning of 2015. "We brought fuel consumption down by a massive 25% in just one season, working more than 2,000 ha of silage."

"Initially, I was slightly sceptical about the extent of the reduced fuel consumption promised to me by EIE, but I have been so impressed by these tractors, that I can only urge other farmers to 'try it, you won't believe it,'" laughs Christo.

EIE supplied Yieldpro with the Same Explorer 90 and 100 models and Same Laser 130 and 150 models on a rent basis. A further, recent purchase covered four ground preparation disc attachments for the tractors, sourced by EIE from an OEM.

Started just seven years ago by husband and wife team, Christo and Michelle van Niekerk, Yieldpro has seen phenomenal success in contract farming in South Africa, increasing its client base simply through word of mouth about their excellent service delivery. Contracts range from silage for the integrated beef business, Beef Master, through to land preparation and harvesting for the giant fertiliser company, Omnia and contract ripping for the Celtic Farm Village in Rietvlei, Gauteng. Here, Yieldpro is providing contract ripping to assist Farm Manager Struan Scott convert the farm to no till farming.

With his roots deep in the soil, having come from a farming family, Christo knows the importance of value for money to farmers.

"Besides the low fuel consumption, the SDF tractors are very affordable, and EIE's financing flexibility meant that I could finance these tractors off balance sheet, directing my capital outlay elsewhere to grow my business," says Christo.

"SDF machines are also tough, as Yieldpro has proved again and again, working those six to seven days a week, 24 hours a day, with just one minor breakdown. EIE's technical support and service provided to me has been amongst the best in the field."

Yieldpro owner Christo van Wyk (right) with Celtic Farm Village Manager, Struan Scott and SDF tractors supplied by EIE.

Christo has a team of 20 permanent and contract staff.

"While my workers were initially a bit suspicious when I switched to SDF tractors, they soon found out that these low spec machines are very operator friendly and suited to South African conditions, handling the different agricultural environments with ease.

"SDF tractors fully deserve to be a Best-in-Class EIE brand," concludes Christo.

According to Yolandy Cornelius, Eqstra Agri's Operations Manager, "As a result of SDF's ongoing investment in technology, SDF tractors offer advanced features, including excellent selection of gear ratios, a three point pick up, and an all-wheel and self-adjusting braking system, with oil-bath discs and hydrostatic control, for superior passive and active safety." The electronic fuel management ensures the correct quantity of fuel is delivered at all times in relation to engine power demands and load, thereby optimising consumption.

With the addition of the recently launched Explorer Special to its range, EIE markets Explorer tractors from 85hp to 110hp, with two and four wheel drive versions available for most models. The four wheel drive Same Laser is built to cater for a wide variety of different needs and is particularly suitable for medium-sized farming. EIE markets Same Laser tractors from 110hp to 170hp, with or without a cab.

EIE is the licensed distributor for SDF in Southern Africa, supplying the agricultural industry with a comprehensive range of the Deutz-Fahr and Same tractors. All components are manufactured and assembled by Same Deutz-Fahr, giving the company complete control over quality assurance.

Wine grape harvest 2016 nearing its end

MORE than half the 2016 South African wine grape harvest is already in tanks or barrels, after what will be remembered as one of the hottest, driest seasons in the past decade.

The 2016 harvest is significantly smaller than the past three years, which were characterised by record harvests. While regions such as Stellenbosch and Swartland are nearing the end of their harvest season, there are still quite a lot of wine grapes to be harvested particularly in Worcester and Klein Karoo.

According to the head of VinPro's viticultural consultation service, Francois Viljoen, this vintage has tested winemakers' skills. "In general, the acidity and alcohol levels were quite low and winemakers need to work smart to obtain good quality wines. However, smaller berries that resulted from the dry conditions could lead to concentrated flavours, while low alcohol wines will be received well by the market," explains Viljoen.

He emphasises that regions where the grapes had already been harvested will benefit from rainfall in the next few months – especially restoring water resources for the 2017 season.

The PPECB supports the fruitful Western Cape

THE Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) is South Africa's official export certification agency for the perishable produce industry. With a national footprint, the PPECB has 13 regional offices across South Africa, seven of which are in the Western Cape.

The Western Cape is the main production region for deciduous fruit intended for export and as such the PPECB has almost 100 permanent inspectors across the province. In addition, relief duty staff from other provinces are sent to the region during packing season which can bring the number of inspectors in the province up to 300.

The main product types inspected in the Western Cape include pome fruit; comprised of apples and pears; grapes, citrus and stone fruit, comprised of peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots and a small amount of nectacots.

Currently almost 90% of all pome fruit intended for export is produced in the Western Cape with over 37 million cartons inspected by the PPECB in the 2014/2015 year. Of these over 80% are from the Elgin/Grabouw and Ceres growing regions. Currently apples are primarily exported to the United Kingdom (UK), Far East and Africa while 60% of pears are destined for the European Union (EU.)

Second to pome for the province is grapes with 63% of all grapes intended for export being inspected in the Western Cape. The majority of these, over 90%, are produced in the Berg River and Klein Karoo regions, the majority of which are intended for the EU and the UK.

Although only 20% of South Africa's export citrus is produced within the Western Cape, the PPECB still inspected over 20 million cartons in the province in the 2014/2015 year, with Citrusdal being the main production region. The majority of these were exported to the EU.

Just under 17 million cartons of stone fruit were inspected by the PPECB in the Western Cape in the 2014/2015 year, which, although less than the other main product varieties, accounts for 92% of stone fruit nationally. The majority of Western Cape stone fruit is exported to the EU, UK and Middle East.

Lismore Estate wines in the spotlight internationally

LISMORE Estate wines from Greyton, South Africa, have achieved considerable success internationally in recent reports and commendations from Neal Martin in Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Decanter Magazine and Jancis Robinson of the Financial Times.

Samantha O'Keefe's "fabulous" 2014 Syrah is the only SA red to achieve 'Top 50' status in Robert Parker's Top 50 Picks of 2015.

The team at Robert Parker Wine Advocate tasted 30,000 wines, and chose 21 whites and 29 reds.

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Editor-in-Chief of Robert Parker Wine Advocate commented, "These were the most exciting new wine releases in 2015, based on absolute quality, singularity and hedonistic/intellectual appeal."

Neal Martin, wine critic and author with The Wine Advocate and eRobertParker.com., wrote in his November 2015 review, "This is one of the best Syrah's I have encountered from South Africa - a truly complex Syrah, one of the best you will find."

Californian Samantha O'Keefe's passion - combined with vines planted at 30m – chilled by the winter snow and nourished by the African summer sun, produce classic cool climate wines which are rich, complex and lovingly hand crafted.

In addition, the 2013 Lismore Chardonnay scored 91 points, the 2014 Viognier scored 90 points, as did the 2014 Barrel Fermented Sauvignon Blanc.

Renowned wine critic and author, Janice Robinson, in her Financial Times column 'Asked a Sommelier!' cited Lismore Estate's 2011 Chardonnay as one of her "favourite off-piste wines."

And, just last week, the 2014 Barrel Fermented Sauvignon Blanc featured as Decanter Magazine's "Must Try White" in tasting director Christelle Giber's column.

Neal Martin sums up wine maker Samantha O'Keefe's progress saying, "Over the last two or three years it's been great to see both Lismore and Samantha gain more and more recognition. Her recent releases, which I tasted at the Cape Show … continue to furrow that path of cool-climate white and reds."

Winemaker Samantha O'Keefe commented, "It's wonderful, and a little humbling, to get recognition from people and publications like Jancis Robinson, Neal Martin and Decanter Magazine. We continue to do our best to grow and harvest the best cool climate grapes we can, and to make wine which brings out the complexity and nuances that the soil and climate in Greyton allow."

Harvest time is upon you

Continued from P2

hundreds of thousands or millions of rands, we hand them over to drivers who have very little or no training and then wonder why there are issues. With Real FMX, there are a few less problems at harvest time to have sleepless nights over."

"We were also quite pleased to see the interest generated in neighbouring countries such as Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and even further afield. Farmers there have some unique challenges, in that satellite and cellular coverage is patchy at best, and infrastructure sometimes a bit shaky. This is why we have created products which can work as Standalone units where there is no signal, can be Refurbished and of course are adaptable to neighbouring country networks where necessary," says Valentine.

"With the economy in South Africa and these other countries all taking a pounding it has become even more important than before to reduce operational costs. This is where Real FMX comes into its own, reducing immediate operational costs, but also having a long-term effect on future costs. Depending on the nature of the application, ROI on Real FMX ranges from three to six months and in some cases even less.

"We found that many of these areas experience high degrees of diesel theft, and although it is unlikely this scourge will be eradicated, there are measures one can take to reduce it.

For example we have a fuel profiler that shows how fuel consumption occurs during normal use and then shows a trough on a graph where unusual consumption has occurred. This would normally indicate high probability of theft," comments Valentine.

A harvest of exceptional quality

THE recent grape season in the Western Cape which, like the previous season, saw packing commence before the new year, brought with it expectations of a bumper crop. Despite the fact that the intense heat wave and drought, which gripped the country in the later part of last year and start of 2016, severely affected the final crop estimates, the quality of the harvest has been exceptional says the PPECB.

Original projections released by the South African Table Grape Industry (SATI) in October 2015 estimated that the Western Cape export crop would be in the region of 37,5 – 38,7 million cartons, while nationally estimates were in the region of 61,3 - 63,2 million. Had these figures been realised they would have exceeded the 2014/2015 harvest by anywhere between two to four million cartons.

"The high original estimate was mainly as a result of excellent weather conditions throughout the growing season which resulted in well-developed, healthy vineyards. This together with the number of new varieties which came into production lead to the high crop estimates. In the Hex region in particular a number of new seedless varieties were planted, which has seen the packing season shift from May to the end of March over the last few years. Likewise, in the Paarl region the harvest trend has shifted two weeks earlier due to new cultivars and 10% of volumes are now packed in December as opposed to January which was the case previously," said PPECB Marketing and Communications Manager Tina-Louise Rabie.

By December, however, it became clear that the original crop estimates would not realise due to the intense heat wave and drought that resulted in a reduced crop and smaller berry size at the time of harvest.

"In some areas, such as Piketberg, producers worked through the night to ensure a quicker harvest as they simply did not have sufficient water to sustain the crops," said Rabie.

The smaller berry size and lighter weight necessitated that more berries were packed per carton to make up the required weight, which ultimately contributed to the reduced number of cartons available for export.

"Although berry size was smaller the majority still fell well within the size requirements for export. In fact PPECB rejections for the 2015/2016 table grape season saw a 43% decrease compared to the 2014/2015 season. This is testament to the high quality grapes that this season has produced," said Rabie.

In the 2014/2015 season over 60,000 cartons of table grapes were rejected nationally due to Brixtss Not Complying (BTNC,) the main reason for rejections over the season. In comparison BTNC has resulted in only 16,000 cartons being rejected for the 2015/2016 year-to-date. Likewise, while small berries resulted in 47,000 cartons rejected nationally in 2014/2015, only 24,000 cartons have been rejected year-to-date for the 2015/2016 year. Despite these significantly lower rejection figures, small berries and under mass still account for 36% of the total rejections in the current season – indicative that the sever heat and drought has had an effect on the harvest.

The PPECB estimates that the year will end with a total national volume in the region of 56 million cartons of grapes for export, slightly under last season's figures, which would indicate that anywhere between five to eight million cartons were lost as a result of the impact of the drought nationally.

BMG is appointed as an official logistics distributor for Festo South Africa

BMG has been appointed as an official logistics distributor for automation technology specialists, Festo South Africa.

"Festo's extensive product range that encompasses electro-mechanical and pneumatic drives, valves, motors and controllers, as well as handling systems, sensors and process automation - is now available from BMG," says Wayne Holton, BMG's fluid technology manager.

The addition of the Festo product range to BMG's sales network, forms part of the company's expansion strategy, geared to enhance the steady growth of the South African operation over the last 40 ye

"Festo's market share will be significantly expanded through this distribution agreement, which improves accessibility to Festo products throughout the country," says Holton

"A broader distributor network enables Festo to focus on establishing a highly trained sales engineering team to support customers in diverse sectors, including specialist industries," he adds.

Currently, Festo products are available from 12 BMG outlets in South Africa's major centres and this distribution reach will grow as the business develops throughout BMG.

Festo automation systems enhance BMG's extensive product range, which now encompasses bearings, seals, power transmission components, electric and geared motors, as well as belting and fasteners. BMG also distributes filtration, hydraulics and pneumatics systems; tools and equipment.

Yokogawa to supply Turbine Control Systems for Mongolia's largest thermal power plant

YOKOGAWA announces that it has received an order to supply turbine control systems for thermal power plant 'No. 4,' the largest thermal power plant in Mongolia. This ¥2.1bn project is being undertaken to improve the efficiency of this facility's operations.

Located in Mongolia's capital city, Ulaanbaatar, thermal power plant No. 4 has a total capacity of 703MW and accounts for approximately 70% of the electricity output to the central energy system in Mongolia. The plant also supplies 1,373 Gcal/h (12,000t/h) of hot water for the district heating system in Ulaanbaatar, meeting about 65% of the city's heating demand. Temperatures in this region fall as low as 40ºC in mid-winter, so this power plant is a crucial lifeline for the city's residents.

This project, which is financed by a Japanese ODA loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA,) will improve the efficiency of power generation and stabilize the supply of electricity and hot water by this plant.

For six of the plant's turbines, obsolete mechanical speed governors will be converted to electronic governors, and control systems and instrumentation will be replaced. In addition to supplying the CENTUM VP integrated production control system for the control and monitoring of the turbine governors and auxiliary facilities such as the feed water pump control system, Yokogawa will provide field devices such as DPharp EJA series differential pressure/pressure transmitters, FLXA21/FLXA202 liquid analyzers, control valves, and safety valves.

Yokogawa will also have full responsibility for the implementation of this renovation project, starting with the survey of existing facilities and proceeding through to the detailed design, delivery, and installation of instruments, related erection work, commissioning, and staff training. This work will proceed in stages, and the first of the renovated turbines is scheduled to be returned to service in June 2017.

Through orders that it received in 1997 and 2003, Yokogawa also provided control systems as part of a project to renovate the boilers and related instrumentation at this power plant. Consequently, all of these facilities are monitored and controlled by Yokogawa CENTUM series integrated production control systems.

As the result of these renovations, this power station was able to reduce its coal consumption by more than 20% over the 1997 to 2007 timeframe. Thanks to the trust that it has established with this plant customer over the past 20 years, Yokogawa was awarded the contract for this turbine control renovation project. A company subsidiary, Yok-

Continued on P20

SKF battery-operated grease gun is "pure genius"

SKF authorised distributor, BSA Nelspruit, supplied a SKF TLGB 20 battery-operated grease gun to assist a long-standing customer in saving time and money by improving their lubrication times and application as well as reducing the quantity of grease being used.

BSA Nelspruit says good service goes beyond the supply of products.

"The regular and expert training we receive from SKF ensures that we are fully versed on the SKF product range that we supply to our customers," states Deon de Jongh. "When we are on site, we are always on the lookout to see where we can assist customers with increased uptime through plant or process improvements by recommending a better quality product that is more suitable for a particular application. When Engen Petroleum approached us looking for assistance in saving money and enhancing productivity by improving the manual greasing process for one of their Fluidlink clients, we did not

SKF TLGB 20 battery-operated grease saves time and money by improving lubrication times and application as well as reducing grease quantities used.

hesitate to recommend the SKF TLGB 20 grease gun. We forwarded the TLGB 20's technical details and received a request from Engen to supply a unit."

Nico Broodryk, Fluidlink Sales Engineer has been using the SKF grease gun for quite a few months now and is most impressed with the unit, labelling the grease gun's integrated flow meter as "pure genius," adding that the weight, shape and balance of the ergonomically designed grease gun ensures user-friendly operation while the long battery life improves productivity.

The grease gun is a positive displacement singe acting pump that can be used with standard SKF grease cartridges or filled with 500cm of loose grease. According to Eddie Martens, SKF Product Manager, MaPro, this versatile, robust, high performance (DIN 1284) unit, has a maximum peak pressure capability of 700 bar and is suitable for lubricating a wide range of applications including bearings, machines, and vehicles. Martens explains that the grease gun is driven by a small, low voltage electric motor connected to a gear transmission. "The rotary motion of the motor is converted into a reciprocating motion of the plunger using a yoke mechanism." The TLGB 20 delivers two speed flow rates and can be switched seamlessly from low volume (110 g/min) to high volume (170 g/min.)

The SKF TLGB 20 grease gun presents a number of useful features and benefits:

- Integrated grease metre shows grease discharge in grams
- LCD battery discharge display shows remaining energy content
- LED light facilitates location of grease fittings in dimly lit areas
- Long (Li-Ion) battery life allows for dispensing of 15 cartridges per battery charge
- Filler nipple for fast, easy filling from drums with filler pumps
- The unit is supplied in a sturdy carrying case which includes a 900mm high-pressure hose, rechargeable 20V battery, charger, and user instructions.

The successful lubrication solution from BSA Nelspruit has improved the grease application time while the excellent quality of the grease has improved uptime and extended equipment life cycle for the end-user.

Government energy investments

GOVERNMENT says it will keep the development of the energy sector high on its priority list as this is key to easing constraints to economic growth.

The Economic Sectors, Employment and Infrastructure Development cluster, chaired by Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti, briefed media to give an update on the implementation of the Nine Point Plan.

The plan, which was announced by President Jacob Zuma in the 2015 State of the Nation Address, aims to put the country on a sustainable growth path, where the energy challenge is resolved, among other goals.

In a statement, the cluster said progress has been made to stabilise electricity supply, which is a crucial resource to keep industry and business powered. Through the Eskom maintenance programme, the restoration of the Duvha unit, connection of the Medupi unit six and customers using electricity sparingly, there has been no load-shedding since September 2015.

Government has invested R83bn in Eskom, which includes R60bn that was converted from a guarantee to a grant. Moreover, R23bn was secured from the sale of government's Vodacom shares.

"This has enabled the utility to continue investing in Medupi and Kusile power stations," said the cluster.

Through the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme (REIPPP) – 6,376MW of electricity have been procured. 2,045MW from 41 IPPs are already operational.

The multiple bid windows of the REIPPP has attracted investment of R194bn, while the procurement of 2,400MW of new coal fired power generation capacity has been completed.

South Africa is also sourcing 2,600MW of hydroelectric capacity from the Southern African Development Community region.

The Solar Water Heater programme, which focuses on load reduction, will continue. The load reduction programme aims to retrofit approximately

Continued on P20

The future of South Africa sees a light at the end of the tunnel

THE impact of global warming and the prevalence of load shedding in South Africa over the last few years, require the prioritisation and encouragement of energy saving initiatives. In the National Energy Efficiency Strategy of South Africa (approved in 2005 and reviewed in 2008), the then Minister of Minerals and Energy, highlighted changing people's behaviour as the biggest challenge in driving energy efficiency initiatives. To achieve this, people will need to be educated on the different options available to save energy.

Tax incentives

As it may not always be financially feasible for business to support energy efficiency due to costs associated with replacing existing equipment or changing current infrastructure, the fiscus has embarked on a path to incentivise the right behaviour.

National Treasury issued a government notice on 9 December 2013 in which the Minister of Finance announced the introduction of a new provision in the Income Tax Act (the Act), which grants a tax allowance or deduction for effected energy savings. The allowance came into effect on 1 November 2013.

The Act initially granted an allowance of 45c per kilowatt hour or kilowatt hour equivalent. A fairly recent amendment increased the rate to 95c and took effect on 1 March 2015. This increase applies to years of assessments starting on or after 1 March 2015.

A person will qualify for the allowance, if it obtains a certificate from an institution, board or body as prescribed by regulation. This institution, board or body must provide a report which contains the energy savings affected.

To claim the allowance the person must:

- Register with SANEDI in the in the prescribed manner
- Appoint a professional to report the computation of the energy efficiency savings per year of assessment
- Submit the report to SANEDI
- Obtain a certificate from SANEDI

The allowance may be disallowed if the person also receives a concurrent benefit with regards to energy savings.

To ensure the sustainability of energy resources and to conserve and protect the environment, our society needs to utilise the resources available to us sparingly. It is important that business adopt energy saving measures. A behavioural change in people is needed.

To achieve this, business needs to be informed of the energy saving options and incentives available. South Africa needs to adopt energy saving measures to ensure the sustainability of the human race.

Environmental justice organisations call for a roll-out of renewable energy

WHILE most of South Africa's attention is focused on Medupi and Kusile – South Africa's much delayed and over-budget, new coal-fired Eskom power stations – little public attention has been given to the additional 2,500 megawatts (MW) of privately owned coal-fired electricity that the Minister of Energy has planned. The new coal energy will be sold to Eskom by those independent coal-fired power producers (IPPs) that are successful bidders in terms of the Coal Baseload Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (CBLIPPPP.) These plans are, however, under threat of widespread public resistance via environmental justice organisations that are opposed to coal-fired power, because of its detrimental impact on the environment and human health.

To date, groundWork (gW) and Earthlife Africa Johannesburg (ELA) – together with community partners in the Vaal, Mpumalanga Highveld and KwaZulu-Natal – have launched a legal challenge against three proposed new coal-fired power stations proposed under the CBLIPPPP. These are the 1,200MW Thabametsi power station (near Lephalale in the Limpopo); the 600MW KiPower power station (near Delmas, Mpumalanga); and the 1,050MW Colenso Power station (near Colenso, KwaZulu-Natal.)

gW and ELA, with their community partners, argue that there should be no new investment in coal power, and that resources should be redirected to renewable energy.

gW director, Bobby Peek, says, "Unlike dirty coal, renewable energy projects in South Africa have a track record of being built on time and within budget. Moreover, renewables do not damage the health of people and pollute water, or contribute to global warming that causes climate change."

All three proposed coal-fired power stations have received authorisations from the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) prompting attorneys at the Centre for Environmental Rights (CER) – representing gW, ELA and their community partners – to launch appeals to the Minister of Environmental Affairs to set aside the authorisations. The effect of the appeals is to suspend the operation of the authorisations until the appeals are decided.

CER attorney, Robyn Hugo, says, "The detrimental impacts on the health of local communities, and the huge water demands of the proposed dirty coal power plants, are major grounds for the appeals."

All three proposed stations would be located in drought-disaster areas, with KiPower to be based in the Highveld, an area already so overburdened by industrial exploitation and air pollution that it has been declared an air quality priority area under the Air Quality Act. The Waterberg (where Thabametsi power station will be situated) has also been declared an air quality priority area. Hugo comments that the Environmental Impact Assessment process for Colenso "has been conducted so hastily that many of the major impacts that the power station will have on air quality and surrounding water sources – such as the Thukela River – and greenhouse gas emissions, have not been assessed."

New investment in coal also contradicts and undermines South Africa's commitments arising from the December 2015 climate negotiations in Paris. In many countries, including the United States, Europe and China, the exit from coal is well underway.

Yokogawa to supply Turbine Control Systems for Mongolia's largest thermal power plant

Continued from P18

ogawa Engineering Asia, will play a leading role in this undertaking.

Mongolia's real GDP has grown at an 11,3% rate over the last five years, and its government is now grappling with the rising demand for electricity and the need to reduce the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted by ageing power generation facilities. Encouraged by this order, Yokogawa will expand its efforts in Mongolia and other emerging markets to address such issues through the supply of control solutions.

Reasons to Participate:

Yokogawa's global network of 88 companies spans 56 countries. Founded in 1915, the US$3,5 billion company conducts cutting-edge research and innovation. Yokogawa is active in the Industrial Automation and Control (IA), Test and Measurement, and other businesses segments. The IA segment plays a vital role in a wide range of industries including Oil and Gas, Chemical, Food and Beverage, Iron and Steel, LNG Supply Chain, Petrochemical, Oil and Gas, Pharmaceutical, Power, Pulp and Paper, Refining, Renewable Energy and Water Wastewater.

Yokogawa South Africa (Pty) Limited is an empowered South African company jointly owned by Identity Capital Partners (Pty) Ltd, a local black women-owned organisation, and Yokogawa Africa Holding BV, incorporated in the Netherlands. Yokogawa Africa Holding BV is ultimately owned by Yokogawa Electric Corporation, a Japanese company listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Yokogawa South Africa (Pty) Limited's comprehensive solutions range from sensors such as; pressure transmitters, temperature, flow meters, level, liquid and gas analysers, as well as network solution products to control and safety systems.

This includes the software for advanced control that optimises productivity; and services that minimise plant lifecycle costs. Yokogawa South Africa's Service Training Department is accredited and proficient in theoretical and practical training for Instrumentation and Control systems from first principles.

"Our Internship Programme contributes to the continued technical skills improvement in South Africa," says Yokogawa.

Government energy investments

Continued from P19

200,000 electric geysers with solar water heaters annually. This will reduce electricity demand in the high consumption residential sector.

"… We will provide skills to emerging companies and local communities to participate in various aspects of the solar water heater roll-out programme that is targeting to install 38,000 units in the 2016/17 financial year," said the cluster.

Skills development

A pilot programme, which will see 300 learners being trained to install and maintain solar geysers, has been initiated in Ekurhuleni. A further R36m has been set aside to provide training to other beneficiaries in other municipalities.

The National Skills Fund (NSF) has disbursed R96m towards developing renewable energy training facilities at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. This initiative seeks to respond to the country's adopted strategy to promote renewable energy production in order to supplement the current fossil fuel energy production.

NSF has also set aside R204m towards establishing work integrated learning facilities for engineering students. The project aims to provide on-the-job training for mechanical and electrical engineering students in order to obtain registration as engineers.

Nuclear programme

The cluster said the expansion of the nuclear programme remains part of South Africa's future energy mix.

"The procurement plan for 9,600MW nuclear build programme will be implemented in the next decade at a pace informed by what the country can afford," said the cluster.

LCP Roofing hosts Safintra Newlok information session

LCP Roofing, in roof truss technology, recently played host to an interactive information session on Newlok, Safintra's latest concealed fix roofing product. The well-attended event saw LCP Roofing customers, suppliers and staff alike come together for an afternoon of learning and connecting.

When Safintra approached LCP Roofing management about hosting an information session for their staff on Newlok, a product specifically designed for use on low pitched roofs and to withstand high winds, they saw an opportunity not only to learn more about the product in-house, but to extend this to their clients and suppliers as well.

"It's important to us that our clients know about new products on the market and that they understand how these can benefit their projects, which was why we thought it was a great idea to open this session to our valued clients and suppliers, so that they could really experience the product and engage directly with the manufacturer," says Lyndsay Cotton, LCP Roofing General Manager.

Safintra took a holistic approach to the information session and brought along their Newlok mobile mill, steel coil, mechanical seamer and 90 degree hand crimper, to showcase the production process of the Newlok sheeting – from roll forming the profile from coil to installation.

Mark Farrell, Safintra's Johannesburg Branch Manager, demonstrated the roll-forming process using the Newlok mobile mill to produce the sheeting, pointing to its unique profile and clipping system. One of the characteristics that differentiate the Newlok profile is that it can be interlocked either with a snap or snap-and-seam mechanism. When either snapped together or snapped and seamed, the two-part clip allows natural thermal expansion and contraction without unclipping between purlin supports.

This makes Newlok a profile that qualifies as both a concealed fix (hidden anchoring system) when snapped together and a standing seam profile (snapped and seamed – either by hand crimping or mechanically), both methods allowing for thermal movement. However, the standing seam configuration provides hold-down strength in excess of 3kPa on negative wind uplift.

While Newlok is ideal for long spans on commercial and industrial buildings, due to the system's ability to expand and contract as temperatures fluctuate, it also finds application in residential settings. It is specifically designed for low-pitched roofs, is fastened on the underside of the sheeting with clips and not pierced with traditional fasteners, resulting in completely watertight sheeting, even at very low slopes. The 50mm rib height also makes for optimal water shedding capabilities at slopes as low as 1.5°.

LCP Roofing provided a sample roof structure onto which the newly rolled Newlok sheets were fastened by the LCP Roofing sheeting team, led by Edward Chego and Thabo Tjale.

"The sample roof provided an interactive and tactile experience for our guests, who could experience the roof structure close to the ground and get up close and personal with the sheeting and clip system," says Cotton.

"The fixing of the sheets was a prime showcase of the Newlok profile in action. Guests could see how the male-female joints easily snapped into place and how the clips held everything together for a smooth, sturdy surface with no piercings. Safintra also demonstrated their hand crimper, for seaming eave and ridge sheets, as well as their mechanical seamer, which is ideal for seaming the entire length of the sheet," added Cotton.

The Safintra information session highlighted a number of practical scenarios and raised awareness of the unique roofing requirements presented by the South African landscape.

"Concealed fix roof sheeting has become a firm favourite among specifiers, but has, until now, not been well suited to the high wind environments experienced in exposed, newly developed areas," says Andri Pretorius, LCP Roofing Operational Director.

"Presently, most concealed fix offerings readily available inland are 700mm wide and, due to changing climatic conditions, need to be positively fixed on both apices and eaves, thereby negating the primary advantage and purpose of concealed fix roof sheeting. Typical residential applications make 700mm wide sheeting problematic to fix and finish off neatly as well. Fitting a 445mm wide sheet on a complex residential roof will also be easier from a labour perspective," he adds.

Not only is steel roofing cost effective, but it also contributes to the overall sustainability of a structure, as metal roofing can be 100% recycled at the end of its useful life. Coupling a profile like Newlok with LCP Roofing's offering enables both to better control quality, offer holistic 'top of wall' solutions and encourages the roofing system and other retrofits to be planned and viewed as a single investment by industry, instead of as separate components.

"Newlok is a truly innovative addition to Safintra's roof sheeting range, and in turn, to ours at LCP Roofing. As keen advocates for innovation, we are proud to offer our valued customers the multitude of benefits that come with the Newlok system," says Pretorius.

"A fact that goes a long way in cementing our reputation as leaders in roof truss technology," concludes Pretorius.

Tyred and tested

PRODUCTION at cement giant PPC's De Hoek plant near Piketberg has quite literally been retreaded. The De Hoek plant – which started production in 1923 – might be one of the oldest cement plants in South Africa, but it's certainly not shy of incorporating new techniques in its operations. CEO Daryll Castle recently reported tangible progress with PPC's alternative thermal energy strategy – which has been introduced via tyre burning at De Hoek.

De Hoek kiln 6 is expected to have a co-processing capacity of about 8,000 tons of recycled tyres per year. This would result in thermal heat replacement of about 15%. The manual tyre feed system was recently completed at a cost of under R10m. This saving should be seen in the context of the draft carbon tax bill (released for comment in November 2015) – most notably the Carbon Tax Act 2017, which will come into operation on January 1 next year.

Previously PPC estimated that the impact of carbon taxes on its business would be around R150m – but now the value is expected to be just below R120m. PPC argued that tyres have a calorific value that make it an ideal alternative energy source for a cement kiln as well as preserving non-renewable natural resources.

By co-processing tyres, the cement kiln achieves 'total destruction' and the ash is incorporated in the product with no by-product. Kiln 6 is also expected to have a co-processing capacity that results in a 10% to 15% thermal substitution rate.

The manual tyre feed system has been operational since mid-August last year. The initial one tyre per minute feed is equivalent to 5% coal replacement – but is a rather strenuous task that requires 26 tyre feeders, four Bell truck operators to feed the system around the clock.

A recent presentation on De Hoek showed that 6,000 tons of tyre stock would be sourced from the Western Cape – where PPC has a large exposure to the cement market.

Interestingly, PPC's presentation on De Hoek suggests there have been improvements in Western Cape cement demand since the end of September last year – noting that over R3bn worth of projects had been awarded in the province since October.

PPC said projects were related to road work as well as residential building activities.

In the meantime De Hoek has – as part of its postponement compliance timeframes agreement with the government - initiated the upgrade of a finishing mill (to ensure it meets 2020 compliance timeframes by January 2016.)

Essentially De Hoek remains a key production asset for PPC, able to produce over 1,1 million tons of cement per annum and pack more than 1,4 million bags of cement a month.

Most importantly, De Hoek is able to sell around 26,000 tons of cement per week!

Not surprisingly has continued to spend on upkeep at this key facility. After spending R55m on a filter replacement at De Hoek's Kiln 6 in 2015, another R10m was spent on the tyre feed in 2015. This year PPC will invest another R19m of a gearbox replacement, R9m on a system filter replacement, R4m on a separator filter replacement and R3m on replacing dust collectors at transfer points.

A place to gather with Terraforce, Souk Waqif, Doha

REVIVED in the last decade as the social heart of Doha, Qatar, Souq Waqif, a historic shopping hub, is a must-see highlight of the city. There has been a souq on this site for centuries; the Bedu would bring their sheep, goats and wool here to trade, and the entire market area has been skillfully redeveloped to look like a 19th-century souq, with mud-rendered shops, exposed timber beams and some beautifully restored original Qatari buildings.

To provide parking for large numbers of visitors, an underground parking facility, located opposite the Msheireb, Downtown Doha, Qatar, became necessary. The design of the car park offered architects some extra space aboveground to facilitate place making, a collaborative process that shapes the public realm in order to maximise shared value. With this is mind, Dragana Lutic Djokic, Landscape Architect at Parsons Qatar, contacted Consent LLC (Terraforce Licensees in the UAE) in 2012, requesting an Amphitheatre design. Specifically, the engineers at Parsons were in search of a product that can be used both for retaining and seating purposes.

Consent subsequently proposed an arena design with the Terraforce 4x4 Multi Step block, a light, dry-stack concrete unit, generally used for constructing low terrace walls, stairs and seating arrangements. Aimed at providing efficient and economical steps in conjunction with the original Terraforce retaining blocks, in this case the L16, they have became very popular (in South Africa and abroad) not only for stairway access, but comfortable, practical stair and seating arrangements at leisure amenities and school sports facilities.

Initially Djokic specified another pre-cast system for the proposed Amphitheatre design, but after a presentation by Consent on the Terraforce 4x4 Multi Step block and L16 retaining block and their colour options, the design was re-rendered with Terraforce blocks.

The final design, completed by Fred Laker of Terrasafe, Terraforce's international retaining wall design service, was approved by Parsons, and in October 2013, Palmera Agriculture Business L.L.C put in the order for the 4x4 Multi Step and L16 blocks. Approximately 5,100 4x4 Multi Step blocks and 4,757 L16 blocks were used, and LED lighting installed at intervals for nighttime ambiance. The amphiteater was completed 2014.

Client	:	Private Engineering Office (PEO)
Project Consultant	:	JAIN Sustainable Engineering Solutions
Design Consultant	:	Parsons, Qatar
Main Contractor	:	UrbaCon trading and contracting
Sub Contractor	:	Palmera Agriculture Business L.L.C
Wall design	:	Terrasafe
Block Supplier	:	Consent LLC

Aurecon 2 awarded 5-Star Green Star rating

THE second office block at Century City for global engineering company Aurecon has been awarded a 5-Star Green Star Office v1 Design rating by the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA.)

The 3,300m² building has been built adjacent to Aurecon's original 7,000m² premises which was in fact the first office building in South Africa to receive a 5-Star Green Star rating.

Aurecon was responsible for the design of all the engineering services of the project and also the Green Star Rating application, with assistance from Ludwig Design Consulting.

Developed by the Rabie Property Group for listed property development and investment group, Ingenuity Property Investments, Aurecon 2 brings to 10 the number of Green Star rated buildings at Century City and to six the number that have achieved a 5-Star Green Star rating.

The other buildings to achieve five stars are Bridge Park East and West, which were also developed by Rabie Property Group, and Number 17 Park Lane which is home to the Auditor General and which was developed by Asset Matrix. The sixth 5-Star rated building is Chevron.

All the other Green Star rated buildings at Century City have achieved 4-Star ratings. They include the Business Centre and Number 3 Bridgeways (home to Philip Morris) – both developed by the Rabie Property Group and both of which have

Continued on P23

Aurecon 2 awarded 5-Star Green Star rating

Continued from P22

The 3,300m² second building at the global engineering company Aurecon has been awarded a 5-Star Green Star office rating.

achieved 4-Star ratings in the Design and As Built categories.

Ibis House in The Estuaries Office Park, which was developed by Horizon Capital, and Estuaries Plaza, which was developed by Asset Matrix, have both also achieved 4-Star Green Star ratings, the former in the design category and the later in the 'As Built' category.

In a similar vein, the Standard Bank branch in Canal Walk Shopping Centre also recently achieved a 4-Star Green Star Interiors v1 'As Built' rating.

A number of other applications for Green Star ratings are still pending including that of the Century City Urban Square which has been developed by Rabie at a cost of R1bn and which includes a Conference Centre, a 125 room hotel, offices, apartments and restaurants in five buildings fronting onto a public square.

This development is in fact registered with the GBCSA as a pilot project for a new mixed use rating tool.

Bridge Park and Chevron's respective applications in the As Built category are also still pending.

Rabie director, Colin Anderson, said their vision was to have the biggest concentration of green buildings in one precinct and this they were attempting to do in the Conference Centre precinct, which is home to not only the buildings around the Square, but also Chevron, Bridge Park, Number 3 Bridgeways and the Business Centre.

"We firmly believe that by building green buildings, coupled with the roll out of Century City Connect – the high speed fibre optic network which enabling the fastest connectivity speeds in Africa – we are 'future proofing' our buildings," says Anderson.

High performance doors

HIGH-speed, high-performance doors excel during intense operation and in demanding conditions. They can improve efficiency, safety and hygiene in applications with frequent openings and closings including manufacturing, cold storage and cleanrooms. Maxiflex Doors Systems offers Albany high speed doors from the global company ASSA ABLOY Entrance Systems.

Albany High speed doors for interior use assure the safety, security and reliability needed on the inside of a building. Current technologies now allow the combination of fast and smart doors for vehicle traffic regulation with special pedestrian-safe designs. The conscious separation of areas inside of buildings allows for area climate-control while automation helps to prevent the spread of germs or fumes throughout a factory. Interior doors range from simple economical building doors to specially designed doors for separating cleanrooms, food production, automated or robotic production areas.

The Albany RR200 can be suited for highly specific and complex business requirements, providing security, safety and reliability - especially for retail stock rooms, logistics centers, general manufacturing facilities and more. The full perimeter seal ensures dust, debris and odours are contained when the door is closed. The thin side frames allow the doors to fit almost anywhere. Plus, with its effortless breakaway feature, the door resists damage and remains operational after an accidental collision.

> "Albany high speed doors for exterior use, significantly impact building sustainability, security and appearance."

Albany high speed doors for exterior use, significantly impact building sustainability, security and appearance. As the main barrier between the inside of the factory and the outside of the factory, exterior doors need to resist fierce weather conditions whilst providing reliability. Depending on the region and building design, the demand may be for the most modern insulation and material technology, weatherproof doors or special designer doors to highlight and accentuate the building facade. Exterior doors range in all sizes of weather-resistant fabric doors to solid burglar-resistant variations.

Maxiflex Door Systems has been the sole-distributor for Albany high performance doors in Southern Arica since 1995, giving them twenty years of experience in installation and service of these high quality doors.

Engen digs deep to partner Husab uranium mine

Engen has been contracted to supply fuel, lubricants and services to the Husab Uranium Project in Namibia.

ENGEN Petroleum, a leading producer and marketer of fuels, lubricants and oil-based products, is digging deep to ensure full operational efficiency for the Husab Uranium Project in Namibia during March 2016.

China General Nuclear Power Holding Corp (CGNPC) – China's biggest producer of nuclear energy – has commenced mining at Husab. Once in full production, Husab will be one of the largest uranium mines in the world.

In 2014, CGNPC's Namibian unit, Swakop Uranium invited the Africa's major players to tender for the supply of essential goods and services to its Husab project. Following a considered evaluation process, the contract for the provision of facilities, fuel, lubricants and services was awarded to Engen.

General Manager of Engen's International Business Division, Drikus Kotze says the company is proud to have been appointed the fuel and lubricant service provider on a project of this magnitude and importance to Namibia.

"Engen has been involved in the design, procurement and construction of the fuel storage and dispensing facility, and will assume full responsibility for the day-to-day management and reporting," says Kotze, adding that "Husab is also an important HSEQ project for Engen, as it is both a flagship operation - with strict criteria on Health, Safety, Environment and Quality - and an opportunity for us to benchmark our capabilities and offering to the Mining Sector as a whole."

Namibia is currently the world's fifth-largest producer of uranium and will overtake Niger and Australia because of Husab's production.

Naturally, to establish an operational fuel facility for a mine the size of the Husab, and which is located approximately 60km from Swakopmund, is no easy task.

"We are currently operational from a temporary facility with the permanent facility nearing completion," explains Kotze. "Construction of the permanent facility commenced in May 2015 and should be completed and commissioned in late March 2016," he adds.

Engen's Commercial Services Manager, Paindane Henrique, says the contingent requirements upon each tendering supplier were typically complex. "The mine will move 150 million tons of rock and 15 million tons of processed ore, per year and consume 80 million litres of diesel in doing so."

Beyond the heavy-duty mining equipment, there were many obstacles Engen needed to overcome.

"For example, a broad range of heavy vehicles each carried stringent specifications, based on the original engine manufacturer's 50ppm Diesel and lubricants requirements. These included low sulphur fuels with low water content and superior cleanliness to ensure operations and fuel system longevity. Engen products fitted this perfectly," adds Henrique.

"Supplying these fuels requires optimum supply chain quality and monitoring at various stages in the supply process together with the necessary best available technology and operating practices."

With an expanding Namibian footprint built upon their Walvis Bay Terminal and several depots, Engen continues to leverage its infrastructure, experience and growing reputation in the mining sector to expand its operations and impact in the region.

Consulting engineers need to embrace the cloud

Simon Berry, Director of Fresh Projects online management platform.

BASIC business principles and cloud-based technology platforms need to be considered if the consulting engineering sector wants to stay afloat. In amongst a myriad of issues, the industry suffers significantly due to a chasm between the actual costs of a project versus the fees derived from scales that are quoted to win business.

Simon Berry, director, Fresh Projects, an online business management platform, says that it is critical that consulting engineers rely less on what is now a defunct fee-scale structure and rather find a new technology driven way to calculate appropriate fees.

"There are too many consulting engineers who resort to offering heavily discounted project fees against the fee-scale structure, without knowing the actual cost of the project. This effectively reduces profitability to unrealistic lows and makes for an uneven playing field. It is also dangerous as businesses make losses they are not necessarily aware of when quoting," says Berry.

This approach has such significant knock-on effects and does not bode well for the future of the industry in terms of general business growth, overall profitability and skills development.

Understanding that there are time constraints when quoting and pressures to win business, Fresh Projects has developed a cloud-based business management solution that is tailor made for the South African built environment professionals. Berry says that it ensures the financial sustainability of businesses and assists in understanding the real costs of a project.

"Using the system will immediately enable the business to control their profitability and will enable the engineer to have an accurate benchmark with which to work for future projects," says Berry.

Getting the costs right, according to Berry, is critical as the current trend of massive discounting will continue the downward spiral and result in massive damage to the industry and economy overall.

He says that work supply could already be at a dangerous low based on the near completion of projects that started post the 2008 recession.

"We find it useful to use the civil engineering sector as a business barometer as they tend to lead the rest of the industry. Most projects first start with civil's enablement work such as roads, water and sewerage. This is then followed by other services such as structural, electrical, mechanical and architectural," he adds.

A significant drop seen in the civils sector, coupled with the fee-scale discounting issues will adversely affect the market.

"Not only will there be less work, but the fees earned, based on uninformed discounting, will make it near impossible to declare any reasonable profits. This will not only kill an industry, but it also sends the skills within the industry packing," says Berry.

Berry says in a plight to be more fairly remunerated many engineers move into other sectors or immigrate to get better salaries and growth opportunities, "This adds to an already acute skills shortage within the engineering sector in South Africa," he says.

Adding to the uncertainty, he says that the competition commission has been investigating the fee-scale practice for the past five years, which was banned in the United Kingdom over 20 years ago.

"It is becoming more important that professionals rely less on fee-scales and work out their fees from basic business principles using an online system that makes the process not only seamless, but easy, quick and accurate," says Berry.

Renttech South Africa's extensive rental fleet of lifting and rigging equipment matches industry requirements

LIFTING and rigging takes place in every conceivable industry sector. Renttech South Africa's wide range of lifting and rigging equipment - and related products - have consistently proven to be an invaluable solution to lifting requirements on a number of major engineering, construction or other infrastructure-related projects throughout South Africa.

Alongside its array of well-known brands in welding, power generation and construction equipment, Renttech South Africa's Unilift and Kyoto products include chain blocks, lever hoists, rope winches, chain slings and rope slings; as well as shackles, endless round slings, pneumatic winches and cargo securing systems.The company's own manufacturing division also produces high-quality webbing and endless round polyester slings. Besides the wide product range of lifting equipment for sale, Renttech also offers a rental option.

For lifting solutions, Renttech is a recognisable name throughout industry – from paper and pulp to shipping, power generation, mining, petrochemical and offshore oil and gas. The company ascribes its success in the industry - and strong presence in the power generation and refinery sectors - to its large rental fleet size and diverse product range,

"Our Unilift brand has become synonymous with dependable lifting systems, all of which are manufactured to Renttech's specifications. Our customers also appreciate the fact that the company is fully ISO-accredited – this assures them of the highest quality products and processes, as in the lifting industry safety is of utmost importance," says Gerrit van Zyl, Managing Director of Renttech SA.

"Renttech also sources directly from the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) and supplies the end-user, resulting in premium brand products at very affordable pricing," van Zyl adds.

As an accredited company and member of the Lifting Equipment Engineering Association of South Africa (LEEASA,) Renttech's products are fully traceable and offer critical safety features, such as overload protection.

"Adding to the peace of mind for our customers is our service, which includes full back-up support, spare parts and equipment servicing. All 23 of our branches around South Africa are consistent in offering high levels of service and quality, all units are load-tested and certified, even if rented out for only a week," says Renttech's Operations Manager, Martiens Opperman.

Furthermore, Renttech plays a pivotal role in the petrochemical sector, having become the preferred supplier for many refinery maintenance and shutdown projects in South Africa.

"Our customers in the oil refinery industry have come to depend on our dedicated on-site team, which is on-hand for technical support, our fleet of more than 5,000 pieces of lifting and rigging equipment, quick turn-around times, and a choice of purchase or rental," says Opperman.

Renttech South Africa is the only company in South Africa with such an extended fleet of lifting equipment for rental and, increasingly, customers are realising the benefits of rental over the outright purchase of equipment, according to van Zyl.

"In many cases, rental makes sense as an alternative to capital expenditure, and our customers benefit from the full lifting solution for the duration of the project, be it long-term or short-term. This means fully-certified equipment which is also supported by service, maintenance and regular inspections. Renttech takes full ownership and responsibility for ensuring the up-to-date compliance of the equipment, which takes the worry out of managing the equipment for the customer," says van Zyl.

Serving a number of blue-chip companies throughout a variety of industry sectors, Renttech has built significant in-house capacity for both repairs and servicing, as well as for safety inspections. Registered as a Lifting Machinery Entity (LME,) Renttech has a number of lifting machinery inspectors (LMIs) with the capacity to inspect and re-certify a customer's lifting equipment to ensure compliance.

"Renttech is involved on an ongoing basis with quarterly visual inspections, as required by legislation, on projects in South Africa, and further afield in Africa," says Opperman.

"Most of our national sales staff have completed the South African Lifting Tackle Inspection (LTI) course. In addition, our workshop staff are all qualified to support the lifting and rigging industry, being fully trained in servicing, testing, and repairs on this equipment, such as chain blocks," adds Opperman.

Many of Renttech's high-end customers request exact, tailored specifications when it comes to the length and type of chain or sling. In this way, the company works closely with the customer in tailor-making equipment according to their requirement.

"At Renttech we strive to provide a solution appropriate to the specific type and scale of a project. I believe our success rate rests on high levels of service and quality, ready availability of stock, and a quick delivery time, all of which are essential to the success of a project," van Zyl concludes.

High quality chain hoists offer lowest lifetime costs

HIGH quality chain hoists face the same challenge in South Africa as other reputable equipment brought into this country – a competitive price bettered by even cheaper imports from China.

Despite their generally lower quality, the very low price of these Chinese imports makes for an attractive purchase. When they break down, they are simply discarded and replaced.

Notwithstanding this challenge, Hitachi, a leading high quality chain-hoist brand manufactured in Japan and distributed in South Africa by Condra Cranes, reports steady local sales, the result of good service back-up and established distribution channels.

Since Condra secured the Hitachi agency exclusively in 2009, sales outlets supported by well-equipped agents have been set up in Durban, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Mbombela, Polokwane, Rustenburg and the Sishen mine in Northern Cape.

A spokesman for Condra explained that repairs of high quality chain hoists are usually cost effective, with the discard-and-replace philosophy proving more expensive over the medium term than investing in better quality equipment and repairing it when required.

He pointed out that Hitachi chain-hoists are well known for careful design and an ability to perform well and reliably for many years

Continued on P35

Kelmeg meets growing demand for top class lifting and rigging equipment

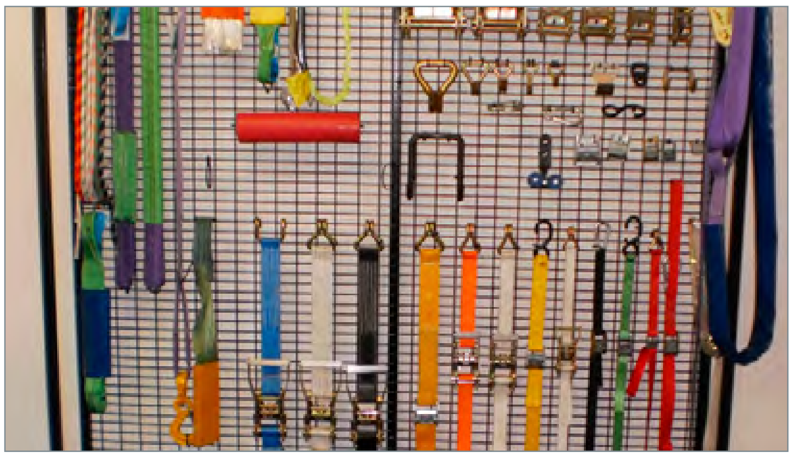
SINCE 1991, Kelmeg Lifting Services (KLS,) based in Wadeville, has provided South African industry with quality lifting and rigging equipment, with a special focus on webbing slings, endless round slings and cargo securing systems.

Thanks to their eye for continuous improvement and innovation, however, the company strives to keep up with changing needs in the market, and now boasts a diverse range of products, components and systems, all carefully designed with quality and safety in mind.

Ongoing research and development (R&D) has ensured consistent growth and diversification for the company, particularly during the last five years, in which Kelmeg has trebled in size, according to Rodney Young, Factory Manager at Kelmeg.

"We have worked hard to achieve a sustainable footprint in all markets, with a focus on diversity not only in terms of our product portfolio, but also within the industries we serve," says Young.

"We are known as manufacturers of polyester flat webbing slings, endless round slings and cargo securing systems, but now offer a range of other systems, including webbing protectors, vehicle toe-straps, 4X4 recovery kits, motorbike straps, tool bags and a host of other lashing components," he adds.



Lashing straps, lashing components and various webbing protectors.

With safety a priority in industries across the board, there is a growing demand for high quality rigging and lifting components. When lifting a substantial weight, such as 50 tons, there is much at stake, Young points out.

"Safety is becoming an increasingly critical factor for businesses to consider, and we are mindful too of changing legislation in this regard. It boils down to a quality product, and at Kelmeg we are proud of our high standards, as borne out by our ISO accreditation," he says.

Kelmeg also manufactures according to the SANS 94-1 and SANS 94-2 specifications, as required by the latest DMR (Driven Machinery Regulations.)

Young also pays tribute to his staff of 40, many of them with extensive experience and intellectual capital. Of vital importance to the business is the ongoing training that Kelmeg provides across the board. This includes the recognised outsourced training courses for the LMI (Lifting Machinery Inspector) and LTI (Lifting Tackle Inspector) qualifications.

"There is a consistent need for LMIs and LTIs, particularly in the mining sector, and Kelmeg is proud to be able to provide industry with this level of expertise and service," says Young.

A division of Renttech South Africa since 2011, Kelmeg has built up strong relationships with its extensive network of distributors, both nationally and internationally. Through its distributors, the company has a presence in most industries, including petrochemical, offshore oil and gas, construction, agriculture, shipping, engineering and manufacturing, among others.

"What we offer is versatility, quality and exceptional lead times – as well as competitive prices. We run a 'tight ship', working smartly and efficiently, with no waste of labour – and we are able to pass on these efficiencies to our distributor network," Young adds.

While offering a range of standard flat webbing, endless round slings and cargo securing systems, Kelmeg also caters for individual requirements, according to specific applications.

"We have an innovative and versatile approach to what we do, growing and developing according to the market - and there is always something new in the pipeline," Young concludes.

Get ready for Africa's largest ever packaging and related industries show

OVER 600 exhibitors are all set to showcase new products, technologies and solutions at the largest ever Propak Africa trade show.

Taking place at the Expo Centre, Nasrec in Johannesburg, from 15-18 March, Propak Africa will offer visitors the opportunity to see the latest products, equipment, machinery and services across the packaging, food processing, plastics, printing and labelling industries. Visitors can expect to see hundreds of leading-edge South African companies in the packed halls, as well as high-profile international exhibitors from countries such as India, China, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, France, Turkey, Greece, the UAE and the United Kingdom.

The excitement is building as exhibitors prepare to engage with thousands of visitors who are looking for cost effective products and solutions that will help to streamline operations, maximise output and deliver optimal returns.

"We are delighted that the show has received such excellent industry support. It is fully subscribed and ready to go," says Joshua Low, Propak Africa Event Director.

"There has been an overwhelming response to the show, despite the tough economic climate. Industry has pulled together to make this the biggest Propak Africa ever and we encourage visitors to come and see the latest innovations on display as well as all the live demonstrations that will be taking place throughout the show," he says.

"Propak Africa, together with the co-located shows, is the largest show of its kind in the southern hemisphere and attracts visitors from across Africa and from overseas. We have had a great response to our visitor programmes, having personally invited hundreds of visitors from across Africa. We are expecting high visitor attendance at this year's show and believe that it will be a valuable experience for all who attend," says Low.

There will be many live demonstrations across the four days, showcasing the latest innovations and technologies. New products to the African market will also be on show. Technical experts will be engaging with visitors.

"An exciting line-up of conferences and workshops are also taking place alongside Propak Africa," says Low.

"The Propak Africa Packaging Conference, organised by VDS Media and endorsed by the Institute of Packaging South Africa, will highlight the latest industry thinking in a comprehensive packaging based agenda. Delegates will be able to gain an in depth understanding on how brand owners, retailers, converters and suppliers all work together to foster a dynamic and innovative solution-based approach addressing current market demand focused on expansion into the African region," he added.

IPSA will also be hosting various specialised workshops alongside Propak Africa, developed specifically for the IPSA Advanced Packaging Programme. The Plastics SA Conference will host Alex Erwin, the previous Minister of the DTI, as one of its guest speakers. Printing SA (PIFSA) will also be running a number of training courses.

Pavlo Phitidis, a regular co-host on the 702 Money show, writer for the Business Day and content producer for the growth engines TV channel, will be running events alongside the show. These will include: 'Building an Asset of Value seminar' which will provide businesses with practical advice on how to grow their businesses from small to medium sized organisations. Based on the popular TV programme 'Dragon's Den', Pavlo will also be hosting a 'Suppliers Den' where three lucky exhibitors will be given the opportunity to 'pitch' their products or services to a panel of industry experts and top procurement directors. People are encouraged to visit the Propak Africa website for more information about these events.

Visitors can also book a seat to join some favourite local and international guru's at The GAPP Business Conference on 16 March, taking place alongside Propak Africa and The GAPP Print Expo. The conference will map out the future of the printing, packaging and signage industries in the context of the current South African and global economic and political environment.

"Top names such as Derek Watts, Justice Malala and Alex Hogg will be discussing current economic and political trends at The GAPP Conference," says Low.

"Techniques will be shared to improve sales and marketing efforts, entrepreneurship and business strategy. Industry experts Linda Jackson on packaging, Laurel Brunner on print, and Mike Horsten on signage will be bringing delegates up to date with latest insights," he says.

Understanding AC motor control models

SINCE the late 1970s, many control models with different names have been developed for AC motors. Examples at SEW-EURODRIVE include V/f control, VFC, CFC and SERVO control.

To achieve clarity among the many designations and abbreviations, SEW-EURODRIVE Mechatronics Engineer Norman Maleka explains the basic characteristics of control models based on the example of SEW-EURODRIVE frequency inverters, which cover the entire power and application range – from basic standard, to the toughest technical requirements.

"Up until the 1970s, DC motors were just about the only option for step-less adjustment of speed and torque in industrial applications. Traditional DC motors are prone to wear, which generates both mechanical loads and servicing costs. AC motors, on the other hand, are far more robust and virtually maintenance-free," states Maleka.

They were, however, far less easy to control, especially when AC control engineering and power electronics were still in their infancy – at a time when there were no digital signal processors and both power MOSFETs and IGBTs were at best theoretical concepts.

Maleka notes that open and closed loop control of AC drives has now become indispensable and is still enjoying highly impressive growth rates in electrical drive engineering. "Inverters with voltage/frequency control are ideal for simple applications such as pumps, fans or basic materials handling technology."

SEW Movidrive B frequency inverters for installation in control cabinets.

They are used to drive moderately dynamic AC motors and are essentially based on the proportional adjustment of voltage and frequency. This keeps the flux in the machine constant and maintains the maximum torque. Since the rated flux generates the highest torque per kg of machine, the raw materials used – steel, copper and insulating materials – are at their most effective.

"From the motor perspective, the controlled inverter takes the form of an adjustable socket for mains voltage and mains frequency. This means it is also possible in principle to operate several smaller motors simultaneously with one inverter. Thanks to their straightforward principle and easy handling, frequency inverters with V/f control are ready to use in a short time. This has therefore become the standard control mode, without speed feedback," says Maleka.

SEW-EURODRIVE uses a mode based on V/f control in its MOVITRAC LTE-B, MOVITRAC B and MOVIDRIVE B frequency inverters for installation in control cabinets, and also in MOVIMOT, MOVIFIT FC and MOVIPRO SDC decentralised drive controls.

During project planning for an electric drive system, Maleka stresses that it is vital to identify the application's control accuracy requirements. If these requirements are transparent and specified, the tailored drive system can be assembled from the necessary components – the gear unit, motor, encoder, inverter and controller.

"The key objective is to include the right components for the specific control quality requirements while also optimising costs. If the requirements are set too high or too low from the outset, this results in unnecessary additional outlay. SEW-EURODRIVE regards itself as a specialist in helping customers select the ideal drive components," Maleka concludes.

Packaging bonanza at Africa's Big Seven

PACKAGING in the food and beverage sector is one of the world's fastest growing industries as it tries to keep up with the massive growth and diversity of new products sweeping through consumer markets.

"This is most evident in Africa where a growing middle class population shows an ever-increasing taste for packaged food and beverage products," says Christine Davidson, vice-president of dmg EMS events in Africa, organiser of Africa's Big Seven (AB7.)

"The number of exhibitors and visitors attending AB7 has grown steadily over the 14-year history of the show, along with thousands of brand new products on display every year," says Davidson.

"The impact of product packaging plays a major role in attracting the attention of AB7 visitors, just as it does with retail consumers. AB7 is the ideal event for discovering world food packaging trends and technologies. The expo takes place from 19 to 21 June at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand, South Africa," she adds.

AB7 - gateway to African markets

Over 260 companies from 49 countries used AB7 as their springboard into Africa last year, to explore business opportunities in 27 countries across the continent. Over 13,000 visitors from 72 countries attended the show.

"Our post show data reveals about one third of visitors specifically targeted the FoodTech and DrinkTech components of AB7, in which the latest packaging trends are showcased by manufacturers," adds Davidson.

Packaging technologies showcase

Last year, packaging companies from Bahrain, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey and South Korea exhibited at the show. Dinga Moyo, Chairman of the Food Processing Technology Department at the Harare Institute of Technology, Zimbabwe, visited AB7 to explore new ideas in food technology.

"It's always rewarding to discover new packaging designs and styles from other countries at AB7, it enables us to improve our competitiveness and forge relationships with potential suppliers from around the world," says Moyo.

One of the UAE's fastest growing snack producers, Signature Snacks, is now supplying more than 60 countries with its unique line of stylishly packaged biscuits, cookies, crackers, chocolate-coated biscuits, cream-filled biscuits, chocolate-coated wafers and baked chips. "We will be showcasing our premium snack products at Africa's Big Seven for the first time this year," says General Manager Mazen Nabulsi.

"In addition to high quality, we offer different formats of packaging, including premium and trendy styled sharing bags for our bite sized products. I'm certain our packaging plays a large part in our success so far," Nabulsi adds.

The global consumer packaging market was valued at US$431bn in 2013 and is expected to reach US$519bn by 2018, adds Davidson.

"Food represented the largest end-use sector at 33,8% market share, with the beverage sector at 25,2%. This is a massive industry opportunity that many packaging manufacturers are under-exploiting, especially in African markets, and that is where AB7 plays a major role as the trade gateway to the continent," says Nabulsi.

Atlas Copco goes the distance

ATLAS Copco customers enjoyed an adrenalin-filled day of fun and excitement as the Atlas Copco off-road racing BAT of Sarel van Biljon and Philip Herselman (GM of Construction Technique) demonstrated its racing prowess over 324km of extremely rough and rocky terrain during the Atlas Copco 450 Gold at Kloof Country Club in Glenharvie, Westonaria.

Sarel and Philip started in pole position, having taken top honours in the previous day's Special Vehicle category 103km qualifying race held the previous day. In the main race they pulled an impressive lead of more than five minutes over the second special vehicle competitor, 2015 champions Evan Hutchinson and Danie Stassen, by the halfway point. Unfortunately a broken suspension mount 58km before the finish prevented this formidable team from repeating their winning performance of 2014 when they won the event outright in Class A.

Hosting this final round of the South African off road motor racing championships, Atlas Copco business areas, Construction Technique, Compressor Technique and Industrial Technique,

Continued on P29

In cider trading

STELLENBOSCH-based liquor conglomerate Distell might be best known for its wine and brandy brands – but the company's spirited growth in the last decade-and-a-half has been underpinned by incredible successes in the cider segment. In fact, so successful has Distell been in marketing its Hunters Dry and Savanna brands that the company now ranks as the second largest cider player in the world. This is a remarkable achievement for a company that first marketed its cider products in the late eighties.

More encouraging is that Distell's cider growth in 2015 comfortably exceeded the average growth in the global cider category – nothing up an 8,7% volume growth versus 4,1% growth.

Distell CEO Richard Rushton – who previously held key global positions for beer giant SABMiller – said the sold growth in cider was driven mainly by the core Hunter's brand, which launched Hunter's Extreme Bold in July last year. He said this natural energy alternative delivered the refreshing taste of apple with a bold kick of Guarana. Rushton said the Hunter's Extreme brand doubled in volume over the last 12 months, making it the most popular alcoholic energy drink in South Africa.

Rushton said the pricing architecture in the cider segment was defined, and that growth momentum was achieved through innovation. Both Hunters and Savanna come in different sized formats, and taste variations.

He said, "South Africa cider volume growth accelerated off a much higher base … year on year growth has increased due to pricing and packaging architecture and innovation."

Distell clearly sees the growth momentum continuing, and has confidently invested another R240m in expanding capacity mainly in the cider manufacturing facilities.

The bigger picture at Distell is also fascinating – especially in terms of building a liquor business with global attributes. Rushton said the investment programme was designed to enhance its competitiveness as the company sought to double the size of its business by 2020.

Other than cider, Distell owns strong selling brands like Fleur du Cap, Nederburg, 4th Street (now the country's top wine selling brand) Two Oceans, Graca, Durbanville Hills, Sedgwicks Old Brown, JC le Roux, Amarula, Klipdrift, Viceroy and Richelieu. In the six months to end December, Distell grew total revenue grew 11,2% to R12,2bn, while operating profits climbed 16,5% to R1,7bn.

Aside from cider's sprightly showing, Distell also made good gains in African and northern European markets as well as Taiwan – which offset the effects of weak demand from Angola, the UK, Russia, China and Latin America.

Rushton noted, "Consumers responded positively to our product offerings and promotions especially over the festive season."

But Rushton was cautious about the persistently challenging and volatile trading conditions in many of Distell's key markets, warning that tougher trading conditions were expected for the second half of the financial year. He said the company would moderate the "sequencing and pacing" of some of its investment plans in some markets.

Still, he remained bullish that Distell's strategic direction, the versatility and diversity of its portfolio of brands would grow shareholder value over the longer-term.

Atlas Copco goes the distance

Continued from P28

demonstrated their solid philosophy and intense commitment to supporting customers no matter how tough the going.

"Our objective is to provide our customers with the opportunity to enjoy a day at the races and network and exchange ideas with like-minded people in an informal environment," explained Philip.

Atlas Copco's success in achieving this was confirmed by feedback received from customers like Filippo Bevilacqua, Managing Member of equipment hire company, Riviera Hire cc., who said that the real enjoyment for him was "being able to interact in an informal environment and mingle with Atlas Copco and other customers, share experiences and obtain feedback."

Filippo added that his short 12 month association with Atlas Copco has already proved beneficial. "Atlas Copco lives up to the ideals of sustainable productivity which meshes well with our core values. It is assuring to know that well established brands like Atlas Copco are working diligently to adapt their offerings to be able to offer cost effective productive solutions which is in line with what is really important namely, the return on investment over the long-term."

Also attending the race day were long-standing Atlas Copco customers Raubex Building and G4 Civils. Louis Bornman, buyer at Raubex Building, complimented Atlas Copco on their product quality and service excellence. "Their product quality is

"Atlas Copco is about top quality, product knowledge and support," said Johan vd Merwe, Plant Manager at G4 Civils (right) standing with Mark Burr-Dixon.

of the best in the country and they are always willing to go out of their way when it comes to deliveries, servicing and spare parts."

Equally complimentary of Atlas Copco's product and service quality, Johan van der Merwe, Plant Manager at G4 Civils and a motor car racer himself, said that "Atlas Copco is always willing to go out of their way to assist. Atlas Copco is about top quality, product knowledge and support."

Pointing to the many analogies between off-road racing and the customer–supplier partnership, Philip says that the ups and downs of any racing season mirror the economic environment. "Moreover, it is a team event where both driver and navigator share a pivotal partnership and good teamwork and clear, open communication determines success. As a customer-focused company, it is important for us to remain committed to meeting our customers' requirements and provide the best solution for their sustainable productivity. To achieve this, we need to listen to our customers, and much like we know our cars, we must know the customer's application and our products - how they perform and what they can deliver."

"We continue the race in 2016 by investing in resources to ensure innovative technology to be able to continue supplying robustness, reliability, powerful performance and efficiency backed by full after-market support – service, maintenance, parts and spares," affirms Philip. "2015 has taught us a lot and we have emerged stronger. We are identifying all the areas where we can improve and be even better. Our customers know and respect our brand and our service so we remain steadfast in our ongoing commitment to be a solid business partner whom our customers can continue to rely on. We are there for our customers for the long run – we go the distance."

With so many Atlas Copco customers enjoying the off-road action, the Atlas Copco 450 was an overwhelming success as fittingly summed up by Louis and Johan: "The best part of the day was the cars, of course."

Tiger Brands appoints new CEO

"WE are delighted with the appointment of Lawrence Mac Dougall and are confident of his abilities to lead the organisation and to deliver on the strategic objectives of Tiger Brands. We have found an exceptional new CEO in Lawrence, who has sound commercial and strategic acumen, the demonstrated ability to lead extensive growth and business turnaround strategies and the leadership skills to develop strong integrated teams that deliver continuous sustainable performance," says Andre Parker, Chairman of the Board.

The Board adopted a rigorous five month process to interview and select the new CEO for the company.

Lawrence Mac Dougall as the new CEO of Tiger Brands Limited.

Lawrence Mac Dougall has in-depth business experience, successfully leading complex local and multinational organisations in challenging environments across Africa, The Middle East, Eastern Europe and Russia.

He has previously worked as Managing Director of Bromor Foods and Cadbury (Pty) Ltd in South Africa. He has led Kraft Foods and Mondelez International as Regional President.

Mondelez is the world's largest snacking and the world's second largest food company. Lawrence has extensive FMCG experience in excess of 25 years in the confectionery, beverages, snacks, groceries and biscuits categories.

"I am excited and energised about joining Tiger Brands. Tiger Brands is an iconic South African business with a strong heritage and great brands that resonate with consumers across many cultures and all income levels. The strength of our brands offers us a distinct competitive advantage that can be leveraged to create value for all stakeholders. I am proud to be leading the Tiger Brands team on this journey as we strengthen our position in the market and contribute positively to the South African economy," says Mac Dougall.

High barrier BOPP label facestock films

INNOVIA Films produce many films that are used within the food industry to wrap a wide variety of products. So you would expect us to know a thing or two about barrier properties.

We have harnessed that knowledge to develop and launch two new high barrier films for labelling applications - UltraFoil CXFA (clear) and WXFA (white), which both have EU and FDA food contact compliance.

"These label facestock films offer brand owners and label printers the complete package. As part of the UltraFoil product group they give superior narrow web print and foil performance. Their tailored surface allows enhanced detail for finer tone work and intricate foiling designs for maximum brand impact. They also have a high barrier coating on one side which aids product protection and the films have now been certified food contact compliant," says Alasdair McEwen, Product Manager, Labels.

Both grades are available in 53 and 61 micron thicknesses and provide high machine direction stiffness for improved conversion and high speed label dispensing.

If you are looking for flexible pressure sensitive label face stock film that provides oxygen, moisture vapour and chemical barrier performance, talk to us. We would be happy to discuss applications and technical details to ensure you get the performance you need.

Distell posts strong growth with record SA festive season

THE Distell Group, Africa's biggest producer of wines, spirits, ciders and ready-to-drink (RTDs) beverages continues to reflect the benefits of an investment programme designed to enhance its competitiveness as it seeks to double the size of its business by 2020. The company delivered impressive growth across all its core beverage categories, thanks to record domestic festive season trading.

Year-on-year revenue grew 11,2% to R12,2bn for the six months to December 31, 2015 on the back of 7,7% higher sales volumes. Operating profit rose 16,5% to R1,7bn.

EBITDA growth of 14,8% was helped by the weaker rand, with currency conversion gains amounting to R192,3m (2014: R35,8m). Operating expenses rose 10,4% as the company continued to fund its growth strategy.

Normalised headline earnings increased by 16,8% and reported headline earnings by 17,8% to R1,2bn. Headline earnings per share were 17,7% higher at 531,5 cents.

An interim cash dividend of 165 cents has been declared (2014:158 cents).

Distell Group MD, Richard Rushton, said a stellar performance from South Africa, with double-digit revenue growth, and good gains in some African, northern European markets and Taiwan, had partially offset the effects of weak demand from Angola, the UK, Russia, China and Latin America.

"The challenging global macroeconomic environment is leading to constrained conditions and subdued consumer spending," said Rushton.

South Africa raised revenue by 14,6%, and volumes by 13,3% for the period, largely due to Distell's enhanced market penetration as well as improvements in its product mix and customer service.

Top volume performers included cider brands, Hunter's and Savanna; 4th Street, now by far the country's biggest-selling wine brand; Scottish Leader whisky as well as Viceroy which is leading the brandy resurgence in the local market. Sedgwick's Old Brown which celebrates its centenary this year and Bisquit cognac, also made impressive gains.

"Consumers responded positively to our product offerings and promotions especially over the festive season. Our performance also reflects the continued progress we are making in South Africa where we are strengthening our market position with significant improvements in market penetration and customer service," said Rushton.

Distell Group MD, Richard Rushton

Distell's other markets in sub-Sahara delivered mixed results. Revenue grew 1,2% on a sales volume decline of 7,4%. Angola, the company's biggest market in the region outside South Africa, proved more challenging, owing to the prevailing adverse macroeconomic conditions in that country which were further compounded by hikes in excise and import duties.

Nigeria was able to deliver solid growth despite a slump in oil prices. Rushton emphasised the potential for further improvements in performance as a result of a strengthened route-to-market.

"Our performance in Southern Africa was gratifying despite challenging conditions in West Africa. Our focus markets, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique all posted strong growth," says Rushton.

Rushton reiterated Distell's commitment to Africa which contributed 55,2% to foreign revenue.

"Our participation in Africa is part of our long-term goal to increase our competitiveness in delivering sustainable revenue and profit growth. We are focussed on developing the right mix of brands, human capital and capacity to achieve this goal,' adds Rushton.

Germany and the Nordics had performed well, he added, with brands such as Nederburg, Drostdy-Hof, the single malts within the company's Scotch whisky portfolio and Amarula showing good growth. In Taiwan, Scottish Leader had entrenched its position as the market leader in blended Scotch whiskies. Volumes in international markets beyond Africa, declined by 15,4% with revenue rising 4,0% due to the weak rand.

Revenue for the wine portfolio declined by 7,0%, on 14,8% lower volumes due to lost summer promotional slots in some European markets following Distell's limited trade recall in May last year.

Rushton expressed caution about the persistently challenging and volatile trading conditions in many of Distell's key markets and said tougher trading conditions were expected for the second half of the financial year. As a response, he said his company would moderate the sequencing and pacing of some of its investment plans in some markets but he remained bullish about Distell's strategic direction, the versatility and diversity of its portfolio of brands which he said would grow shareholder value.

He also pointed to the potential long-term benefit of Distell's new route-to-market established in the US through a partnership with Terlato Wine Group, a leading player in the wine and spirits industry.

"Our partnership with Terlato will set us up for long-term growth in the USA," says Rushton.

Chinese business confidence brings New Hope to South Africa

The commitment of giants like FAW Trucks boosts local investment

AT an initial investment value of just over R200m, the leading Chinese animal husbandry, animal feed and meat products manufacturer, 'New Hope Group,' has established its first South African animal feed plant, going into pilot production at the beginning of December, to be followed with production for the agricultural market as from 05 January 2016.

"South Africa was chosen because the country offered great infrastructure, a stable political environment and the opportunity for doing fair business while following the strict ethical standards demanded by our China-group headquarters," says Yang Zhao, CEO of New Hope South Africa (Pty) Ltd.

"Furthermore, the fair trade practices and excellent business cooperation between China and South Africa have been very evident from the numerous Chinese giants that have established themselves in South Africa, like FAW Vehicle Manufacturers South Africa which chose to situate their plant in Coega, Eastern Cape, South Africa," says Zhao.

"The New Hope Group, headquartered in Beijing, has fully owned subsidiaries on four continents and in 20 countries across the globe. In 2014 our worldwide group collectively sold 15m tons of animal feed," he adds.

He also explained that 'New Hope SA' (Pty) Ltd will be providing the most affordable, high-quality animal feed to SA livestock farmers, with assurances of livestock growth and animal health equivalent to any of the better established brands.

Being the new entrant into an existing market is challenging at best, but the parent Chinese New Hope Group chose carefully when deciding on the location of their second African subsidiary, the other being in Egypt.

"New Hope has not come to the South African market with thundering noise or loud fanfare, but we have taken the time to establish our first plant at the R59/R550 interchange in Randvaal Gauteng. This is a good start-up location; accessible to all the raw materials which we are sourcing locally only, thereby creating reciprocal business opportunities within the agricultural sector," says Zhao.

Hope's ethos is very community oriented. Yang Zhao affirms that they are here for the long haul, to share 'space' in their business model with local farmers and agricultural communities; to provide job opportunities for local people and to bring benefit to all partners associated with them.

The feed plant is poised for scaling to

Continued on P32

EBH Namibia employees trained in engine repair by Rolls-Royce

ELGIN Brown & Hamer (EBH) Namibia's partnership with Rolls-Royce has recently been strengthened through a training opportunity which has seen four employees boost their skills in marine engine repair. The employees were chosen, along with three Rolls-Royce trainees, to undergo a training programme at Rolls-Royce's engine factory in Bergen, Norway, from 10 August to 4 September 2015.

This initiative is in line with EBH Namibia's drive to provide ongoing training for its employees, so they can grow in their careers while at the same time meeting the needs of the company's increasing list of international customers.

"Our partnership with Rolls-Royce is of significant strategic importance to EBH Namibia, and the training that our employees have received is invaluable in terms of the transference of globally sought-after skills," says Hannes Uys, Chief Executive Officer of EBH Namibia.

EBH Namibia and Rolls-Royce team which attended engine repair training at Rolls-Royce, Bergen: From left to right: Patrick Adam (Rolls-Royce Service Centre Manager Namibia & Ivory Coast), Teopolina Shilongo (EBHN), Joseph Nendongo (EBHN), Erwin Keiseb (EBHN Technical Superintendent) Jacobus Jacobus (EBHN), Silas Shihepo (EBHN), Svein-Magne Ripe (Rolls-Royce), Odd M. Tvedt (Rolls-Royce)

"Serving the African market via our Namibian service hub is a key part of our strategy to provide a good service in every port, every day. To live up to our own set of high standards we need to invest in our relationship with our partners and invest in our employees," says Patrick Adam, Service Centre Manager Africa: Rolls-Royce.

"Together with EBH we now have seven engineers trained who will be able to provide all required service and overhaul work on-board our joint customers' vessels," he adds.

The three trainees from Rolls-Royce - Nestor Ndapuka, Sethole Montonane and Brian Profitt - and four trainees from EBH Namibia - Jacobus Jacobus, Joseph Nendongo, Silas Shihepo and Teopolina Shilongo – were also joined by EBH Namibia's HR Manager Patrick Chizabulyo, Mechanical Superintendent Erwin Keiseb, and Rolls-Royce's Patrick Adam.

Chizabulyo describes as the training as 'an important milestone' in the mutually beneficial relationship between EBH Namibia and Rolls-Royce.

"An important part of our value offering to our customers is to find synergistic partnerships with other players in the industry and to leverage off each other's expertise. The training that our employees received will enable them to assist our partners, Rolls-Royce, in the repair and overhaul of Bergen engines, and will also enhance our own skills base at EBH Namibia," says Chizabulyo.

Based on an agreement which was signed in early 2011, Rolls-Royce, under its marine division Marine & Industrial Power Systems (MIPS), has been operating a dedicated servicing hub at EBH Namibia's Walvis Bay facility. EBH Namibia has been providing artisanal and semi-skilled labour, working alongside Rolls-Royce technicians in propulsion and related mechanical work. The newly-acquired skills will enhance Rolls-Royce and EBH Namibia's position to tender for Bergen overhaul work in the future.

"Rolls-Royce proposed that EBH Namibia nominate a few employees to attend training at their Bergen Engines facility in Norway," explains Chizabulyo.

Bergen Engines, a subsidiary of Rolls-Royce Power Systems, manufactures a range of medium speed gas and liquid fuel engines for the marine and offshore oil and gas industries.

The training programme for EBH Namibia was extremely comprehensive, and included basic electrical and control systems, mechanical adjustments and start-up procedures, the maintenance of water and oil pumps, the overhaul of cylinder heads and valves, assembly line training and an introduction to gas engines.

"It was a fascinating experience, for those of us from EBH Namibia, to experience the world class expertise of Rolls-Royce first-hand, and we were overwhelmed by the positive and welcoming culture at their Bergen facility," says Chizabulyo.

EBH Namibia prides itself on its skills development programmes, which have included exchange programmes with other leading shipyards around the world.

"As a player in the global shipping industry, we have long since placed training and career development at the top of our agenda. This is becoming an increasingly important part of our overall aim, which is to provide our clients with the highest levels of support and service, further enhancing our position as a shipyard of choice on the west coast of Africa," Uys concludes.

Chinese business confidence brings New Hope to South Africa

Continued from P31

full production from January next year; and have put in place all the necessary regulatory and environmental controls required; the company has identified farmers for its supply chain and chosen suppliers and partners to support operations.

Their first five FAW commercial vehicles are ready to distribute the animal feed products, from the initial test production next month. The FAW-only fleet has been delivered and comprises three FAW 28,380FT bulk tanker units, one FAW 28.330FL 14 ton freight carrier and one FAW 15,180FL 8 ton freight carrier. The larger trucks have been fitted with bulk tankers to carry the 20 ton and 30 ton payloads, while the smaller units will service the bagged (50kg each) feed distribution.

"For now the vehicles will run within 150km radius from our plant in Gauteng, but will on occasion also run supplies to Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland. As our feed production volumes increase towards reaching our full capacity of 200 000 tons per annum, our fleet will grow together with our distribution radius – probably up to 400km," says Zhao.

"We are already considering investing in another four plants, with the second plant most probably situated in the Northwest Province, South Africa," he adds.

"Our greatest considerations when choosing FAW trucks were reliability and uptime, as well as reasonable cost of ownership and an understanding that we will be a customer with high expectations. However, having said this, we demand from FAW Trucks SA no more than we expect of ourselves, after all we work and live by similar goals – to provide quality products at an affordable price, with superior aftersales service and support," says Zhao.

Zest Weg Group Africa first again with extended product guarantees

LONG gone are the days of being considered a 'run-of-the-mill' OEM. This is the strong message being given to all industries by Zest WEG Group Africa. With WEG Brazil as its parent company, this group has its roots firmly in Africa and its commitment to the continent is without question, especially following the large investments made in 2015 in local manufacturing facilities that will be able to service countries across Africa.

Such is the confidence and level of commitment of Zest WEG Group Africa to its customer base that Louis Meiring, group CEO, announced guarantees have been extended across all WEG products.

"Zest WEG Group Africa is known for leading industry in its thinking and the decision to extend the product guarantees is, we believe, another very important first. While the extended guarantee will cover customers for unexpected electrical and/or mechanical failures giving them absolute peace of mind, it is not going to cost them more," says Meiring.

Meiring says that this was a prime consideration for Zest WEG Group Africa as the organisation is well aware of the additional financial pressures that many of its customers are operating under in the current financial climate.

"By extending our product guarantees we are increasing the peace of mind that customers have with WEG products and opening the door for potential customers to examine what we know is an unbelievable value proposition," says Meiring.

It is quite significant that Zest WEG Group Africa was the first equipment supplier to move from IE2 motors to IEC3 compliant motors, and a key aspect was that that change was introduced at no additional cost to its customers, thereby reducing the total cost of ownership.

"Extending product guarantees is aligned with our strategy of forming long term partnerships with customers. Continuous product improvement is ongoing at WEG and indeed at Zest WEG Group Africa's local manufacturing facilities and the benefit of this must, of necessity, be passed on to our customers allowing them to optimise their operations," says Meiring.

"We have reviewed the performance of all WEG products over an extended period and are confident that all will meet the guarantee with ease," says Gary Daines, managing director of Zest WEG Electric.

Extended guarantees will vary from product to product, but all customers are still assured of the same high level of in-field support for which Zest WEG Group Africa is known.

- WEG W22 low voltage motors guarantee extended to five years.
- WEG Variable Speed Drives and Softstarters guarantee extended to two years.
- Where WEG motor and drive combinations are used, the WEG drives guarantee is extended to three years.
- WEG Switchgear guarantee extended to three years.
- WEG transformers guarantee extended to three years.
- If WEG transformers are acquired with a WEG Service Plan the guarantee is extended to five years.

Meiring says that Zest WEG Group Africa plans to continue its strategy of bringing innovative initiatives to market that will add value to customers' operations.

"Despite being part of a major global corporation, we have not lost the flexibility and responsiveness for which we have always been known," concludes Meiring.

Ingersoll Rand RS30 and RS37 Air Compressors deliver 13% efficiency improvement

INGERSOLL Rand has introduced the new RS30 and RS37 models, the first compressors in a series of new oil-flooded rotary screw air compressors known as the Next Generation R-Series.

The Next Generation R-Series delivers world-class performance and enhanced reliability, lowering operational costs for those requiring general purpose plant airs in support of assembly, manufacturing, mining and conveying applications.

"Our customers are under unprecedented pressure to be leaner, more productive and more energy efficient," says Riaan van Wyk, Regional Sales and Services Leader Johannesburg, Ingersoll Rand.

"The Next Generation R-Series represents a new benchmark in compressor performance that can greatly reduce our customers' energy footprint while maintaining reliable compressed air to keep their operations running smoothly," he says.

Performance and technical benefits include; efficiency, reliability and air flow capacity.

The new air compressors improve performance through a state-of-the-art airend – the heart of every air compressor. The new airend design was developed through advanced analytics and modelling, and includes, amongst other things, an optimised rotor profile that provides up to an 13% efficiency improvement compared to previous models.

The new rotor profile also contributes to best-in-class airflow capacity, delivering up to 11% more airflow than previous models. The improved airflow creates a more reliable air supply, reducing downtime and increasing production efficiency, even in extreme operating conditions. An enhanced bearing arrangement and sealed drive system further improves performance and reliability, as well as reducing the need for maintenance.

The compressors in this series are built to withstand extreme conditions, with an advanced motor design that is engineered for operation in challenging environments. The compressors are available in high or low ambient temperature options.

The newly revised, analytics-modelled airflow and piping system further contributes to energy efficiency by ensuring a low pressure drop. This saves energy and lowers utility bills while minimising sound output to create a safer, more comfortable work environment.

The Next Generation R-Series features the sophisticated Xe-series controller, allowing easy remote access to, and control of, the compressed air system through a web browser. Users can receive information on compressor performance and events by email, adjust compressor settings remotely and programme compressors according to specific events through real-time clock schedules. This means users can automatically start or stop compressors for shift changes or preventative maintenance.

The new series of compressors also enhances reliability with Progressive Adaptive Control™ (PAC) systems software that continuously monitors key performance parameters and automatically adjusts settings to the application's needs. The adaptive controls provide built-in performance analysis for a wide range of load requirements, thus reducing downtime risks.

Next Generation R-Series compressors also save customers money on equipment and operations by ensuring that discharge air powering equipment carries a minimal amount of moisture, reducing the requirements of large downstream air dryers.

Contact your local service representative for more information on the Ingersoll Rand Next Generation R-Series family of air compressors.

Rockwell Automation brings SAB Maltings into The Connected Enterprise

ROCKWELL Automation recently supplied South African Breweries' (SAB) first fully automated and networked EtherNet/IP-based control system for its new maltings plant in Alrode, Gauteng. The new control system will integrate traditionally disparate malt production processes into a single networked EtherNet/IP-based solution to provide plant-wide visibility and actionable data from the malting plant's production floor to SAB's top floor. The new maltings plant will account for more than half of the breweries' South African and Namibian malt production when fully commissioned early in 2016.

In a move to support the local economy, the new maltings plant, situated next to the company's existing brewery in Alrode, will increase local malt production from 60 to 90%, reducing the financial impact of imported malt. The plant will greatly enhance the production capabilities of its predecessor by increasing malt production from 42 000 to 150 000 tons per annum.

SAB contacted Rockwell Automation to design a fully automated and networked EtherNet/IP solution for the maltings plant, a first for SAB. The solution Rockwell Automation implemented in the maltings plant connects all data from the plant floor to the rest of the SAB enterprise, transforming the plant into a connected enterprise.

"By converging operations technology and information technology, we enable SAB secure access to operational, business and transactional data to improve the malting plant's supply chain, economic and sustainable performance," says Adrian van Wyk, Business Manager for Power and Components, Rockwell Automation, Sub-Saharan Africa.

All devices and processes within the plant are integrated in a single secure network with dual-port EtherNet/IP-based hardware connected in a Device Level Ring configuration.

"This provides a strong future-proof technical solution with high-performance delivery and Network resilience at Device Layer," adds van Wyk.

Controlled by Allen-Bradley ControlLogix Controllers and Allen-Bradley Stratix Industrial EtherNet/IP Switches, the Motor Control Centers comprise more than 500 E300 Intelligent Electronic Overload Control Relays, 70 PowerFlex 750 AC Drives and 50 SMC Flex Smart Motor Control Softstarters for motor starting, stopping, control and protection with greater production efficiency delivery.

To address the plant's energy metering, energy consumption, load shedding and harmonics analysis, Rockwell Automation supplied a range of its Allen-Bradley PowerMonitor metering solutions. Technical partner, MSE, provided all packaged Motor Control Centers distributed throughout the plant to reduce cabling costs.

"The new automated system gives SAB personnel plant-wide control, from plant floor to executive level, via a single, secure integrated EtherNet/IP network, by enabling secure access to actionable run-time production data, machine diagnostics and automatic fault-finding, SAB gains full visibility of the maltings plant, ultimately facilitating a faster time to market, lower total cost of ownership, improved asset utilisation and enterprise risk management for the maltings plant," says van Wyk.

In order to keep the plant running 24/7, 365, all Motor Control Centre Device Level Hardware are equipped with the Rockwell Automation Automatic Device Configuration (ADC) for automatic self-healing and configuring of replaced componentry. ADC, paired with the Rockwell Automation Device Level Ring network that ensures uninterrupted real-time device communication, provides SAB with greater network resilience and reduces unplanned downtime.

"There is no part of the new plant that isn't connected; everything is networked on EtherNet/IP," comments van Wyk.

"We've used the very latest Control and Motor Control technologies that are not only future-proof, but provide backward capability to ensure SAB's operations are more productive, sustainable and respond competitively to dynamic market demands on a global level," he adds.

Integration partner, Advansys, is responsible for the integration of all processes and control systems for the plant. Currently running at 70% capacity, SAB Maltings Alrode is set to be fully commissioned early 2016.

Leuze fit-for-purpose optical sensing solutions

Leuze Optical Distance Sensors enable quick and accurate measurement of distances.

THE ability to accurately measure over both short and long distances is critical in sensing applications. Leuze has leveraged technology to enable customers to achieve this no matter the parameters. Two types of Leuze Optical Distance Sensors are available – one using laser or LED light and the other using ultrasonic technology.

Sensors that use laser or LED light are able to quickly and precisely measure distances on a wide range of materials, even at extended ranges. The Leuze product line-up caters for varying applications and includes a basic laser distance sensor with a measurement range from 20mm to 500mm. This compact sensor, the Leuze ODSL 8, is in a compact metal housing and supplies reflection-independent distance information.

The Leuze PDSL 9 sensor enables accurate measurement even under difficult conditions including glossy objects. Its integrated display shows the measurement values and facilitates easy adjustment of the sensor. This sensor offers greater flexibility as it can be used in combination with digital interfaces.

Suitable for large measuring distances, from 60mm to 25,000mm, the Leuze ODS 96B optical distance sensor is extremely robust. Adjustment and configuration is simple done using its integral key pad. The sensor can operate in fast, standard or precision mode depending on the application requirement. It is also compatible with RS 232/485 serial interface.

Achieving maximum precision at long distances can be done using the Leuze ODSL 30 sensor which has a measurement range up to 30m, and in applications with bright objects as far as 65m away. With a sensing resolution of 1mm, the unit is capable of highly accurate measurements over the complete range. The unit features a referencing function for preventing fluctuations in measurement values.

Ultrasonic technology is most advantageous where there is limited light and using Leuze Ultrasonic Distance Sensors it is possible to reliably detect even partially or completely transparent objects. Measurements can also be done in dusty, hazy or humid environments.

The Leuze 418 Series sensor is best for short range applications and its small cylindrical metal housing makes it suitable for use in adverse conditions. It is possible to synchronise up to 10 sensors on one cable.

More compact in design, the Leuze 430 Series sensors is ideal for detecting levels in liquids and bulk material. High accuracy is possible through temperature compensation. The distance information provided by this sensor is highly independent of surface properties.

Leuze Optical Distance Sensors are available from Countapulse Controls, the official distributor for these German-engineered sensors.

The company offers access to technical support and information, as well as to its comprehensive range of sensing, measurement, counting, switching, monitoring and positioning instrumentation. Customer support is available 24/7 through its technical advisory service hotline.

OPINION

Ground control to Vodacom

Continued from back page

you do? Pass the buck back to the shop. I requested you to escalate without further delays. Then you pass the buck to your repairs section! Vodacom will suffer reputational damage. Please escalate this to a competent person without further delay.

• Vodacom responded, *inter alia:*

As your security is our main concern ... reply to this email with these three bits of personal information:

1. *ID number or Company Registration Number for corporate accounts*
2. *Debit order date*
3. *Bank name and account type*

From: Pieter Schoombee
Sent: Saturday, February 06, 2016 8:50 AM

• Vodacom

In reply to you latest set of questions, herewith my ID number and bank account, again. The debit order has been in operation for many years and you will find the date in your archives. Before the agent calls, give him or her the correspondence to date (as included.)

From: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Saturday, February 06, 2016 4:12 PM

• *Dear Pieter*

Thank you for your email. Please be advised that I have tried to contact you on 0833008676 unfortunately I could not reach you. Due to the time period that has passed since your last interaction with Vodacom, we need to verify that you have permission to request information on this account by asking you a few security questions:

*Invoice address; *Debit order date; *Vodacom Package

Nosabatha Funo, Customer Care

From: Pieter Schoombee
Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2016 8:32 AM

• Dear Vodacom

You are scraping the barrel with your excuses, ducking and diving. You phoned twice, I answered twice, I could hear you at the other end of the line (heavy breathing,) but you would not speak. Please note that I reserve the right to quote this correspondence.

From: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2016 9:29 AM

• *Dear Pieter*

Thank you for your email. Please accept our sincere apology for the delay in resolving this matter.

I tried calling you today on the number 0833008676 unfortunately the subscriber destination was busy. I have logged a service request to our back office for further investigation and assistance with the matter ... Kindly await feedback with in 24 – 72 hours. If possible could you please provide us with a contact number should we need to contact you.

Luvuyiso Plaatjie, Customer Care

On 2016/02/08 08:39 AM, Pieter Schoombee, wrote:

• Dear Vodacom

Thank you for a more sensible reply. I can be reached on the number you have: 0833008676. I have checked my cell phone. The two calls from Vodacom (08227597) I mentioned were received at 16.01 on 6 February. No further calls were received from Vodacom.

From: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 8:58 AM

• *Dear Pieter Schoombee*

Thank you for your email. Kindly be informed that I have requested that they treat the query with the utmost of urgencies and respond to it as soon as possible.

Please note however, that due to the nature of the investigation, there may be a delay in feedback

Ntsika Xesi, Customer Care

From: Pieter Schoombee
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 9:03 AM

• Dear Vodacom

I refer to your message below. Please advise when I may expect a response.

From: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 9:23 AM

• *Dear Pieter.*

Thank you for your email. Please be advised the status of the service request logged is pending. Feedback will be provided once the investigation has been completed into the service request

Clayton Arendse, Customer Care

• It is now more than a month later. That was the last word heard from Vodacom.

In the meantime they have taken more money from my bank account. Aliens ripping us off? You decide.

E-mail: noag@hermanus.co.za

Better batteries key to clean power

Continued from back page

ium-ion versions. But there is a snag. The aluminium plates have to be replaced to recharge, which might make it difficult, assuming more than one is needed. It could be used in theory for emergency power for vehicles. And might even solve the range problem of electric cars, and last longer.

Perhaps optimistically, it might extend the range to 1,000m, at which point electric cars would be serious rivals to petrol and diesel ones.

It certainly looks promising, but a major flaw is that aluminium production soaks up huge amounts of electricity, so the (ahem) carbon footprint of the battery honestly calculated may rule them out – unless nuclear, hydro or solar power generation is used, nuclear being the front runner to produce enough.

Aluminium-air batteries might produce better electric cars than the Tesla, but they are challenged when it comes to storing larger amounts of power.

Airflow batteries on the other hand can store a lot of power. They just might make wind farms and solar plants that do not work all the time, often at inconvenient times, more efficient. These batteries store power in tanks that when full can deliver power all day. It is a chemical process using cheap materials (water, chromium, and iron.) The drawback is that the process releases hydrogen. That means they get steadily less efficient. Solve that problem and air-low batteries could be winners.

Harvard University researchers claim they have a cheaper and more efficient version, but it is years from production.

The media are enthralled by ex-South African Elon Musk's plans to get over the battery problem by building a massive battery factory in Nevada. He plans to be up and running next year, and producing 500,000 every year from 2017.

Musk is betting on being able to corner the battery market, but he is taking an enormous risk, arousing doubts in some financial and investor circles that he can recoup his investment before better batteries are available. Musk is no fool and he too is researching airflow types.

Where does that leave Musk and his giant factory? Some say he may have started too soon. They point to the battle in the market between VHS television recorders (remember them?) when later digital versions, emerged victorious.

Battery technology has its own problems, but the competition among potential competitors for Musk is hotting up. If a better battery emerges within five years, he could be in trouble. His lithium-ion batteries might turn out to be white elephants like VHS recorders.

Meanwhile, Japanese and Israeli entrepreneurs are betting on their airflow battery types getting into production by 2017. Musk's Nevada factory will take longer to recoup its costs of US$5bn. But then computer chips, gels, and graphene could dramatically improve lithium-ion batteries.

With the big car companies now getting in on the electric car market and even bigger challenge to Musk's ambitions could occur since they are able to marshal huge amounts of capital and expertise.

Thanks to private enterprise, especially in the developed countries, we can look forward to a healthy battle for the battery market. Right now, though the batteries on the market simply do not cut the mustard, especially when it comes to storing power to inject into the existing electricity grids.

What seems unassailable is the contention that bulk load electricity provides by either coal, oil, or developing countries will choose nuclear power stations as they seek to reach the standard of living of the developed world.

The climate may be warming but measurements from space have not shown this happening for the last 18 years or so. It is more likely that the sun is responsible rather than humankind's puny activities.

As for carbon dioxide causing surface temperatures to rise, the scientific jury is out, despite claims that most climate scientists believe it is. As for computer models that are used to predict imminent doom and destruction, it depends what numbers are fed into them.

What we do know for sure is that plants love CO_2. Indeed, without it we would all be worse off – rich and poor.

That is not to say that solar and wind power could not prove very useful away from the electricity grid, but right now that is where they will mostly stay until major advances in battery technology come to market and can survive with subsidies i.e. other people's tax money.

High quality chain hoists offer lowest lifetime costs

Continued from P25

under robust conditions.

The hoists feature helical gearing for quiet operation, electro-magnetic disc brakes for long life, and plug-in cables to reduce maintenance and installation time.

They are also rich in safety features, which include:

- A 24-volt impact protected and rain-proofed control pendant with wire rope moulded into the cable for strain relief.
- An electro-magnetic contactor with mechanical interlock to protect against shorting due to shock
- Optional emergency stop buttons and overload protection.
- Chain containers fitted as standard.
- Upper and lower limit switches to prevent hook over-travel.
- A reverse-phase relay on most models to facilitate inspection.

Among the more ordinary features in the range are chains with hardened surfaces for optimum strength and wear resistance, and hooks that are heat-treated and fitted with a safety latch and 360° swivelling.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- Boilers, burners and combustion systems
- Electrical and automation solutions: supplies / applications / solutions
- Financial Services: access to finance and consulting services
- IDZ's and related Infrastructure: consultants / services / supply chain
- Industrial chemicals: manufacturing and distribution
- Industrial metals (and allied industries) ferrous / non-ferrous
- Innovation & design: including electrical / mechanical engineering innovations / industrial projects / solutions driven design
- Maritime: shipping / port operations
- Materials handling and equipment
- Motoring
- Occupational health and safety
- Power Industry: Generation, transmission, distribution and metering
- Printing and packaging: design / materials / machinery and converting
- Tooling: machine tools / power tools
- Water: engineering / infrastructure / dewatering / maintenance and equipment

Cape Business News is always on the lookout for stories of companies that are shaping the Cape business landscape. If your company has a story to share, in these, or any other business sector, send your story to editor@cbn.co.za for consideration.

CAPE **Business News**

Chairman:
Rudi Leitner
rudi.leitner@hypenica.com
CEO:
Devi Paulsen-Abbott
devi.paulsen@hypenica.com
Publisher:
Errol Bryce
publisher@cbn.co.za
Editor:
Jenni McCann
editor@cbn.co.za
Production Manager:
Elise Jacobs
elise.jacobs@cbn.co.za
Journalist:
Jadine Gracie
jadine.gracie@cbn.co.za
Sales Team:
Heather Ferreira
heather.ferreira@cbn.co.za
Claudia Moult
claudia.moult@cbn.co.za
Robin Dunbar
robin.dunbar@cbn.co.za
Andre Evans
andre.evans@hypenica.com
Subscriptions:
Yvonne van der Westhuizen
subs@cbn.co.za
Publisher:
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Ground control to Vodacom

OPINION

ON THE CONTRARY

Pieter Schoombee

There is a story line that aliens have indeed taken over the world and enslaved us. We manage to pay the bills by working for them, while they live in unthinkable wealth and comfort, not among us, but in special enclosures reserved for them. They are disguised as multinational corporations.

So today we are not joining the usual gathering of splendid conversationalists in the local pub and grill; instead we are going to investigate the alien behaviour of one big corporation with tentacles into the lives of probably every one of us.

Do you have a Vodacom contract? Do you take calls from Vodacom customers?

I have chanced upon a personal observation of their conduct and can therefore vouch for the truth of what is reported below. If it seems like fantasy or humour at times, believe me, it is not.

My original message was sent to Vodacom's online contact facility, about their failure to send me statements and the recent discovery that they were making unauthorised withdrawals from my bank account.

• Vodacom's reply on January 31, inter alia:
Protecting your Vodacom account from fraud is important to us, so ... reply to this email with these three bits of personal information:

1. *ID number or Company Registration Number for corporate accounts*
2. *Bank name and account type*
3. *Physical or postal address that appears on your account*

Vodacom Customer Care

To: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2016 9:05 AM

• Dear Vodacom

In reply to your questions, herewith my ID and bank account details.

(As stated in my mail), you don't send me an account, so I don't know what address is on it. I have requested emailed statements and invoices but don't receive them. Please stop delaying and provide service. This is an urgent matter with implications for Vodacom.

• A call was received from Vodacom's Sonyia Rudolph, and she was given a full explanation of the original email. In response, she sent the following email:

From: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2016 10:33 AM

Dear Mr Schoombee

Thank you for your email. As per our telephonic interaction. I have made you aware of why your invoice for January calculated to the amount of R1,000.34. I have sent you your invoices, from October to January as requested. I have activated your email billing; you will receive your invoices via email ... in PDF format.

Mr Schoombee, regarding the contract 0721833276 which you have a dispute on as advised we require the job number to log a service request for you. Please send us the job number and could you please elaborate on what the query is about. Once we receive the information we will assist you further with your query

Sonyia Rudolph, Customer Care

From: Pieter Schoombee
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 2:16 PM

• Dear Ms Rudolph

The Job Number supplied to me yesterday (4 February 2016) by the Vodacom shop in Hermanus is 0871107, dated 19 November 2015. The document in my possession cites the Job Number as 11197513 and is dated 16 November 2015.

To repeat, this is what happened:

On Thursday, 12 November 2015, I entered into an agreement at The Vodacom shop in Main Street, Hermanus, which included a Samsung cellphone ... I took the phone home and charged it according to the instructions. The battery did not keep its charge and I could not use the phone.

On Monday, 16 November 2015, I returned the phone to the Vodacom shop, informed them that it was not working and that I was cancelling the agreement. The agent, Ms ... claimed I could not cancel and refused to give me a receipt for the phone. She took out the SIM card and gave that to me. Mr ... who seemed to be the manager, also refused to give me a receipt for the phone.

I informed them that by law I was within my rights to cancel the abortive agreement and left the faulty handset with the agent...

From the (subsequent) invoices you sent me ... I note that, in addition to the long-standing service (that phone is used by my wife,) I was billed an amount of ... R646.06

Please cancel the agreement made on 12 November, as requested on 16 November, please make no further billings for the second handset (which I do not have) and please reimburse me the R646.06.

From: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 9:01 PM

• Dear Pieter Schoombee

Thank you for your email. Kindly refer back to the store where you took out the contract and escalate the matter with the manager of the store as to why you still being billed for a device that you not using and requested to be canceled. Should they fail to assist you please do inform us and will escalate your query further.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest apologies for any inconvenience that you may have experienced. This is certainly not in line with Vodacom's aim in achieving service excellence. Vodacom values you and always aim to provide you with the best quality network, products and services.

Ntsika Xesi, Customer Care

From: Pieter Schoombee
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 9:31 AM

• Dear Vodacom

Please stop passing the buck. As you have been informed, the store refuses to cooperate and has given me dubious information regarding the Job Number ... Please escalate without further delays.

From: customercare@vodacom.co.za
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 2:29 PM

• Dear Pieter

We acknowledge receipt of your email. Please contact our Vodacom Repairs on 0821944 (free call from a Vodacom sim card) as their are best equipped to assist with your query ...

Mthuthuzeli George, Customer Care

6 Feb 08.24, via Vodacom's online contact facility:

• Dear Vodacom

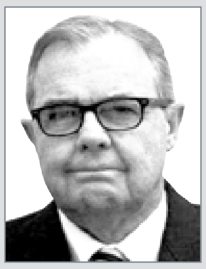
I refer you to the existing correspondence on this matter.

You said it would be resolved once I supplied the Job Number. I did that. What did

Continued on P35

Better batteries key to clean power

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN



Keith Bryers

A battery-fire recently reduced to ashes a Tesla electric sports car while its Californian owner was charging it, raising once again the fatal flaw in all electric cars that use lithium-ion batteries.

Available batteries are the hurdle all non-carbon methods of generating power still need to climb before they can to live up to their much hyped promise.

Fashionable photovoltaic arrays and wind generator farms that have spread across Europe in an excess of green enthusiasm produce very little usable electric power compared to the demands of industry.

The rest of the world has meanwhile been less enthusiastic with more than 2,000 coal-fired power stations now under construction in various developing countries, notably China and India.

Nevertheless, right or wrong, the demand for electric power that does not emit perfectly harmless carbon dioxide, is proving the usual carrot to the free market and profit seekers.

In other words, the battery problem is acknowledged, notwithstanding the wave of propaganda that supports clean energy at any cost – usually taxpayers' money in the form of subsidies. And the private sector is stepping up to the plate.

As usual too, bureaucrats see another chance to spend other people's (i.e. taxpayers) money and ask for more so that they can sink millions into battery research, enlarge their empires, and so increase their pay. Their delusion is that they can identify good prospects better than entrepreneurs can. On the other hand, maybe it is only to ensure their own importance.

There are many new battery types at the research stage. Some are even being tested before commercial production. It is of course one thing to make something in a laboratory, quite another to produce the thing in a factory and make a profit.

One of these is an aluminium-air battery. It is cheap and stores more power than lith-

Continued on P35