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Down the pan

Time to pull the SAA plug.

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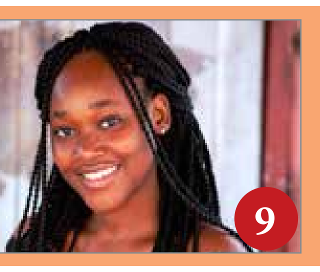
First female to win



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Road Accident Fund - 'a travesty'

Catastrophic incompetence – Transport Minister reveals bankrupt RAF has a R49.9-bn backlog and 45 000 claims stretching unpaid for more than 10 years.

Image courtesy: Illustrative archive photo.

THE Personal Injury Plaintiff Lawyers Association (PIPLA) is the latest group of attorneys to add their voice to the mounting allegations of mismanagement, incompetence and non-payment at the Road Accident Fund (RAF).

"As much as the RAF would like to deflect blame, the reality is that claims are piling up and are just not being paid. This is impacting the most vulnerable in our society – road accident victims," says Advocate Justin Erasmus, Chairperson of PIPLA.

He says this situation has become a complete travesty and attorneys are not the only ones complaining. On Friday 1 November, the KwaZulu-Natal Private Ambulances Association (KZNPAA) issued a memorandum to the RAF threatening to withdraw its ambulances belonging to more than 25 emergency medical services if the RAF did not honour the R10 million still outstanding.

Medical experts have also been hard hit by the twin forces of RAF non-payments and COVID-19, potentially making their practices financially unsustainable. A recent survey in Legalbrief conducted among occupational therapists (89) and industrial psychologists (21) – found that 98% of respondents indicated they cannot sustain their practices financially under current measures implemented by the RAF. Occupational therapist Anne Reynolds says the situation has been compounded by the chaos which was caused by the termination of the RAF's panel of attorneys.

"Reports and joint minutes have not been finalised as a result, new appointments have not been made and/or court dates have been delayed. All of this has had a significant impact on the victims of road accidents, as well as the experts (both defendant and plaintiff) whose valuable expertise is required to ensure fair and equitable settlements of the road accident victims' claims," says Reynolds.

Not a single respondent indicated that their practice was financially sustainable with the current non-payment situation by the RAF. "The real losers will unfortunately be the victims at the end of the day. With no experienced experts to assess the claims, the likelihood is that claims will be under settled with little provision for adequate funds to cover medical costs and aids to ensure an optimal quality of life," she says.

Erasmus says the backlog at the RAF is nothing new, but this has been exacerbated by Covid-19. "When almost every private sector company was making arrangements for staff to work remotely at home during the lockdown, no one was able to interact with any RAF staff during this period which now means the fund is facing an even bigger backlog."

He says with so many complaints of non-payment being aired it is difficult to understand who is actually being paid from the roughly R2 000 million Rand paid to the RAF monthly. There is just no transparency. It appears much of the money flows to Provincial Health Departments who ironically have now also put in claims against the Road Accident Fund – essentially subsidising public health care in South Africa.

Claims from Minister of Transport, Fikile Mbalula, earlier this year that the appointment of ex PRASA CEO, Collins Letsoalo as RAF CEO in August, would help streamline the organisation have unfortunately just not materialised. "In fact," says Erasmus, "if anything, things have only gotten worse."

An employee at de Broglio Attorneys attests to this saying she had been working with the RAF for the last eight years and for the first time this year she actually felt scared for her clients.

"Emails are not answered or acknowledged, and phone calls are simply not picked up. Staff in the costs department say they don't even have paper to print on," she says.

Last month RAF CEO, Collins Letsoalo, asked for a 180 day reprieve on claim settlement payments. "The problem," says Erasmus, "is that the 180 days does not start from the court settlement day, but rather the day the RAF decides to load the settlement onto their system – which is often more than 6 months after the Court case." This week Judge van der Schyff of the High Court in Pretoria criticized the Road Accident Fund saying they must "get their house in order" and that there was "…a total lack of transparency in the [RAF's] dealing with the claims since the beginning of this year…".

Imagine how hard it must be for victims. "Remember it can take anything from 4 – 6 years for a claim to be settled. Many of these victims have had to exist in intense deprivation during this time and may even have been breadwinners for a family so the spin-off is huge. Once the settlement amount is finally settled with a Court Order, the waiting should be over but that

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Adopt-a-school programme aids 57 schools

THE Transport Education Training Authority (TETA) supplied 57 remote rural schools across South Africa with personal protective equipment (PPE) and various learning resources as part of its Adopt-A-School programme for 2020.

According to Maphefo Anno-Frempong, CEO of TETA, the Adopt-A-School programme was initiated to provide schools in outlying areas with teacher capacitation, learning resources, career guidance and additional STEM-based subject classes.

"As a result of the global pandemic, the programme prioritised the distribution of PPE to both learners and their schools, including face masks, face shields, hand sanitisers, refills and thermometers," she says.

Realising that many of the participating schools were in areas outside of the reach of technology, TETA donated several iPads and partnered with service providers to provide the necessary connectivity and data to enable online learning. This resulted in greater access to online learning materials, tools and resources.

With social distancing protocols in mind, the programme culminated in a number of handover events across the country, which took place at a single meeting venue for all participating schools in each province. Learners were presented with string bags containing all required PPE and sanitisers, as well as career guides and pens.

"While 2020 was certainly a difficult year for the majority of learners, TETA is committed to continuing its mandate to assist South African learners from underdeveloped areas with the tools needed to succeed," concludes Anno-Frempong.

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is where the nightmare really begins, trying to get through the administrative inefficiencies of the RAF."

Take for example, a case where the Court Order for the amount was made 24 April 2019. The RAF only requested the payment on the 4th of October 2020. This means that since when the Court Order date was finally signed by a judge and accepted, this payment has already been outstanding for 554 Days (almost 2 years), but because the RAF only requested the payment, on their own system, the 4th of October 2020, they claim it had only been outstanding for 25 days. This means this client will have to wait a further 155 days if RAF has its way.

"Many clients come from very poor backgrounds and just do not have the means to wait or survive this long. A waiting period of at least 500 days is average and for further delays to happen in the actual registration is just not acceptable. We know that the longer the waiting period before an injured victim can receive rehabilitation and support, the less likely his chances of ever returning to the workplace are.

It appears there is no incentive or urgency to register the claim once settled and this is an area we urgently request the RAF to address," concludes Erasmus.

Pandemic fashions retail changes

PROSPECTS could be rendered threadbare for Cape Town's biggest fashion retailers if the Covid-19 pandemic lingers longer than expected in 2021.

With fashion deemed a non-essential item, the curbing of sales by lockdowns has come at an inopportune time for local fashion retailers already battling intensified competition from foreign retail chains and increased online shopping options.

Truworths International – a doyen of the local fashion retailing sector – recently advised that retail sales for the first 18 trading weeks (29 June 2020 to 1 November 2020) of the 2021 financial period decreased 10% to R5.7 billion (compared to the first 18 trading weeks between 1 July 2019 and 3 November 2019).

Retail sales for Truworths Africa (comprising mainly of the businesses in South Africa) decreased by 9% to R4.2 billion. Account sales comprised 69% of these retail sales - but the number of active accounts decreased by 6%.

Truworths said the percentage of active account holders able to purchase and overdue balances as a percentage of gross trade receivables were at 83% (2020: 85%) and 15% (2020: 13%), respectively.

Truworths noted that while gross bad debt in respect of the book were increasing, the overall quality of the book was showing signs of improvement and the allowance for expected credit losses was also starting to reduce.

Trading space decreased 0.5%, and Truworths expects this to remain largely unchanged for the full 2021 financial period.

Truworths, however, put on a brave face for the year ahead. Executives said although the trading environment was expected to remain challenging in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and a weak economic backdrop, the group continued to utilise its extensive experience to manage the risk of fashion through its proven merchandise design and buying processes. Truworths would also manage the risk of the book through continuing to apply strategies to ensure the on-going health of the portfolio.

If there was a real sign of optimism at Truworths it was the announcement of the acquisition of the Barrie Cline Clothing Line; a ladies wear apparel design centre that has been a supplier to the group for more than 30 years.

Truworths CEO Michael Mark said Barrie Cline was well aligned with the varied needs of the Truworths ladies wear. The business provided apparel design, sample and pattern-making services as well as apparel manufacturing through a network of approximately 50 local cut, make and trim operations.

Pepkor – which owns Pep Stores and Ackermans – also looks set for a trying 2021.

In the year to end September, Pepkor managed a 3.6% increase in revenue to almost R64 billion.

CEO Leon Louw said Covid-19 costs of R92 million were incurred – but added that Pepkor saw cost savings of around R700 million compared to budget. He said savings on property rental costs was the biggest

contributor.

"The group continues to operate at the lowest cost of doing business in the market."

The core clothing and general merchandise segment – revolving mainly around Pep and Ackermans - reported an increase in revenue of 1.4% to R45.6 billion. But operating profit decreased by 15.6% to R5.2 billion.

Lourens said retail store expansions slowed during the second half of the year with the segment's store base expanding by 93 stores (net) to 4 375 stores.

Looking ahead, Lourens maintained that the compelling customer value propositions of Pep and Ackermans were expected to continue to resonate with customers in search of value and affordability. "This was confirmed by exceptionally strong growth of 240 basis points in the market share of both PEP and Ackermans as reported by the Retailers' Liaison Committee (RLC)."

Pepkor's speciality retail hub reported mixed results on the back of weaker demand for adult footwear and more discretionary apparel. There was an overall decrease of sales of 3.6% and the division closed 35 stores as some brands consolidated. This reduced the total store base to 829 stores.

Lourens said that while sales performance in Tekkie Town was satisfactory, it was supported by aggressive markdowns.

He said Shoe City was negatively impacted by lower demand in formal and school footwear categories, and that John Craig's performance was impacted by a shift in consumer demand away from formal wear. Pepkor has subsequently opted to dispose of this business.

Lourens revealed that Dunns, however, achieved profitability for the first time in many years.

Lourens stressed that Pepkor had gained significant market share in the period since May 2020. "The strong sales momentum continued into the months of October and November 2020 with double-digit like-for-like sales growth reported in PEP, Ackermans, Speciality and the JD Group." Lourens contended: "Providing the South African consumer with affordable products has become even more important in the current environment and the group is ideally positioned to execute on this."

Still, Lourens warned that the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact in the near to medium term remained uncertain. "There is an expectation that the toughest times for the economy and customers are still to come as unemployment increases and special grants and other benefits are reduced."

Fortunately for Pepkor cash generation has been excellent and the balance sheet has been fortified. Lourens said this provided security and the ability to capitalise on potential opportunities that may arise in the market.

He also stressed that the group's operations were prepared for changes in consumer behaviour with accelerated progress in e-commerce and fintech capabilities.

Lourens emphasised that despite the challenges ahead, the group continued to identify opportunities for store expansion – which would mainly be driven by Pep and Ackermans as well as the development of new retail formats.

Vanity bailout costs nearly 6 000 beneficiaries property ownership in the WC

BY cutting the Western Cape Title Deed Restoration Grant (TDRG) by over R23 million, as part of the R10,5 billion bailout to SAA, the National Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni had demonstrated that the National Government was not prepared to make the tough choices needed for a real recovery, that would ensure jobs, safety and dignity in South Africa.

This reduction in the budget means that at a cost of almost R4 000 per Title Deed, over 5 800 people would now not be assisted by the State and therefore not receive this life-changing and empowering document. To exacerbate matters, this is the final year where the TDRG will be allocated.

At the beginning of this financial year, we had a TDRG of over R67 million, which would've assisted 17 000 deserving beneficiaries. Due to the fight against the coronavirus there was an initial cut of R44.4 million,

SAA bailout?

and the reduction in the second adjustment is over R23 million. This further reduction means that the number of beneficiaries that can be assisted is significantly lower.

It is unfathomable that this is being done to keep a failed airline like SAA flying. It is an insult to the dignity that each person in our province deserves.

As a Provincial Department of Human Settlements, we've been on a mission to accelerate the handover of Title Deeds. Just recently, and in the space of one week, with funds utilised from the TDRG, we handed 90 Title Deeds to deserving beneficiaries in Khayelitsha (74) and Pniel (16), as we understand how these handovers empowers our people to significantly improve their lives.

> "Tito Mboweni had demonstrated that the National Government was not prepared to make the tough choices..."

Furthermore, a Title Deed also opens up a variety of opportunities for recipients and their families to create wealth for themselves and their loved ones. It therefore also stimulates the economy and can help create jobs.

That is why we will continue to find innovative ways to provide this empowering dignity to our residents in the Western Cape, and we will not shy away from making the brave choices which the National Government has failed to do.

Hard yards for Golden Arrow in 2021

HOSKEN Passenger Logistics and Rail (HPLR) – which has Golden Arrow Bus Company as its main profit engine – will be hoping to pick up speed in 2021 after the Covid-19 pandemic put the brakes on profit growth in the past year. Golden Arrow ferries a sizeable portion of Cape Town's workforce every day, and as such can be considered a fairly accurate barometer of economic activity in the province.

The Covid-19 pandemic required some careful steering by Golden Arrow.

HPL&R's latest annual report noted that the projection made by the City of Cape Town in May that approximately 130 000 jobs would be lost due to the pandemic during the first half of the year, mirrored the decline in passenger numbers recorded in the same period by the group's commuter bus operations.

HPL&R CEO Francois Meyer said that to properly align demand with supply, Golden Arrow Bus was compelled to withdraw 200 buses from service and reduce manpower commensurately.

Ultimately 306 staff were retrenched in July from mainly the operations and engineering units of Golden Arrow.

In addition to this, he said short-time and temporary layoffs were also instituted to provide relief for the operation of reduced service schedules under varying restrictive lockdown regulations.

Fortunately for Golden Arrow, it was able to conclude an agreement with the Provincial Contracting Authority to pay a standing kilometre rate where scheduled operations were unduly disrupted due to capacity limitations and travel time restrictions imposed by the lockdown regulations.

Meyer said continued attention would be given to clawing back from the setbacks induced by lockdown restrictions.

He pointed out that with the easing of restrictions accompanying each level of lockdown, the number of Golden Arrow passengers showed a gradual increase ranging from a low of 10% with level five to close to 60% with level one.

Meyer said that in the case of the Sibanye Bus Services - which primarily operates routes along the western seaboard - the increase in passengers occurred at a faster rate and the expectation was that full capacities could be achieved in the short term.

The performance of Table Bay Area Rapid Transit was not affected during this period – thanks to the nature of the contractual arrangement with the City of Cape Town. But HPL&R's Eljosa Travel and Tours - whose operations are linked to the luxury coach market segment - were severely impacted by international travel restrictions. Meyer reckoned that with a second wave of COVID outbreaks being experienced in the traditional international markets, it may be some time before this market returned to pre-COVID levels.

To make matters worse, Meyer observed that service delivery protests, in the areas in which the group operates, were becoming more common place in the run up to the general elections.

He said both Golden Arrow and Sibanye were affected by this type of action and eight buses were destroyed in the past financial year.

Ultimately, Meyer believed the recovery of the local economy will be critical in recording pre-COVID passenger numbers in the year ahead. "Utilising a reduced overhead structure to achieve budgetary targets has been elevated as a key operational imperative."

For the past financial year HPL&R saw bottom line profit down 46% to R68 million with the reduced passenger numbers pulling down revenue 27%.

Meyer said the group had put all major capital expenditure - including its fleet replacement programme on hold. This is expected to last for at least the next 12 months.

Coega's SEZ update

The development of DHL Logistics Facility estimated to create 380 job opportunities.

THE Coega Development Corporation (CDC), developer and operator of the Coega Special Economic Zone (SEZ) it is currently constructing three projects accumulatively valued in excess of R380 million.

The projects, which have brought about much needed jobs in the economy of the Eastern Cape (EC), have culminated in the creation of no fewer than 290 construction jobs thus far. Having experienced limited to no economic activity during the earlier levels of the South African government national lockdown. These jobs have come at a time when many families are struggling to make ends meet.

With infrastructure forming a key part of South Africa's economic recovery plan, Special Economic Zones (SEZ), such as Coega, has a role to play in stimulating economic growth and job creation.

The projects, which include African Port Logistics and Infrastructure (Citrus sector) – R264 million, expansion of the Multi-User Facility – R71 million and DHL Logistics Facility (Logistics sector) – R156 million, form part of the EC's economic priority sectors.

Multi-user facility

The Multi-user phase two (2) located in Zone 3 of the Coega SEZ is currently under construction with over 151 construction jobs created thus far. The 7 000m2 facility is a replica model of the successful phase one (1), which is now fully occupied. It seeks to provide affordable industrial space for many small-to-medium companies, especially entrepreneurs wishing to grow their business. Since the establishment of the multi-user facility, it has provided local people with employment in the construction industry.

APLI, a R264 million project, which will see the development of fruit packaging facility, fruit cold storage and a container depot. All handling, packaging and exporting citrus fruit that is proudly produced in the Province. The project has to date has created over 147 jobs in construction and a further 14 SMMEs having benefited.

The last of the three projects is the DHL Logistics Facility, which will occupy a total of 11 400m² and will see the development of a warehouse and offices. The project is estimated to create 380 construction jobs and further SMME participation.

Skills project to create job opportunities in the clothing and textile sector

THE City of Cape Town in partnership with the Craft and Design Institute (CDI) has launched the Cape Skills and Employment Accelerator project, which is focused on creating employment opportunities for youth and women in the clothing and textile industry in Cape Town over the next three years. The plan is for CDI to recruit between 40 to 60 SMMEs to participate in the project and the goal is to train 200 machinists for the sector.

The Cape Skills and Employment Accelerator has been made possible thanks to the National Skills Fund collaboration with the City of Cape Town. The project will enable SMMEs to take on machinists at a greatly reduced cost to their business while creating learning and work opportunities for unemployed women and youth

The programme is designed to offer National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level training and workplace opportunities for unemployed youth and women as part of a 12-month learnership, with a view to the SMMEs employing the women at the end of the project. The learners who are recruited for the project must reside within the City of Cape Town metropolitan area, while the businesses may operate outside it.

'The youth and women will be supported through an accredited learnership (NQF level 2) in either clothing, footwear, leather, and textile production. SMMEs will be able to create a job profile to suit their individual business needs and recruit participants from the learnerships with little cost to the business. Thanks to tax rebates and incentives, a business can reduce the cost even further,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Opportunities and Asset Management, Alderman James Vos.

The application deadline is 15 January 2021.

THE BEE IN MY BONNET COLUMN

Rail in decline – a precursor to road deterioration?

There is always a consequence...

NOT having embarked on a long road trip since leaving Johannesburg for good, seven years ago, I was looking forward to the experience when the opportunity arose to pay the old haunts a visit.

The sights are just as beautiful as I remember especially the Hex River Valley but what I found astonishing was the number of trucks on the road which I'm convinced outnumbered other traffic by at least 50:1.

I can't complain at the level of skill and politeness of the drivers of these behemoths although I'm sure when several 50 tonners get into convoy, slipstreaming the guy in front – probably to save fuel – means that other motorists have to plan very carefully to safely overtake three or four trucks at once. More timid drivers just don't take the risk and this causes a tailback and frustration and even more risk as faster drivers now have to choose their spot carefully to overtake not just three juggernauts but perhaps several passenger cars or bakkies too.

Besides road safety, another issue caused by the increase in heavy goods traffic is the condition of the roads. Not good, probably best described as 'adequate'. Negotiating rough and corrugated pavements got me to thinking why the heavy goods vehicle market had grown so much when we have a railway system that statistics show should be much more efficient and cost competitive than road transport.

We have the worst of both worlds – a dysfunctional rail system plagued by theft, corruption and incompetence and a road freight industry which admittedly has filled the gap, but at what cost to the fiscus?

I'm sure there is rational explanation (!) why there are so many manganese ore carriers transporting this important export from the Northern Cape to Port Elizabeth on the roads, but having driven on the R389 recently and dodged the potholes, its unfathomable why this important mineral has to be transported by road.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that the rail system isn't competitive and hasn't been so for many years but this lack of investment and desire for competitiveness is incomprehensible for a growing economy. I'm sure our road engineers will quote all the statistics and maintenance projections of the damage these 30 – 50 tonners do to the road surface and the frequency our roads need to be repaired – all at great cost, safety considerations and inconvenience to the taxpayer.

What level of contribution does the road freight industry make to the maintenance of our roads? Can a finger be pointed at this industry to determine that they are paying their fair share for maintaining the road infrastructure? A rhetorical question.

Perusing various government generated reports on the topic of freight movement, indicate that they are not and at least one comments that there is reluctance on the part of the RFA (Road Freight Association) to part with industry statistics.

One report consulted showed that a comparison between the damage caused to road surfaces by a passenger car axel of 850 kg as opposed to a truck axel of 4 000 kg, was 0,002 times or that a truck axel does nearly 500 times more structural damage than a car axel does. Maximum permitted truck axel loads in this country can be double that – 8 000 kg!

The RFA proclaims (on its website) that one of the fundamentals of its establishment in 1975 was the upkeep of road infrastructure but apart from a mention in the contents opening paragraph, this activity is absent from the Association's activities or goals.

Readers interested in the switch of freight from road to rail could do no better than read the full report *"Freight shift from road to rail" www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/publications/freightshift_roadtorail.pdf*

By way of closing, can anyone explain why it is apparently not necessary for trucks and trailers to have mud guards? It is a very dangerous omission, especially in heavy rain when the spray generated by an unguarded wheel obliterates other driver's vision and I have suffered two broken windscreens by rocks and stones thrown up by the unguarded wheels of a passing truck.

Eish.

AMSA'S arrogance and the DTIC's naivety knows no bounds

Opinion by Gerhard Papenfus

Credit mg.co.za

DURING the course of 2015, after a visit to then-President Zuma by the owner of ArcelorMittal International, the steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, the DTI made a 180-degree about-turn in respect of its approach towards South Africa's sole primary flat steel supplier, the monopolistic ArcelorMittalSA (AMSA).

Prior to Mr Mittal's visit, the DTI was entirely opposed to import duties. In fact, the last 5% duties had been scrapped by the DTI before his visit. The effect of Mr Mittal's visit resulted in:

- a lucrative BEE deal that cost AMSA millions of Rands; and which
- in return for the favour, resulted in the introduction of 10% customs duties and soon thereafter a further implementation of 12% safeguard duties.

Although these duties caused havoc in the steel downstream, AMSA's woes, and its loss-making trajectory, continued. Duties were not enough; they had to come up with a new plan.

The newly proposed Steel Master Plan presented AMSA with a new opportunity.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC, formerly the DTI), instead of drafting the Plan, requested a protégé of AMSA to draft it. The end result is a plan which in its entirety is aimed at benefitting AMSA - a colossal, ineffective, loss-making monopoly.

The new Steel Master Plan, if introduced, spells disaster for the entire industry. The Plan, among others, makes provision for the following:

- for every ton of steel used in South Africa, R5 to R10/ton must be paid to fund a Steel Council that will enforce an arrangement which will compel SOE's, the Government Infrastructure Build Programme, municipalities, etc. to buy expensive AMSA steel under the disguise of 'localisation';
- the banning of certain items used by the steel industry's production processes. This list of items was clearly compiled by AMSA, since the importation thereof competes with AMSA's products; and
- for the Steel Council to work closely with the prosecuting authority and SARS to prosecute those who do not adhere to this 'localisation' drive.

Not only will the steel downstream be expected to pay in order to keep AMSA alive, but also the taxpayer; just another tax burden to keep an inefficient entity alive.

The blatant, in your face, ruthless, to-hell-with-the-downstream nature of this proposal is simply mindboggling.

The Plan does not make any mention of the scrapping of all duties that the Industry so desperately needs to enable it to import the current shortfall created by AMSA's poor performance.

The Plan does not, in any way; grapple with the notion that for the Steel Industry to prosper as a whole, access to duty-free imported raw material should be allowed.

Since the obvious intent of the new Master Plan is to indiscriminately protect this malignant tumour terrorising the Steel Industry, nothing constructive is proposed.

Gerhard Papenfus is the Chief Executive of the National Employers' Association of South Africa (NEASA).

Community rallies behind SU student

BLAINE Coetzee, a 20-year-old Stellenbosch University Engineering student, was recently diagnosed with Stage 4 Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL). To help him and his family through this difficult time, his community has come together to lend him a helping hand.

Blaine requires extensive testing prior to aggressive chemotherapy treatment in order to determine the extent of the spread of the NHL. Unfortunately, these tests are not covered by medical aid and neither he nor his family has the funds to cover them.

To assist Blaine in his road to recovery, a crowdfunding campaign has been launched on BackaBuddy, which has already raised over R124 000 towards his fundraising target of R150 000 with contributions from 272 donors both locally and abroad.

"At 20 years old the diagnosis alone is devastating. Add to that the costs involved and the stress that brings to him and his family? We cannot begin to imagine! But, despite the shocking diagnosis as well as the financial strain and uncertainty, Blaine is holding his head high, remaining positive, and is trying to be a source of strength and comfort to his family and friends. Reaching our target would mean that Blaine and his family can focus all of their energy on his recovery, without having to worry about the financial burden as well." says close friend, Samantha Taylor.

View Blaine's crowdfunding campaign: https://www.backabuddy.co.za/blaine-coetzee

Donate via Snapscan: https://pos.snapscan.io/qr/blaine-coetzee

All funds raised by Blaine's BackaBuddy campaign will strictly be used to cover his ongoing medical expenses.

About BackaBuddy:

- **BackaBuddy is a proudly South African crowdfunding platform where individuals have the opportunity to raise funds for causes they feel passionate about.**
- **BackaBuddy has raised over R200 million for various charities, individuals and causes across South Africa.**
- **Website: https://www.backabuddy.co.za/**
- **Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BackabuddySA**

R7,7 billion worth of investment heading directly to Cape Town

Of the investments announced at the recent Presidential Investment Summit, R7,7 billion will be invested directly into Cape Town. The investments into Cape Town include Google (R2,2bn), Amdec (R2bn), Capita (R500m), and Teraco (R3bn), says Alderman James Vos, the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Opportunities and Asset Management,

"THERE is no better testament to our investment ecosystem. Major international corporations know that they can access world-class infrastructure, sound governance, a skilled workforce, and the political will to secure significant investment, which will result in job creation.

"The City of Cape Town is ready to partner with the public and private sector to help attract investments that will drive demand and make sense.

"Our Investment Facilitation Unit, within the City's Enterprise and Investment Department, focuses exclusively on attracting investment, providing various kinds of specialist support to small and large businesses, as well as investment incentives and skills development so we can help businesses reach their full potential and employ more people.

"For more information on the City's business brand, Invest Cape Town, run by Enterprise and Investment Department, visit www.investcapetown.com

"The City provides funding to and collaborates with Strategic Business Partners (SBPs) to actively seek out opportunities to grow our economy by attracting investment. Due to the national lockdown, part of our strategic plans to plot the road to recovery was to ask our SBPs to pivot their operations, which resulted in significant investment and job creation.

"Between April and September 2020, the City's SBPs collectively facilitated R8,8 billion worth of investment, created 4 980 jobs and trained 1 366 people, despite the various stages of the national lockdown and economic downturn we have faced.

"Two of our SBPs, Wesgro's Investment Promotion Unit, assisted by the InvestSA One Stop Shop, helped facilitate the Amdec deal, with CapeBPO (formerly known as BPeSA) facilitating the Capita investment.

"The strategies implemented and the collective achievements by our SBPs proves that where there is a will, there is a way to plot a sustainable path to economic recovery."

A recent study found that the average golfer walked around 1 500 km annually

Another study found that golfers drink on average about 99 litres of alcohol per year, which means that golfers on average get about 5,7 ℓ/100 km.

Kind of makes you proud – I almost feel like a hybrid.

World Bank invests $10.5 billion in fossil fuels since Paris Agreement

- *World Bank provides finance for fossils despite climate pledge*
- *Energy transition too slow to avert climate crisis*
- *Ongoing fossil fuel investments push world past 1.5°C global warming*

AS the World Bank conducted its digital Annual Meeting, civil society groups criticized the bank's ongoing investments in the fossil fuel industry. Research conducted by Urgewald reveals that the World Bank Group has invested over $12 billion in fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement, $10.5 billion of which were new direct fossil fuel project finance.

In order to arrest the escalating climate crisis, the world needs an urgent and just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Data shows that the energy transition is happening far too slowly. Researchers from several expert organizations, including the UN Environment Programme, determined the world is currently on track to produce 120% more fossil fuels by 2030 than is compatible with a 1.5°C pathway. Thus, we are already on track to miss the Paris Climate Agreement goal. In addition, according to The Economist, annual investments in wind and solar capacity need to reach about $750 billion, which requires a tripling of current investment levels.

Simply put, critics say that there is far too much invested in fossil fuel production and not enough in renewable energy. Actions that slow down the energy transition result in more destabilizing climate-related consequences. The World Bank states that without urgent action, climate change will push more than 100 million people into poverty by 2030.

Yet the World Bank is a big part of the problem.

Freshline™ offers benefits for retailers and customers

SINCE the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the drastic changes to the buying patterns of consumers, the value of Air Products' Freshline™ solutions were highlighted as a key aspect of the success of modified atmosphere packaging (MAP). By using products packaged in this particular way, consumers have peace of mind that the products will stay fresh for longer naturally, thus enabling them to visit the stores less frequently.

Besides extending the shelf life of food products, MAP also plays a further role to maintain the texture and taste. It is often referred to as gas flushing in the industry as the high-purity single gas or the gas mixture creates an atmosphere around the food that acts as a protective layer. The use of MAP was first introduced in the 1930's, and the meat industry predominantly benefitted from this way of extending the shelf life of food products for longer periods of time. Through the years, more products and various atmospheric gases were adopted for this form of packaging.

Changing the way food is prepared and stored

An improvement in packaging technology was a crucial aspect to support food manufactures. Over time, more of the big retailers started making use of central distribution facilities, ultimately leading to a solution where food can be stored in a modified atmosphere that allowed the food to stay fresher for longer. The increased effect of globalisation and the need to move products over long distances, also called for drastic changes and improvements in the preparation, packaging, transportation and storage of food.

Highlighting the benefits of this innovative form of packaging

Pregie Maistry, Specialty Gas Sales Manager at Air Products, explains that they have seen a significant increase in the sales of Freshline™ over the years as more and more manufacturers discovered the benefits of atmospheric packaging.

Maistry shares that there are a number of benefits that they have observed with customers. "The shelf life of products can increase between 50 and 500%, which holds many advantages for manufacturers. There is a definite improvement in the utilization of labour and equipment as the flattened product peaks allows longer packing runs. Due to the MAP packaging, there is an enhancement of the visual aspect of the products which makes it more attractive to the consumer."

According to Maistry, many of their customers have also commented that the sealed packs prevent drip and odours. Customers would rather buy a product that is packed safely, which is achieved by MAP, and this packaging also plays a role in minimising waste and spoilage.

With a culture of consumers being health conscious and paying close attention to ingredients that may cause allergies and other conditions, this form of packaging has played a vital role in reducing the need for artificial preservatives.

Maistry further comments that companies are continuously looking at ways to reduce their carbon footprint by means of more sustainable distribution possibilities.

He concludes: "At Air Products, we pride ourselves in our ability to not only supply high-purity food grade gases and equipment, but to form a partnership with our customers. We assist them to improve their systems and the quality of the products they manufacture with the technical support we provide and most importantly, our unmatched industry experience. Lastly, we believe our service levels play a role in the success of each of our customers."

For more information on Air Products, visit www.airproducts.co.za.

An Overture into supersonic flight

Picture credit Boom Supersonic.

IN a joint press release, Boom Supersonic and Collins Aerospace announced that the two companies have entered into a strategic collaboration to develop nacelle technology on the Boom Overture, a concept supersonic aircraft.

Boom Supersonic and Collins Aerospace engineers will work in unison in order to develop inlet, nacelle, and exhaust system technologies on the Overture.

The goal of the collaboration is to reduce the fuel burn of the Overture, reduce the noise and the environmental impact of supersonic flight. The two companies plan to achieve this by utilizing lightweight aerostructures and variable nacelle geometry.

"Through improved acoustics and lightweight materials systems, we can provide the next generation of supersonic propulsion systems with the nacelle technologies that not only enable higher performance and lower fuel burn but also quieter operation," stated president of aerostructures at Collins Aerospace Marc Duvall.

Variable inlet and exhaust technologies will be at the forefront of the collaborating manufacturers, which should minimize the noise emitted from the aircraft, while at the same time adding extra performance.

"Boom is taking an all-encompassing approach to sustainability— from our commitment to make Overture 100% carbon neutral to minimizing community noise and emissions, we're dedicated to making mainstream supersonic travel environmentally and economically sustainable," added the founder and CEO of Boom, Blake Scholl.

Overture is planned to roll-out in 2025, with the first scheduled flight to take place in 2029. Recently, the manufacturer rolled out the XB-1, a smaller-scale supersonic testbed for technologies for the Overture.

Credit AeroTime Daily News.

Explosion-proof compressor systems

J. P. Sauer & Sohn Maschinenbau GmbH, the parent company of the Sauer Compressors group, offers explosion-proof high-pressure compressors for many ATEX zones. The company has now had the quality management system for the manufacturing processes of the devices audited according to ISO/IEC 80079-34:2018 by an independent third party. In June, TÜV SÜD confirmed the conformity with the important standard following a voluntary audit.

The ATEX Directive 2014/34/EU regulates equipment and protective systems being put into circulation as well as being provided in potentially explosive atmospheres. The quality management system according to ISO/IEC 80079-34:2018 ensures that the products actually comply with the directive. By complying with this standard, J. P. Sauer & Sohn Maschinenbau assumes responsibility not only for its own components, but also for all supplied parts. This means that the company controls suppliers and their processes accordingly. Managing Director Harald Schulz names one example, "We use our own measuring equipment to check whether fans and tubes that are installed in the compressors are antistatic as declared and therefore ATEX-compliant." The ATEX-compliant manufacturing process also extends to the areas of maintenance and spare parts.

Transferring high design standards to processes

The company has newly created the specialist position of an ATEX manager as a staff position with the management, and the employees are permanently trained. The audit by TÜV SÜD is to be carried out annually from now on. "The demand for explosion-proof ATEX compressors is increasing. We have now established our high design standards on the side of the processes as well. Customers can thus minimize their risk and be sure that the compressors are ATEX-compliant front to back," explains Managing Director Harald Schulz.

Sauer Compressors is a medium-sized German group of companies with twelve international subsidiaries. The company was founded more than 135 years ago, and has over 85 years› experience in compressed air technology. Today, it focusses on the development, production and sale of medium- and high-pressure compressors for applications in commercial shipping, industries, the petroleum industry and the defence sector. The four product lines Sauer, HAUG, Girodin und EK focus on specific fields of application.

The Sauer line comprises oil-lubricated high-pressure compressors for a wide variety of applications, while HAUG stands for oil-free and hermetically gas-tight compressors. The Girodin and EK lines offer special compressors for the naval market. Sauer Compressors' modern reciprocating compressors for the compression of air and various gases reach pressures of 20 to 500 barg.

Besides standard products, it offers customised solutions for individual customers, OEMs and companies that operate on a global stage. With a global network of agents and representatives, Sauer maintains close proximity to its customers. By supplementing the compressor range with high-quality accessories, engineering services, assembly and service concepts, Sauer offers system solutions right up to complete turnkey installations.

For more information, visit www.sauercompressors.com.

The energy efficiency of vane technology

THANKS to their high volumetric efficiency, mechanical efficiency and low rotation speed, Mattei rotary vane compressors are able to compress air in a more efficient and environmentally friendly manner than other air compressors.

On average, compressed air is responsible for 10% of industry's electricity consumption, with peaks of up to 20%.

More efficient air compression technologies, together with the correct sizing of the system, can therefore considerably limit the energy consumption of companies and contribute to the containment of CO_2 emissions related to the use of fossil fuels. Moreover, the energy efficiency of the compressor is key to reducing its Life Cycle Cost, a parameter that assesses the entire cost of ownership of capital goods. It should not be forgotten that electricity accounts for about 80% of the total cost of a compressor's life cycle.

Mattei air compressors incorporating exclusive rotary vane technology enable efficient production of compressed air, reduction of energy costs, CO_2 emissions and machine operating costs.

The importance of design

Rotary vane compressors are based on a design that provides important benefits:

- the process of air compression is volumetrically very efficient thanks to the elimination of air leaks during the compression phase. Unlike rotary screw compressors, where the small clearances between the moving mechanical parts allow for air leaks, the absence of leaks in vane compressors is due to the particular rotary vane design consisting only of a rotor, stator and vanes;
- the blades compress the air, never coming into direct contact with the internal surface of the stator, driven by centrifugal force during rotation, obtaining a perfect seal thanks to the presence of a film of oil;
- moreover, the structure of the machine allows minimal the mechanical losses, thus achieving 90% of mechanical efficiency with much lower consumption of energy.

The high volumetric efficiency, the mechanical efficiency and the low speed of rotation determine energy savings of more than 15% compared to other rotary compressors.

For more information visit www.rotorvane.co.za

'One-stop-oncology' offering

Icon Growth announced as empowerment arm.

VALUE-based care (VBC) business, Icon Oncology South Africa is pioneering transformation in the local healthcare sector and driving adoption of value-based-care to deliver better patient outcomes.

On World Quality Day, the group of companies under the leadership of Anthony Pedersen (formally CEO of Medscheme Holdings) announced a number of new business initiatives and shared its (2023) strategy to create value across the cancer treatment continuum.

"For years we've known that the traditional fee-for-service model is simply not sustainable. In the last decade Icon Oncology has developed evidence-based cancer treatment protocols, drug formularies, a large footprint of facilities and a network of some of the best oncologists in South Africa," says Pedersen.

"Today, we are able to combine all of that into something quite unique: a streamlined, bundled fee pricing model that brings the best possible care to increasing numbers of patients. Importantly, our studies show that this model is 27% more cost effective than other providers whilst delivering improved outcomes for our patients."

Despite the additional pressures of the pandemic, Pedersen has consolidated and driven Icon Oncology's business strategy which aims to position the company as a preferred partner to funders and an obvious solution provider for NHI oncology benefits once implemented.

"In the challenging and uncoordinated South African healthcare sector, we are committed to transforming our culture, move towards becoming a majority black-owned business, diversifying our business offering and through value-based contracting, delivering quality cancer care to both the private and public sectors," says Pedersen.

As a significant step in its transformation strategy, Icon Growth was recently registered to empower black shareholding in the business. "In the future, black oncologists will [be able to] own a 51% majority stake in the business, which will accelerate our goal of becoming a level 2 BBEE contributor by 2022," says Pedersen.

Enterprise development is also earmarked in its transformation strategy; "Oncology is a capital intensive industry. Icon Growth will give black practitioners the opportunity to set-up a business with the support of a large national network of peers. Through this venture young black oncologists will have access to clinical and managed care IP and systems, capital, turnkey cancer treatment facilities and a contracted patient base," explains Pedersen.

In a vote of confidence, the Icon shareholders have unanimously approved a property transaction to invest R480 million to purchase a property portfolio holding 15 key properties within the group's oncology partner network.

"This will enable us to expand our national footprint and allow us to create full-service 'one-stop oncology centres' for doctors wishing to set-up a practice. We anticipate concluding the transaction within the next couple of weeks," says Pedersen.

As part of becoming a one-stop oncology service, the company is diversifying further in the oncology value chain by offering a full chemotherapy solution. The first step was to secure a wholesale pharmacy licence which the company acquired with its recent purchase of AG Morris International (Pty) LTD.

"This is a key milestone in our chemotherapy business which will include mixing facilities, administration and supply chain management. Participating in the pharma-value chain will allow us to do what we do best which is to reduce wastage to bring patients the best quality and most effective care at the most affordable price. To see this work in practice, we look forward to implementing our first full-service chemotherapy unit at our new Constantiaberg facility in Cape Town early in 2021," says Pedersen.

Celebrating SALGA in a parallel universe

0r a festival of failure.

Observations from Ms Janine Myburgh, President of the Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

THE South African Local Government Association (SALGA) two-day National Members Assembly held recently in Sandton, Gauteng, provided examples of a kid-glove approach to problems in the civil services demonstrated by a kid-glove approach to the shambles in municipalities.

For SALGA is a Quango – a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization. Like the civil service It depends on government funding. Everything it does is funded by taxpayers, including its two-day conferences. Whether SALGA members consider themselves servants of the public is moot.

A veritable who-is- who was there: the President, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, the President of SALGA, and the association's senior staff, MECs for Local Government, the Chairperson of the National House Mayors, Speakers and Chief whips, Councillors and traditional leaders, and a few ordinary citizens.

SALGA is 20 years old, but two decades of overseeing a collapse of local government in all but 20 of the country's 257 municipalities, is a milestone of sorts. And milestones, even in the most troubled of marriages, need to be marked lest things get worse.

How did the President's speechwriters handle this delicate situation? How to celebrate failure?

The answer is with euphemisms designed to soften the awful state affairs, and an opening sermon with an unspoken subtext that sinners are always welcome, if they confess their sins. There were quotes from the Good Book (The Constitution) then a solemn reading of the SALGA Mission Statement (the Creed) and then a call to reflect (Prayer).

Delegates were enjoined to reflect on progress which was difficult but there were all sorts of external factors to be considered – Covid, of course, described as "a setback for all spheres of government", and then a series of reflections posed as questions:

Has local government been effective in overcoming the injustices of the past?

What progress have we made in improving the quality of life for our citizens through our local government structures?

Has local government advanced effective and ethical governance?

All the scripted answers were positive. Local government has been a key driver of development. Progress has been substantial. The quality of life of millions of people has been improved. There are schools, libraries and clinics where there once were none. Communities have sanitation and clean drinking water. Homes have been electrified. Streets have been paved.

Bad news was voiced carefully so as not to upset. The damning reports of the Auditor-General were pointed at, but described as very serious "challenges". Other challenges were "inherited" (nobody's fault, then).

These inheritances were from 20 years ago, like massive backlogs in basic services, deep inequality, weak revenue bases, rising demand for services and the devolution of several new powers and functions to local government.

Many municipalities are ill-equipped to take on the responsibilities expected of them. (No fault there either).

When corruption and nepotism were mentioned they were bracketed within the euphemism of institutional weaknesses – in case anyone might have thought fingers were being pointed – and there was the cover-all "crisis of credibility".

Nothing bad was ever anyone's fault.

The solution offered was more structures and more civil servants, this time under a banner called the District Development Model of which there are already three pilot sites – one each in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, the Waterberg District Municipality, and the OR Tambo District Municipality.

The Development Bank of Southern Africa will be an "implementing agent". The success of all this is promised to be greater coordination and collaboration between all spheres of government, based on the "COVID-19 experience"….

To long-suffering ratepayers it may invoke the old saying, "Fine words butter no parsnips" which means, to use a sporting analogy: More managers, coaches, water carriers and physiotherapists will not make the team play any better".

Against the background of municipal collapse it seemed like celebrating SALGA can be likened to a parallel universe.

Or how to celebrate abject failure. After reading SALGA's aims and objectives on its website, I'm still in the dark as to what it does and why it is necessary. Someone please enlighten me. Ed.

SASFA drive for membership

LARGELY due to the poor economic conditions, the Southern African Light Steel Frame Building Association (SASFA) has been suffering a decline in membership numbers.

In order to expand its it has decided to revise the Individual Membership category, which has up to now been reserved for students.

Any person can now apply for Individual Membership to ensure they are included in mail messages and reports, and qualify for membership discounts for courses and publications. Membership fees will be a nominal R2 500 pa.

So as not to detract from the status of the other membership categories, names of Individual Members will not be listed on the SASFA website, and they will also not receive a membership certificate.

All members will be given the opportunity to provide input and guidance for the role SASFA is required to play during the next 10 years.

SAB provides R1.2bn boost to local canning industry

ANHEUSER-Busch InBev (AB-InBev), parent company to The South African Breweries (SAB), has reaffirmed its role as a driver of economic growth as the brewer negotiated a deal with local can manufacturer Bevcan to export an additional one billion locally manufactured cans across the Atlantic to its operations in South, Central and North America between 2020 and 2021.

Bevcan, like many others in SAB's value chain, had suffered a knock over the lockdown period due to the two beer bans. As a result of this deal, Bevcan have reignited a decommissioned line solely for the purpose of producing and exporting cans for the America's. This will provide a much-needed boost of R1.2bn or a 20% increase to the South African beverage canning industry, which supports thousands of livelihoods at a time where economic growth and unemployment are experiencing record lows.

This partnership demonstrates the company's commitment to growing the nation's economy by buying local and supporting local businesses in the markets that it operates. During these trying economic times and having endured two unwarranted bans on beer, the brewer is steadfast in rebuilding its local business as well as those of its value chain partners, with the ultimate goal of building a sustained economy.

This boost to the South African canning industry will add an extra layer to the already significant economic contribution of the beer industry.

Over one million livelihoods depend on the alcohol industry's value chain with 140 000 of those livelihoods depending on SAB alone.

Confidence rises again in Q4 on the back of a further uptick in residential building demand

THE FNB/BER Building Confidence Index gained 20 points to 24 in 3Q2020. A further rise in confidence to 29 was registered in 4Q2020. This is the joint best level since the end of 2018.

Despite the rise in confidence, the current level of the index indicates that more than 70% of respondents are dissatisfied with prevailing business conditions.

The following changes in confidence were registered in the quarter: architects (+16), sub-contractors (+14), hardware retailers (+9), main contractors (+7), quantity surveyors (-4) and building material manufacturers (-9).

Main contractor confidence registered its highest level this year of 21. "The better sentiment this quarter was supported by improved activity. Although still lower than a year ago, the survey suggests that the rate of decline was less than in 3Q2020," said Siphamandla Mkhwanazi, Senior Economist at FNB. Also lifting confidence was an increase in profitability.

There was a clear diversion between confidence and activity among residential builders compared to the experience of non-residential builders. The index measuring activity in the residential sector improved noticeably whereas in the non-residential sector activity fell back to the level registered in 2Q2020 (when Covid-19 restrictions on activity were the strictest). As such, confidence also moved in different directions. However, most of the uptick in the residential activity came from residential sub-contractors (not reported on separately). "There still seems to be some benefit to the residential sector due to additions and alterations resulting from people working from home, but also because people are now spending more time at home in general. Furthermore, the increase in mortgage activity in certain segments of the property market is also lifting activity relating to renovations. It must be emphasised, however, that these are usually small projects of lower value," remarked Mkhwanazi.

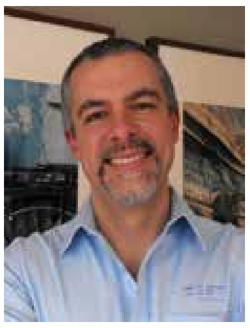
For similar reasons to the residential sub-contractor segment, hardware retail sales rose significantly in 4Q2020. This pushed hardware retailer confidence to its highest level since 2015 of 64. "Consumers who have managed to hold on to their jobs and have not received a salary cut have more disposable income than before given the lower interest rate environment and savings related to working from home. Some of this money seems to have been channelled into hardware sales," remarked Mkhwanazi.

In contrast, building material manufacturer confidence slipped to 31 in 4Q2020. This was despite a significant increase in domestic sales (to its best level since 1Q2017 on the back of retailer demand) and production (to its best level since 1Q2018). "Although production is higher, an increasing number of builders have indicated that the inadequate supply of building materials is constraining business operations," added Mkhwanazi.

Activity at the start of the building pipeline remained very downbeat. Despite this, architect confidence increased to 30 in 4Q2020. The confidence of quantity surveyors, however, fell to 0. "Whatever optimism we are experiencing in the residential building and hardware sector must be tempered by the continued weakness in the building pipeline/ incoming activity," cautioned Mkhwanazi.

Despite the rise in confidence this quarter, the outlook for the sector remains bleak. According to Mkhwanazi, "the large-scale capital (or new) projects required to boost the sector more substantially remain elusive, and could be for some time, especially in the non-residential sector. High office vacancy rates and therefore low, even declining, rental growth and the sharp rise in e-commerce at the likely expense of a physical store presence is likely to weigh on demand for office and retail space respectively over the medium term. This is confirmed by the persistently weak state of activity among architects and quantity surveyors".

Zest WEG – 40 years and growing in Africa



Juliano Vargas, Zest WEG CEO.

ZEST WEG's four decades in Africa have produced a powerful local manufacturing base, and a growing footprint across sub-Saharan Africa – strengthening supply chains and local economies.

"Progress in skills development has been significant in the past few years, as we have invested heavily in technology and skills transfer between the company and our holding company WEG in Brazil," says Juliano Vargas, chief executive officer of Zest WEG. "Leveraging WEG's global manufacturing productivity logic, we have also installed the latest equipment and systems to pave the way for a sustainable future."

As a result, local content in the company's manufacture of transformers is now nearly 90%, while for products like E-Houses and electrical panels has exceeded 70%. Vargas highlights the strategic importance of local content not just in terms of the mining industry's commitment to the Mining Charter, but for the sustainability of the South African economy as a whole.

"Our local manufacturing capability has helped to strengthen the supply chain for our customers, making businesses more secure," he says. "The value of this has been well demonstrated by the economic impact of border closures during the Covid-19 pandemic."

Vargas emphasises that Zest WEG's own supply chain has been actively nurtured through enterprise development initiatives, fostering the sustainability of local businesses. This local manufacturing ecosystem shields the company from market fluctuations and gives it a competitive cost advantage on locally manufactured products.

Success in South Africa has fostered growth into 47 other African countries, where customers are not only supported by wholly-owned operations but also by Zest WEG's Value Added Resellers (VARs) in over 20 countries around the continent.

"These VARs understand their local markets and are skilled practitioners in their fields," he says. "This ensures that they can apply Zest WEG solutions appropriately and optimally to customers' specific needs."

VARs are a key aspect of the company's strategy to become rooted all over sub-Saharan Africa, collaborating with in-country experts and enhancing technical expertise and local capacity for economic development. Vargas notes that WEG's range of products serve many industrial sectors, allowing Zest WEG and its VARs to explore opportunities not only in mining, but also in oil and gas, agriculture, water, cement and general industry.

Transnet will find that prices are determined by buyers not sellers

By Geoff Jacobs, President of the Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

A few days ago we commented on the City of Cape Town's defiance of common sense by hiking the price of water during a drought then keeping it high when it ends. Today comes the news that Transnet wants to raise Cape Town harbour dues by 19.74%.

This stroke of madness will ensure that the City's port remains one of the most expensive in the world and will deal a hammer blow to imports and exports, with negative consequences for the Western Cape economy and its inhabitants.

Two observations on this twin economic lunacy immediately come to mind. Firstly, the decision-makers in both Transnet and the City of Cape Town clearly have no clue about present economic realities. Secondly, they are revealing examples of the differing attitudes to customers between private sector managers and those enjoying employment in public sector and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

Private businesses know customers will go elsewhere if what they sell is unsatisfactory – either on price, quality, or service. Public sector entities, whether municipalities or State-owned enterprises, regard customers as their serfs, compelled to pay whatever they demand. The result is that prices have everything to do with their own comfort, and nothing to do with their customers' needs. SOEs are monopolies, masquerading as public services - anathema to free enterprise, sustainable wealth creation, economic growth and employment.

A darkly comic aspect to this tragic situation is the loud objections to the port tariff increases voiced by the Cape Town City Council's management, ironically by using logic that should equally well have been applied to its own approach to the price of domestic water.

A 19, 74% increase in port charges would be "catastrophic", said one highly paid Council official. It was based on statistics gathered before the Covid-19 lockdown damaged the economy. Port tariffs should be reduced in line with international standards. Container cargo dues are 233% above the global averages. Terminal handling charges are 117% above them. Cape Town's port is one of the most expensive in the world. It affects every single person buying or selling products.

All true.

Every business in the private sector applauds these comments. Would that the City Council applied the same thinking to its own pricing system for the rates and levies it imposes on taxpayers.

As for Transnet, someone should instruct its managers on the meaning of the term "public servant" and, for good measure, explain in words of one syllable that if Cape Town's port becomes even more expensive, as they clearly intend, then all our exports will become more expensive. Our wine markets overseas will turn to Chile, Argentina, New Zealand and Australia who will be only too willing to take over. As for imports which describe everything we don't make ourselves, their prices will go through the roof.

The overriding lesson here is that in the private sector, the Customer is Royalty. In the public sector, the Customer is, well, not so much — to put it mildly.

Local content requirements survey – a Curates Egg

THE requirement for companies, including foreign businesses in South Africa, to source local parts has had mixed results, leading to some skills development and technology transfer but also higher costs for South African consumers.

The EU is South Africa's largest trading partner and the biggest source of foreign direct investment for the country. There are over 1 000 EU companies active in South Africa, the most of any foreign entity, according to independent research organisation Who Owns Whom.

EU companies interviewed in the framework of a survey on the impact of local content requirements (LCRs) indicated that they appreciated South Africa's industrial and transformation policy imperatives and are committed to supporting skills development and technology transfer which enhances the domestic knowledge and skills base. In some cases, this has led to the adaptation of foreign technology in the local market and helped increase South Africa's exports to Sub-Saharan Africa.

The companies however raised concerns about the design and implementation of local content regulations in South Africa, pointing out that these were at times inconsistently applied and, in some cases, unclear. Some local content requirements were also found to be unobtainable.

In addition, the survey of 14 EU companies operating across several sectors in South Africa found that:

- the pre-conditions for an effective localisation programme do not exist in many sectors. As a result, EU firms have experienced problems in accessing the full range of manufactured inputs and products at internationally competitive prices in the local market;
- small and especially family-owned European companies find it difficult to comply with the ownership element of South Africa's B-BBEE policy; sometimes leading them to sell their goods through South African agents, further raising prices for consumers

The survey also found that LCRs have increased the cost of production in South Africa's very successful renewable energy public procurement programme by at least 10% – most of which was passed on to the consumer.

This has increased the cost of production in other sectors, such as manufacturing, but the impact was difficult to quantify.

The study highlighted the recent decline in public infrastructure investment, as well as delays in the implementation of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REI4P), which have had a significant impact on attempts to develop a sustainable local capacity.

The study noted that the South African government was looking to extend and tighten local content regulations. Given the loss in domestic capacity that has occurred in recent years, this may lead to a further escalation in prices in some sectors, benefiting entrenched manufacturers, while undermining exports and South Africa's long-term international competitiveness.

For the above reasons, the European Union Delegation to South Africa and EU businesses are keen to engage constructively in a dialogue with the South African government on its approach to local content regulations, with the intention of inducing much-needed international investment into the South African economy and generating local capacities at competitive economic costs.

Dr Riina Kionka, the EU's Ambassador to South Africa, noted: "President Ramaphosa, in announcing the Government's Economic Recovery Plan last Thursday, made specific mention of the importance his Administration places on supporting SA businesses through industrialisation, localisation and export growth. The EU can be a key partner in all three areas.

"In particular, we understand that the South African Government will be publishing new and increased localisation targets for goods in areas like agro-processing, health care, basic consumer goods, industrial equipment, and construction materials and transport rolling stock.

"The study on Local Content Rules shares some critically important insights around the opportunities and potential pitfalls of local content rules in certain sectors. The EU wants to contribute to economic transformation of SA, and to do that it is important to learn, not only from the successes such as those in the REIPPPP or the automotive sector, but also from the challenges faced by our EU investors when it comes to local content rules and to figure out together what the best way forward is."

PMI sees a decline in November

THE Absa Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) declined to 52.6 index points in November from the solid 60.9 points recorded in October.

The decline comes after three consecutive upward moves and brings the index to the lowest level since July 2020. While still signalling an improvement in business conditions, the drop suggests that the manufacturing sector's recovery is starting to lose momentum. This was to be expected as output levels for many subsectors are nearing pre-pandemic levels and will need sustained demand growth to fuel a further output expansion. In this regard, it was worrying to see the new sales orders index dip back below the neutral 50-point mark for the first time since May. This was in part driven by a renewed decline in export sales, which could possibly be linked to lower activity in Europe due to the renewed COVID-19 lockdowns.

This, as well as concerns about coronavirus developments in South Africa, likely explains why purchasing managers turned less positive about business conditions going forward. The indicator tracking business conditions in six months' time dipped for a second month to 52.7 index points and is now about 12 points below the level of just two months ago. While positive news regarding vaccine developments may result in an improved global growth outlook over the medium term, the next six months remain highly uncertain.

In addition to the new sales orders index, the other four components of the headline PMI also declined relative to October.

However, encouragingly, both business activity and inventories still signalled expansion. Even so, the fact that both indices fell by about 10 points suggests that the pace of the recovery has slowed significantly. Furthermore, the employment index dipped lower in November. Unlike the other indices, employment never breached the neutral 50-point mark in its recovery from the lockdown-induced slump in April. The supplier deliveries index remained high in November, suggesting that supply chains and product availability are still constraints.

Finally, the purchasing price index came down from a two-year high reached in October. The deceleration in cost pressure was likely driven by the, on average, stronger rand exchange rate which lowers the rand-cost of imported raw materials and intermediate goods.

VWSA celebrates over 4 million vehicles manufactured in Uitenhage

VWSA has celebrated the milestone of more than 4 million vehicles manufactured at its plant in Uitenhage.

VOLKSWAGEN Group South Africa (VWSA) has celebrated a momentous milestone with over 4 million vehicles having been manufactured at its Uitenhage plant.

The first of these vehicles was manufactured 72 years prior in November 1948, when the premises still belonged to South African Motor Assemblers and Distributors (SAMAD).

The first Volkswagen vehicle to be manufactured in Uitenhage was a Volkswagen Beetle that rolled off the production line in August 1951. Since then, VWSA has manufactured a broad range of vehicles locally, including Audi vehicles, the iconic Volkswagen Beetle, and various models of the Transporter series (Kombi), Golf, Jetta and Polo.

The Uitenhage plant currently manufactures the Polo for local and export markets, as well as the Polo Vivo for the local market. Since the start of 2020, the plant has produced 75 521 Polos for export, as well as 12 804 Polos and 17 038 Polo Vivos for the local market.

"This production milestone is a proud moment for VWSA, and proof of the dedication of the VWSA family," said Bernd Schaberg, Acting Production Director at VWSA. "With this level of commitment, I am sure we can achieve many more milestones to come."

The trouble with administered prices in municipalities

Comment from the Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

WHEN municipal servants plan to spend billions, small business owners, home owners, and ordinary citizens who are these days generally strapped for cash are entitled to wonder where the money comes from.

Even Cape Town, which has saved a great deal of money over the years, is planning to spend millions. But, given the circumstances of its ratepayers, many think it would have been politic to spend at least some of it on those who provided it in the first place.

> "Have your wages and salaries gone up by as much as the prices you charge on the services you are paid to provide".

The administrative pricing of electricity, domestic water and property rates, allows the City to charge what it costs without having to consider cutting back on expenditure, which would be the reaction of any household or private business.

Administered prices, unlike those that exist in a free market that move up and down according to the supply and demand, go up according to the needs as defined by officials. They seldom go down.

How much administered service prices in municipalities have increased in recent years was made clear recently in Parliament in a presentation by the South Africa Reserve Bank. It was alarming.

According to the Bank, electricity prices are 177% more than they were a decade ago. Rates and taxes have increased by 118%. Municipal water now costs 213% more than it did in 2010.

Granted the Bank was reporting nationally, and of course Cape Town is better than most, but still the figures show that municipal officials are immune to market reality.

In plain language, ratepayers everywhere are asking a fundamental question of their municipalities: "Have your wages and salaries gone up by as much as the prices you charge on the services you are paid to provide".

Very few people in the private sector can say that their pay has almost trebled in the past 10 years (the price of water has) or even merely doubled (as is the case for electricity).

If municipal salaries have increased as much, then there is something seriously wrong and ratepayers are right to be concerned.

Prize awarded for engineering innovation

THE UK's Royal Academy of Engineering recently announced Charlette N'Guessan as the first woman to win the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation. The 26-year-old technology entrepreneur, who walked away with £25,000, is also the first winner based in Ghana.

Charlette and her team developed BACE API, which is a software that uses facial recognition and artificial intelligence to verify identities remotely. The software can be integrated into existing apps and systems and is aimed at financial institutions and other industries that rely on identity verification when providing services.

"Participation in the Africa Prize programme has given our business much exposure in great circles and to potential clients, and the workshops have been invaluable in providing insights to strategy. It has allowed me to expand my professional network and, by association, it has given some additional weight and credibility to what I say in my area of expertise," Charlette shared when she was announced as a finalist.

"We are so delighted to have our first woman to win, Charlette, who came through the Africa Innovation Fellowship, which we run in partnership with WomEng," said Cordelia Burch, Programme Manager for the Africa Prize at the Academy. "This Fellowship scheme started in 2018 as a way to increase the number of female applicants and shortlisted entrepreneurs in the Prize, and we are already seeing the success of the initiative."

Charlette N'Guessan, the first woman to win the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation.

Runners-up

The three runners up receive £10,000. Two of them, David Tusubira and William Wasswa, are from Uganda. Tusubira invented Remot, a system that manages off-grid power grids by monitoring the condition of the solar arrays. Wasswa, on the other hand, invented PapsAI, a low-cost digital microscope that speeds up cervical cancer screening. The final runner up was Aisha Raheem from Nigeria, who invented a digital platform that help farmers and families prevent food waste and enhance nutrition.

Shortlisted candidates and their inventions

The 2020 shortlisted candidates were based in six countries including, for the first time, Malawi. Additionally, six of the contestants were women. Amongst them was DryMac, Adrian Padt from South Africa – A containerised drying system that uses biomass instead of electricity to dry and preserve various products.

CiTi involvement

"We have found a dynamic synergy with the Royal Academy of Engineering, especially around our shared impact values," states Ian Merrington, CEO of the Cape Innovation and Technology Initiative (CiTi)."Making a difference and improving lives through technology by accelerating African innovation and African entrepreneurs is an objective shared by both organisations. CiTi has relished the opportunity to design a pan-African incubation programme. We now find ourselves strongly positioned as an African partner to international organisations who want to deliver high-impact support for entrepreneurship on the continent through hybrid models of training and mentorship."

CiTi designed the entrepreneurial engineering programme specifically for the Royal Academy of Engineering. It uses a remote incubation model, delivering entrepreneurial training, coaching, and mentorship over eight months. This is coupled with three residency weeks that include workshops, networking events, and local entrepreneurial engagement sessions. This year the final residency week and event were moved online because of the pandemic.

For more information visit www.citi.org.za/blog/africa-prize-2020-everything-you-need-to-know/

South Africans report falling incomes and strained finances for 2021

SOUTH Africans are reporting increasing financial strain from the COVID-19 pandemic, with the latest survey from GeoPoll finding over 72 per cent have suffered income falls since June, leading to reduced online spending, mobile money use, and spending on non-essential items.

Credit Image by David Mark from Pixabay.

In a survey of 3 000 respondents across six countries, including Mozambique, DRC, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Kenya, as well as South Africa, GeoPoll found that few respondents expected an instant financial recovery from the pandemic, with 38 per cent of South Africans predicting the financial effects will last into 2022.

"We are seeing a comprehensive picture of financial strain in our end-year poll, with 44 per cent of respondents reporting that finance is now their biggest challenge and 69 per cent reporting they are now more concerned over meeting their expenses than they were in June," said Roxana Elliott, VP of Marketing for GeoPoll.

The survey found widespread hope that 2021 would bring at least some relief to personal finances. But caution now dominates, with almost half of the South African respondents, at 47 per cent, saying they expected to spend much less in the holidays, while a further 21 per cent expected to spend a bit less.

The financial pressure is also causing rising levels of emotional distress, with 52 per cent reporting they are feeling worse emotionally than a year ago. This emotional deterioration has been higher than in South Africa than in most of the other countries polled, with 43 per cent reporting declines in their emotional wellbeing across all of the six countries surveyed.

"South Africa has suffered more than all of the other five countries in its levels of infections and deaths, which is bound to have created a greater financial and emotional toll. However, it also means that South Africans are more ready to embrace vaccination," said Roxana.

Across all the countries polled, 42 per cent said they would definitely get a Covid-19 vaccination as soon as they could, but in South Africa 52 per cent reported they definitely would and 17 per cent that they probably would.

However, South Africans are reporting a wide range of expectations on when life will return to normal. It never will, say 9 per cent; it will take until 2022 or later, say another 9 per cent; while for 24 per cent, it already has.

Landmark "Deadly Air" pollution case against government to be heard in May 2021

EVERY DAY, people living and working on the Mpumalanga Highveld are breathing toxic, polluted air that is harmful to their health and well-being. This is the basis of the Deadly Air case, which will be heard by the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria on 17 to 19 May 2021.

The applicants in the court case, environmental justice groups - groundWork and the Vukani Environmental Movement, launched this Constitutional litigation in June 2019, requesting the court to declare that the poor ambient air quality in the Highveld Priority Area constitutes a violation of the Constitutional right to an environment not harmful to health or well-being. They are also asking the court to order the government to take further steps to improve the air quality in the area. The applicants are represented by the Centre for Environmental Rights.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, Prof David Boyd, was admitted as an amicus curiae (friend of the court) in the case by the Pretoria High Court on 5 November 2020. Professor Boyd is represented by Lawyers for Human Rights. Submissions will be made to the court on his behalf during the hearing.

The Highveld Priority Area – formally declared a pollution hotspot by the Environment Minister as long ago as 2007 - flanks Johannesburg and Pretoria, and includes large parts of Gauteng and Mpumalanga. It is home to over 3.5 million people. The poor air quality has significant and direct impacts on human health and well-being, causing premature deaths and chronic respiratory and other illnesses. Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to the dangerous levels of air pollution.

An expert study shows that Eskom's 12 coal-fired power stations, Sasol's Secunda plant, and the nearby NatRef refinery, are responsible for the lion's share of the air pollution in the Highveld Priority Area.

After many delays in responding to this court application, the government respondents belatedly filed their notice of opposition in September 2020.

Following a case management meeting between the parties, the Registrar of the Pretoria High Court issued directions on 10 November 2020, confirming the May 2021 hearing, and that the government respondents are to file their answering affidavit (defence to the applicants' claims) by 29 January 2021.

We will provide further information and updates on the Deadly Air webpage as we count down to 17 May 2021.

Further US divestment pockets Sasol $404-m for debt relief

SASOL Chemicals North America LLC ("SCNA"), a wholly owned subsidiary of Sasol, has agreed principle terms with INEOS Gemini HDPE Holding Company LLC ("INEOS") and a new entity to be formed by INEOS ("Newco") to sell its 50% membership interest in Gemini HDPE LLC ("Gemini") to Newco (the "Sale") for USD404 million (sub ect to adjustment for cash, debt, working capital and other items). Gemini produces and sells bimodal high-density polyethylene based in La Porte, Texas, USA. The Sale represents a further step in achieving Sasol's strategic and financial objectives by accelerating the focus on specialty chemicals and reducing net debt. Proceeds from the transaction will be used by Sasol to repay near-term debt obligations.

Concurrent with the closing, the Company will have completed the restructuring of its existing debt facilities and the security package in respect thereof, resulting in Sasol and its subsidiaries being released from any existing security being provided in relation to Gemini (the "Refinancing").

The representations and warranties being given by SCNA are general corporate representations and warranties.

As disclosed in the Sasol financial statements, prepared in accordance with IFRS and audited by the Company's auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc., the value of the net assets relevant to the sale is USD 176 million (approximately R3 billion) as at 30 June 2020, which is net of the debt facilities associated with the interest. The loss attributable to the net assets was USD 18 million (approximately R290 million) for the year ended 30 June 2020.

The Sale between SCNA, INEOS and Newco will only be effective upon restructuring of the existing debt facilities and the Company's security package in respect thereof. Closing is anticipated to occur by 31 December 2020.

The Sale is classified as a Category 2 transaction in terms of the Listing Requirements of the JSE.

SAPS dragging its feet on Cape extortion racket boom

By Geoff Jacobs, President of the Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

COMBATTING extortion and racketeering in Greater Cape Town has become critical as gangsters feel immune from the criminal justice system and what seems to be an unmotivated South African Police Service.

Extorting protection money from small businesses in swathes of the City has become so lucrative, so easy, and its consequences so remote, that criminals have expanded their threats to ordinary people with jobs.

Figures kept by the City of Cape Town show a dramatic rise in what amounts to a form of urban terrorism. Cases of extortion have expanded beyond businesses in the central business district to areas such as Khayelitsha, Bloekombos, Wallacedene, and Gugulethu.

There is evidence of a growing reign of terror. Gangsters have taken to holding public and private transport to ransom. Some are now demanding protection money from construction sites. Protection money is being extorted from foreign-owned businesses and even backyard dwellers who have jobs.

As the private sector strives to recover from the devastating effect of the Covid-19 lockdown and the loss of so many jobs, it was inevitable that incidents of petty crime would increase, but this is something different. Citizens are under severe threat, unsafe even in their own homes.

Should this slide into lawlessness continue, economic recovery job creation will be severely hampered. It is critical that Minister Bheki Celle makes good on the promise he made six weeks ago to launch a task team to curb this scourge, now aimed not only at business but at the poorest of ordinary citizens.

Urgency to embrace digital transformation - study

BUSINESS leaders within global manufacturing and distribution sectors have shown urgency in embracing digital transformation to overcome the disruption caused by the pandemic. This is according to new research that has been released by SYSPRO, a leading global provider of ERP software.

In order to understand the impact of the pandemic on manufacturers and distributors as well as emerging trends, a survey was completed by 144 industry professionals of different managerial levels within EMEA, the United States, Canada, and APAC. The survey was conducted in August 2020 and focused on the rise of the remote workforce and the need for increased collaboration, the impact of supply chain disruptions, and emerging trends that will shape the manufacturing and distribution sectors moving forward.

The rise of the remote workforce

Based on survey findings, nearly half of businesses were unable to function effectively due to a reliance on their operational staff only being able to function from the work premise. In a shift towards remote work and increased collaboration, 73% of businesses stated they would need to invest in technology to facilitate remote working capabilities in the future. According to Paulo De Matos, Chief Product Officer at SYSPRO, "COVID has had a ripple effect in many areas but remote work is here to stay and will need to be supported by systems that allow for easy communication, collaboration and performance management."

Supply Chain disruptions and resulting trends

Unsurprisingly, the survey showed that 60% of businesses were impacted by supply chain disruptions during the pandemic. When looking specifically at distribution, 45% agreed that they were unable to operate at the same levels of distribution efficiency enjoyed before the pandemic. "Supply chains have been heavily integrated and increasingly reliant on foreign raw material, in particular from Asia. Companies looked to offshoring with the knowledge of the potential risk of quality control, but with the benefit of lower labour costs. With the increasing shortages of parts, manufacturers and distributors started looking to find alternative supply sources and establish more resilient supply chains."

"Near or re-shoring is the practice of transferring a business operation that was moved overseas back to the country from which it was originally relocated."

This was echoed in the study, where 42% of businesses stated that they will re-shore manufacturing operations. "Near or re-shoring is the practice of transferring a business operation that was moved overseas back to the country from which it was originally relocated. Here, industry-built technology solutions will deliver industry specific functionality for manufacturers and distributors to optimize and simplify operations, stay current and in control," states De Matos

The inflection Point for the Factory of the Future

According to the study, only 38% of businesses felt that their business systems were adequate to handle the disruptions. When diving deeper into these findings, the study found that business systems lacked the necessary accessibility, availability, insights and basic planning tools needed by the industry to react to the pandemic. In fact, 29% of businesses stated that their systems lacked in providing them with the availability and accessibility during this time and they would be pursuing cloud-based business systems to deal with any possible future disruptions.

To read more about SYSPRO's study visit https://za.syspro.com/brochure/report-the-inflection-point-for-the-factory-of-the-future/

"Excellence Through Experience"

The New Metraclark Obsidian Multiplex Range

The new Obsidian Copeland semi-hermetic multiplex represents the flagship of Freon commercial refrigeration products that Metraclark offers in the market.

- Rigid, high strength, fully welded S355JR steel frame.
- Complete inboard modular mechanical design with component layout aimed to aid serviceability and maintenance.
- Electrical wiring and switch-gear layout based on a modular design, and wiring done to SANS regulations.
- Top and bottom lifting lug locations.
- Center of mass forklift channels, and corner castor wheel channels.
- Helical oil separator for enhanced oil retention within the multiplex system.
- Low pressure oil management system with oil reservoir.

The Obsidian multiplex range has been designed utilizing first order thermodynamic principles to ensure optimal component sizing and high refrigeration efficiency. The overall mechanical design philosophy was set to create a modular design, that maintains simplicity with ease of installation and maintenance.

The Alicedale Pack House-Blueberry Farm Quad Omega Rack Project

Metraclark Engineering was instrumental in the customized design of the Quad Omega Rack for Alicedale Pack House-Blueberry Farm.

The Alicedale Pack house, located near Rustenburg, is a pack house dedicated to the packing and distribution of blueberries. The general purpose will be to export the berries internationally.

Solo Refrigeration (Mbombela), requested the assistance of Metraclark Engineering in the design of a flagship cold chain to match the technologically advanced pack house.

Phase one required 430kW at a suction of -5°C. The force cooling rooms was designed to chill 380kg of blue berries from 30°C to 5°C in 1.5 hours. It is also required to chill 720kg of packed product from 5°C to 0°C in 3 hours.

- Design Engineer: NW du Plessis
- Branch: Metraclark Nelspruit

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Quantum leap in poultry sector

THE local poultry sector has seen an eventful 2020 and – judging by a recently announced large acquisition by Quantum Foods - could be in for even more intrigue in the year ahead.

The big shake-up last year came with a tussle for control of Wellington-based Quantum Foods – which aside from producing chickens also dabbles in eggs and animal feeds.

Just to refresh memories, Stellenbosch-based agribusiness Zeder Investments sold its 30% shareholding in Quantum to larger poultry rival Country Bird Holdings (CBH).

CBH contemplated making an offer to take over all of Quantum, but this move seemed to ruffle a few feathers in the poultry sector. SA's largest poultry producer Astral Foods – which has a long standing and strategic supply agreement for birds with Quantum – seemed most perturbed.

Then came an unexpected twist when an international agri-business investor, Silverstreet, acquired

a similar sized stake as CBH in Quantum. This seemed to prompt Astral to enter the fray and snap up a strategic 10% stake in Quantum. Quantum management also increased their stake markedly in the business.

With three significant new shareholders there has been some speculation on the future of Quantum - especially with hints that Silverstreet and Astral as well as senior management could work as a loose shareholder alliance.

CBN is happy to report that indications are that Quantum – despite all the ructions on their shareholder register – seems intent to focus on building capacity and production efficiencies.

In December the group announced the acquisition of L P Buhr Boerdery, the owner of the Helderfontein broiler farm, for R53 million. The deal is easily fundable for Quantum, which at the end of September still had over R250 million in cash on hand.

L P Buhr Boerdery is a broiler chickens rearing business based in Malmesbury and has been a contract grower to Quantum for the last 25 years.

The deal was prompted by a decision taken by the owner to retire. The deal should ensure an uninterrupted broiler supply chain in the Western Cape, as well as allow Quantum to increase volumes in the future.

The deal will no doubt make Astral happy too. If Astral's supply agreement with Quantum was compromised in the Western Cape it could be problematic.

Not only would it be disruptive to Astral's distribution network in the province, but the group might need to fork out a massive spend (perhaps as much as R900 million) to build its own production facilities. A bigger and better Quantum will certainly keep Astral's nest well feathered.

In the year to end September,Quantum's revenue grew 15% to R5.1 billion. There was a R25 million gain for the farming segment with broiler farming revenue benefiting from increased volumes sold to customers in the Western Cape.

Quantum's core broiler farming business also delivered an improved overall financial performance. CEO Hennie Lourens said this was possible due to increases in national day-old chick production and live bird production in the Western Cape.

He added that operating costs were well managed throughout the broiler value chain and per unit costs declined. "The broiler farming operational efficiency performance continued to improve from an already high level."

Lourens did note, however, that the challenges at broiler breeder level were not resolved and the marginal improvement see in 2019 was not sustained.

He disclosed that the number of day-old chicks produced per parent breeder hen declined in 2020. "This part of the business will receive increased management focus going forward to ensure it stabilises in the short term and improves in the medium term."

Lourens said the past year has been eventful - both from a business and corporate activity perspective.

Looking forward to 2021, he noted that medium-term weather forecasts indicated that South Africa should receive at least normal rainfall in the summer rain areas. "If that is the case, there should be sufficient domestic maize. However, the Rand to US dollar exchange rate remains unpredictable and will influence all raw material costs. A weaker Rand will result in an increase in the cost of all major raw materials."

He conceded the next period was expected to be challenging. "However, the strength of the business portfolio, investments made in recent years to increase production capacity, maintenance of operational efficiency and a focus on cost management should ensure that we navigate through the period successfully."

What's at the end of Rainbow?

IT COULD also be a big year for Rainbow Chickens – which is part of the Remgro controlled RCL Foods group – after a big shake up in leadership near the end of last year.

Rainbow – which has been a bit of an albatross around the neck of Remgro since the nineties – will now be headed by three top executives from rival Country Bird Holdings (CBH).

CBH's well respected CEO Marthinus Stander – who has previously worked at Rainbow – will become the new CEO.

There has been ongoing speculation that RCL could sell off the problematic Rainbow business, allowing its hard pressed executives to concentrate on the more profitable grocery brands business.

The year ahead could be a make or break period for Rainbow, which still owns a substantial production presence in the Western Cape.

Record grain harvest will bolster economic recovery

Minister Meyer, Mayor Sakkie Franken and Hennis Germishuys, WCDoA.

WESTERN Cape Minister of Agriculture, Dr Ivan Meyer, accompanied by Executive Mayor Sakkie Franken of the Overberg District Municipality and Mayor Paul Swart of the Cape Agulhas Municipality recently visited grain farming enterprise, Agri Dwala (Pty) Ltd in Napier in the Overberg region.

The visit comes off the back of the news that the Western Cape is expecting one of the largest winter grains and oilseed crop in recent history, shattering previous records.

Commenting on the forecasted bumper year, Minister Meyer said:

"The Western Cape Department of Agriculture expects a record grain harvest this season. We are grateful as this will increase the value of our agricultural production in the Western Cape as well as revenue from the grain industry."

Agri Dwala (Pty) Ltd is one hundred per cent owned and operated by farmworkers turned farmers.

The enterprise owns 580ha of farming land on which it farms with wheat, barley, oats, canola and lupines.

Manager and shareholder, Daniel Pieters says that after a few tough years they are excited by the prospect of a record yield.

Pieters: "We have been keeping record of our harvest performance. All the indications are that we are going to have an exceptional year. A good crop and a good price mean that we will be able to re-invest in our business."

According to Western Cape Department of Agriculture economist, Louw Pienaar, the latest estimates from the Crop Estimates Committee, released on 28 October 2020, are forecasting the Western Cape wheat harvest at 1 million tons.

Pienaar: "Apart from a bumper harvest in 2016, this is the largest harvest in more than two decades. In terms of the national barley and canola harvest, the majority produced in the Western Cape, the harvest will exceed any other harvest in the past, with 520 000 tons barley and 126 000 tons of canola expected."

Pienaar continued: "The excellent yields come as a result of rain and weather conditions being right for winter grain production across both the Swartland and the Overberg regions. Aside from the good harvest, current prices are also at levels higher than the past several seasons, which will boost economic growth in rural areas."

United States opens new ports to South African citrus exports

THE United States government has announced the opening up of several new ports for the import for citrus products from South Africa, further facilitating two-way trade with South Africa.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service published a final notice in the U.S. Federal Register on November 5th approving the use of additional ports options for South African citrus growers. Previously, the South African citrus industry was limited to the use of only four ports and had long sought access to other U.S. ports. With this announcement, exports will be allowed to any U.S. port that has cold storage facilities, including the strategically important ports of Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia.

U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Lana Marks commented on the announcement, saying "The opening of these new ports of destination for citrus, a move the U.S. Mission in South Africa has been advocating for, will help facilitate trade between our two countries going forward, providing flexibility to U.S. retailers and wholesalers, lowering transportation costs, and broadening the reach of South African citrus to other regions within the U.S. market."

Justin Chadwick, the CEO of the South African Citrus Growers Association, welcomed the news, adding that "The opening up of all ports to South African citrus fruits means that this high quality, vitamin C rich fruit can now reach many more consumers in the United States. We would like to thank all those who made this possible, including the U.S. Embassy and the South African Embassy in Washington.

In 2020, according to Summer Citrus from South Africa, South Africa shipped a record amount of over 77 000 tons of citrus to the United States, 68% more than in 2019. South African farmers ship citrus duty-free to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade preference program.

CTP, YOUR TOTAL WINE PACKAGING PROVIDER

Whether you're a boutique winery in need of shorter production runs or a large volume producer, your wine deserves packaging that looks as good as it tastes.

CTP Packaging, through its specialised divisions; SA Litho Label Printers, CTP Cartons & Labels and Boland Printers, have established themselves as premium quality producers of wine labels, shrink sleeves and litho laminated cartons for the South African wine industry.

A closer look at their product portfolio confirms the Group's position as a total solutions provider, a one-stop-shop if you will.

WINE LABELS

SA Litho Label Printers have invested in the best of both flexo and digital print technology to support their short and medium run business model. This hybrid business model ensures that whether you're a boutique winery or a large volume producer, SA Litho has the right fit for you. What's more, the company's combined flexo and digital print capability translates into greater production flexibility and an accelerated speed to market.

With over 100 years of experience as a label supplier to the wine industry, SA Litho has established a global network of suppliers, providing clients with a wide range of substrates to choose from. So whether you're after a textured and distinguished look, a glossy and modern feel or, the increasingly popular, no-label-look, SA Litho has a substrate available to suit your needs. Additionally, the company's state-of-the-art equipment arms them with all the necessary tools to bring a client's vision to life. The company's advanced technology and software prioritises colour management, realising colour consistency and quality across print runs, whilst allowing all the usual finishes that clients know and love, including but not limited to foil, high build, embossing, debossing and an assortment of spot and overall varnishes.

SHRINK SLEEVES

As wine packaging continues to evolve, SA Litho Label Printers has taken the necessary steps to evolve with it. Canned wine is one such example; as the trend toward this convenient packaging format continues to make its presence known, SA Litho's complimentary shrink sleeves are a beneficial solution for wineries adopting this format.

Shrink sleeves applied to cans, as an alternative to printed cans, are advantageous in many respects; as demand forecasting becomes trickier and sku volumes smaller, shrink sleeves allow for greater procurement flexibility. Clients' are placed in the favourable position of ordering blank cans, which can be used across all sku's, whilst the shrink sleeve serves as the differentiator, effectively reducing shortage or oversupply instances. Additional advantages are; shrink sleeves have a far shorter lead time (8 - 12 business days) relative to printed cans, shrink sleeves have a lower minimum order quantity – SA Litho's digital printing capabilities easily accommodates orders for as little as 50 sleeves and a single sleeve can be produced for mock-up purposes. Furthermore, sleeves are reverse printed, protecting the print design from scuffing as the product is handled, whilst design changes can be trialled and tweaked with ease.

WINE CARTON SOLUTIONS

CTP Cartons & Labels and Boland Printers, both divisions of CTP Packaging, are leading producers of litho laminated cartons for South Africa's large wine industry. Each division's market leading equipment and wide range of customisable fluting profiles coupled with their teams of technical experts ensures that clients' receive packaging that is structurally sound and visually appealing. With much loved finishes like; foil, embossing, debossing, soft touch varnishes and an assortment of overall and spot gloss and matt varnishes at their fingertips, clients' are equipped with all the tools necessary to breathe life into their designs.

Together CTP Cartons & Labels and Boland Printers present a short, medium and long run business model. The businesses exist alongside one another, with boutique and niche wineries benefiting from Boland Printers shorter run capabilities and larger volume producers benefiting from CTP Cartons & Labels longer run capabilities.

Together CTP Cartons & Labels and Boland Printers boast an impressive product offering, including but not limited to; 1.5L, 2L, 3L, and 5L bag-in-box formats, promotional gift packs and six or twelve bottle wine carry packs, custom-made from a selection of substrates and fluting profiles which best suits its purpose. Additionally, CTP takes care to produce cartons that perform optimally on both manual and automatic filling lines.

CTP Packaging favours a collaborative approach, before bringing a packaging design to life, each division's technical team works with clients' and designers' to consider the necessary structural requirements, its filling, transport, storage and consumption environment and the client's budget requirements. In doing so, CTP strives to bring packaging to life that is practical, cost-effective and show stopping.

The robot-powered microbrewery of the future

The DIY approach of the microbrewery industry can be complemented by the use of robotics, says Yaskawa Southern Africa's System Solutions Engineer Riccardo Ferrari.

WE'VE seen a rise in the popularity of craft beer, as many individuals create microbreweries in their spare time. As the demand for their malt, sweet or spicy concoctions grows, so too does the manual production.

When production increases, there's a need to work smarter and more efficiently. This is where automation – specifically, robotic technology – can make a significant difference.

"If the volumes increase, it's only natural a microbrewery might struggle to cope with the manual production," says Ferrari.

"From shuffling bottles to moving them around for filling, then laying them out to be packaged and palletised for shipping – it's tedious and strenuous labour that takes both time and repetitive effort. However, by introducing a robot with an end-of-arm gripper, there's a lot of multi-purposing that can be achieved. Whether you're moving around full or empty bottles, or even six-packs, the robot can handle the tasks you would've normally done by hand before."

It's a smart solution, but what happens when production inevitably increases once again, and you reach the threshold of the robot's capabilities? According to Ferrari, you simply add another robot to the mix. "You split the tasks between robots," he says. "For example, one robot would handle the shuffling of the empty bottles while the other focuses on moving the full ones. As your production grows, so too can your robotic fleet as you add more components over time."

With many microbreweries being self-funded or small businesses, pricing is often a concern – and there's a belief that robots might prove to be too costly for the size of the operation. Ferrari says that it's important to put it into context, though.

"When we consider robots versus other purpose-built machinery, robots end up being cheaper alternatives," he explains. "This is because robots offer a flexibility that dedicated machinery doesn't. If you want a robot to perform a different function or task, it's often just software programming that's required. The worst-case scenario is that you'll need to change the gripper, which is far more affordable than buying a new machine altogether."

For the brewer who's now turning a profit but not enough to buy a robot just yet, there's also the option to lease a robot and experience the power of robotics first-hand.

Riccardo Ferrari.

Ferrari believes there's a huge opportunity for microbreweries or any other business that specialises in bottling to make use of robots. "There's certainly a gap in the market," he says. "Most of these tasks, such as packaging and palletising, have been automated and are already being done in isolation across various other industries, so it only makes sense that the bottling sector would embrace robotics as well. It would be beneficial to their overall productivity and output."

Before a microbrewery encounters a bottleneck in its manufacturing process, the answer to its biggest challenges could literally lie in the neck of the bottle. Instead of spending time on the arduous and repetitive task of moving bottles around, work smarter (not harder). Make use of robotic automation in your production process while you focus on growing your business and doing what you do best: brewing new recipes and tasty flavours.

Alcohol industry - efforts to curb Covid-19 spread

AS South Africa enters a second wave of Covid-19 infections, the Beer Association of South Africa (BASA) says it will continue rolling out extensive interventions to further limit the spread of the virus in the country.

The association's interventions – whose members include the Craft Brewers' Association of South Africa, Heineken SA and South African Breweries (SAB) - include:

- BASA members have provided training and guidelines to outlets across the country, including the roll-out of 50000 educational posters to establishments;
- Members have also visited businesses across the country to ensure they are compliant. These oversight visits will continue over the festive season;
- The beer industry will maintain its zero-tolerance approach towards non-compliant businesses by cutting off supply to those outlets and establishments that have had their licences revoked by provincial liquor authorities;
- South African Breweries has contributed R15 million to the South African Solidarity Fund. Beer manufacturers have also donated PPE for hospitals and frontline health workers and will continue with these donations to provincial health departments over the festive season.

"Preventing the further spread of Covid-19 must be the first priority, and so we call on all liquor outlets and establishments to continue playing their part by enforcing the wearing of masks and social distancing in their establishments," the association said.

"We also call on consumers to drink in moderation and continue taking the necessary precautions to protect themselves and others from Covid-19 while enjoying their holiday.

"This includes wearing their masks, continuously sanitising their hands and avoiding large social gatherings. Finally, we urge all South Africans not to drink and drive."

The association said that this is the only way the country will be able to avoid another hard lockdown, protect lives during the second wave, and safeguard the economy and jobs.

Industry hurting

"While it is imperative that we do all we can to stop the spread of Covid-19 during the upcoming holiday period, it is also critical that we safeguard the close to 415 000 jobs that depend on the beer industry as well as the one million livelihoods that are supported across the alcohol value chain," the association said.

It added that the previous alcohol bans and prolonged restrictions on the trade of alcohol saw an estimated 7,400 jobs lost, R14.2 billion in lost sales revenue and more than R7.4 billion loss in taxes and excise duties in the beer industry alone.

The craft brewery sector was particularly hard hit, with 30% of breweries shutting their doors and those that managed to stay open being forced to retrench staff, resulting in hundreds of jobs losses.

"Those businesses that managed to survive can simply not afford another ban or further trade restrictions.

"It is therefore critical that we all play our part in flattening the curve and to avoid our health services becoming overwhelmed over the festive season."

Reprinted from https://businesstech.co.za/news/business

Three Ships Whisky takes top spot at Old Mutual Spirits Trophy Show 2020

SOUTH Africa's Three Ships Whisky once again proved why it stands tall among the best whisky producers in the world– when it was singled out among strong competition to take the *Best Whisky* title at this year's Old Mutual Spirits Trophy Show, for its *9-Year-Old Fino Cask Finish.* This limited release, the fourth in Three Ships Whisky Master Distiller Andy Watts' celebrated Master's Collection – of which only 2 940 bottles were produced - also took the trophy for the show's *Best Blended Whisky.*

Watts also created the *Bain's Founder's Collection 18 Year Old Oloroso Cask Finish Special Release Single Grain Whisky,* which won the trophy for the *Best Grain Whisky.* Both are produced at the James Sedgwick Distillery in Wellington, Cape Town - the continent's only commercial whisky distillery - where Watts has produced the globally awarded South African Three Ships Whisky and Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky ranges for the past 35 years.

''This award is especially important to us," says Watts. ''Over the years it's been our mission to change the way local whisky is perceived, and we believe this is starting to happen now. The *9-Year-Old Fino Cask Finish* is a fine example of how South African whisky ingenuity is revolutionizing the whisky category - and it's a singular honour to have this whisky acknowledged as the best whisky in the country by our own countrymen."

''The fact that South Africa secured the lion's share of the gold medals and trophies across most major classes this year, is a grand acknowledgement that our own country's contribution to the evolution of whisky is something to be wholly proud of. I'd like to tip my hat to my team at the distillery, for their tenacity and dedication to excellence," he adds.

Now in its second year, the Old Mutual Spirits Trophy Show is the first of its kind in the country, and is open to all South African producers and importers. The awards platform seeks to identify the top spirits and liqueurs available in the South African market and make this information available to the country's consumers, in an effort to recognize excellence as well as assist in growing the local spirits market.

Watts explains why this year's *Best Whisky* is so special. '' The limited edition Fino offers collectors a beautiful blend of the finest grain and malt whiskies with lovely expressions of Fino Sherry coming through. Coupled with this, in the palate, the whisky opens up with peat, treacle syrup, tobacco, spice and a playful nuttiness. "On the nose you will also get prominent smoke and peat, interlaced with figs, pineapple, orange peel, pepper and spice."

"To achieve the exceptional cask finish that is the mark of the Three Ships Whisky Master's Collection, we first matured the whisky for five years in older American oak, and then released it into seasoned Fino Sherry casks for a further maturation period of four years. This was coupled by visits at regular intervals. During the crafting stage, I witnessed the unravelling of extraction from the wood over four years and carefully selected four casks which I deemed to offer the optimal flavour composition." he says. The whisky is un-chill filtered and natural in colour, presented in its natural form at a strength of 48, 6% ABV.

This annual limited edition collection reflects the pursuit of the exceptional that this whisky brand has become synonymous with. It exemplifies the Three Ships Whisky portfolio's 'Made Exceptional, Made Here' range of premium blended and single malt South African whiskies, and has become a must-have for collectors who keenly anticipate getting involved in a completely new way of online purchasing.

The fifth limited edition Master's Collection release - an *11-Year-Old Single Malt Shiraz Cask Finish* – was released on 20 October this year at the exclusive online sale where just 400 bottles were made available for purchase – with most selling out within the first 10 minutes. This is a superb collector's whisky to add to the festive season gift basket.

Follow @ThreeShipsSA #MadeExceptionalMadeHere or Andy Watts @TheWhiskyMaker

New fizz for beverage sector?

THE local food and beverages sector has taken an interesting twist in the past few years with new innovative brands -often capitalising on consumer's increased fixation with health and customised quality – coming more strongly to the fore.

Some innovative brands have already captured the attention of mainstream investors.

Stellenbosch-based Chill Beverages – the makers of Fitch & Leedes mixers and Score energy drinks – was bought by Brian Joffe's Long4Life investment company.

BOS Brands, the makers of rooibos tea-based beverages, attracted investment giant Remgro's venture capital fund InVenfin as a major investor. By CBN's count Remgro has invested close to R350 million in BOS over the last few years.

Interestingly, InVenfin has also invested in two other cutting edge food ventures in the Western Cape – confectionery maker Joya Foods and artisanal chocolate business De Villiers.

A new venture that has popped up on CBN's radar is PURA Soda, which has ambitions to become the next US $1 billion company within the next few years.

PURA Soda, which has its roots in Cape Town, exports healthy non-alcoholic soda brands to 13 countries.

PURA has seven flavours with just a sprinkle of sugar, all-natural flavours and zero colourants.

Founder and CEO Greig Jansen believes the audacious $1 billion aim of being the next 'unicorn' business can be a reality: "We launched the brand in 2017 and within a year had already surpassed the rate of sale of popular local brands. Since then, we have grown by over 400% over the past 18 months…"

He said extensive research into the future of the soft drinks industry reinforced a belief PURA Soda was perfectly positioned for growth.

"The carbonated soft drinks industry is changing rapidly. High disposable income, continued urbanisation and changing lifestyles, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, have all contributed to a natural progression into the desire for people to lead a healthier life."

He believed the non-alcoholic ready-to-drink beverages market has spiked as people move towards beverages with less sugar.

Jansen pointed out that the global non-alcoholic beverages market size was valued at over $919 billion in 2019 and was projected to reach over $1.2 trillion by 2027. This would represent a compound annual growth rate of 8.2%.

He said the largest category of the non-alcoholic beverage market is soft drinks, with the fastest growing segment being in the 'better-for-you' category.

"If we can capture just a fragment of this market, we will be well on our way of reaching our aim to be the next $1 billion business. And I believe we can, because PURA Soda sits in the sweet spot between offering a drink that is better-for-you, retailing at an affordable price point, that still tastes good…" PURA could be one to watch in 2021…and beyond.

CEO of PURA Soda, Greig Jansen.

New generation longspan shelving

LOGISTICS Systems Engineering (LSE) is introducing its new Constructor range of Longspan Shelving 3 (LS3). Introduced to the European market earlier this year by LSE's solutions partner Gonvarri Material Handling, the new generation of longspan shelves feature improved versatility with a large selection of accessories that enhance system flexibility to any light duty storage requirement.

Easy to dismantle, adjust and reinstall, these storage shelving systems are a solution for customers storing a variety of goods. The system's expandability means it can meet customers' growing needs, ultimately reducing shelf lifetime costs and providing a higher return on investment.

The longspan shelving advantage:

- With a conventional shelving system, space can be lost if goods do not precisely fit. This is especially the case if stored goods are larger than normal or oddly shaped. Longspan shelving is the ideal solution for storing manually loaded, bulky or long items.
- Beams can be up to 3 m long, with a choice of chipboard, pine, steel or wire mesh shelving.
- The open frame design means shelving can be loaded from the front and back, optimising access and reducing the amount of lost space.
- Shelving frames are braced and bolted for strength and reliability, while the foot and levelling plates allow for shelving systems to adapt to uneven surfaces.
- Upright covers allow them to be used as a low system or even work benches, which prevents product snagging, which is traditionally the case.
- Fully adjustable beams mean the LS3 range accommodates future product changes, providing additional flexibility and peace of mind.
- The system can be easily dismantled, reinstalled and adjusted. This provides it with the ability to adapt and grow in line with customers' needs, which reduce shelving lifetime costs and provide a higher return on investment.

For more information about Logistics Systems Engineering, visit https://www.lsegroup.africa email sales@lsegroup.co.za or call 0861 61 61 61.

High-temperature furnace belts offer 3x service-life of conventional

BMG's Light Materials Handling division supplies and supports a comprehensive range of belting products which is suitable for use in diverse sectors, including high-temperature applications, like glass bottle manufacturing.

"Because of extreme heat generated from furnaces in glass bottle manufacturing plants, we recommend the installation of flat top chains that run efficiently at a safe distance from the furnaces" explains Ryan Forsyth, Business Unit Manager, Light Materials Handling division, BMG. "To ensure efficient handling and optimum safety of bottles during production, we propose the following handling procedure: bottles should be conveyed from the furnace, through a cooling system and then transported on a specialised stainless-steel Knuckleback™ flat surface belt to the packaging area for distribution.

"In high temperature conveying applications near ovens, kilns and furnaces, extreme heat causes conventional metal belts to stretch."

"This damage adversely affects performance and results in costly downtime for urgent repairs. BMG's Cambridge Knuckleback belts, which have been developed specifically for high-temperature applications, offer three times the belt-life of conventional furnace belts, ensuring minimal downtime and reduced maintenance requirements."

BMG's high-temperature Cambridge Knuckleback belts are recommended for safe and efficient conveying near ovens, kilns and furnaces.

Fully-customisable high-temperature Knuckleback belts have a reinforced proprietary reverse back-edge weld that prevents belt breakage, by moving the tension away from the weld point. This robust design reduces stretching and camber in high-temperature applications and extends belt-life by strengthening and lengthening the connection between the belt's spirals and rods. The uniform surface helps remove excess deposits and minimises slag build-up.

These durable belts, which can withstand temperatures up to 1 176°C, are available from BMG in widths up to 5 080 mm.

BMG also offers Knuckleback Platinum belts that undergo an additional treatment process to reduce carbon diffusion, which extends belt life by an additional 25%.

The company offers a technical advisory and support service throughout Southern Africa.

Workshops and stock depots are equipped with the latest tooling and equipment and manned by skilled belting technicians.

The kingpin of universal cranes

WITH over 200 years of crane manufacture and supply, Demag's range of universal cranes still offer a superior lifting option, especially with over 800,000 Demag cranes installed in over 60 countries with 63 000 remote connections.

"Demag's universal cranes offer the largest range in the industry and come with a pedigree that is applauded around the world. The high level of certainty of quality, efficiency and reliability associated with Demag is without question one of its most striking features. Customer performance expectations are easily met and maintained, the safety of the equipment is outstanding due to its unique Safe-Control control system and compliance with Crane Safety Function Performance Level d" said Demag Managing Director, Emil Berning.

The universal crane gives optimal adaptation to the building geometry and the best possible configuration is ensured for every application due to the high variety of crane types and possible connections. The top-mounted crane bridges make installation easier whilst the double girder overhead travelling cranes maximise coverage of available floor space due to improved cross-travel approach dimensions.

> "...over 800,000 Demag cranes installed in over 60 countries with 63 000 remote connections."

Universal Crane Products

The Demag product portfolio includes single and double-girder overhead travelling cranes and suspension cranes. Besides universal cranes with welded box-section girders, Demag also offers solutions with rolled steel sections. The tailored wall-mounted travelling cranes and crane sets are based on standardised components to meet specific customer application requirements.

"Our Demag V-type crane due to its tapered diaphragm joints offers a reduced oscillation by up to 30%, 17% less deadweight and up to 500 000 changes of load giving it a longer service life. It really has revolutionised load handling" said Berning. With 55% less surface area exposed to wind, maximum stability of load bearing parts and improved safety due to greater light, the V-type offers significantly improved efficiency for handling loads and higher handling rates than conventional box-section girders.

The Demag double-girder overhead travelling cranes give exceptional load capacity for a low deadweight. Their innovative crane geometry also provides for extremely good travel characteristics, which minimises wear on the end carriages and crane runway. The load hook can be raised between the two crane girders, thereby maximising lifting heights.

For further information email Emil Berning, at NewTechnology.za@demagcranes.com

Cape Town crane company supplies WWTW expansion

BB CRANES, the Cape Town-based lifting equipment manufacturer, is to deliver two 4ton, 5metrespan underslung cranes to Zandvliet Wastewater Treatment Works.

To be installed in new upper and lower screw-pump stations that will form part of the plant's expansion, both machines have been ergonomically designed to facilitate manual control of the long-travel, cross-travel and lift.

They follow earlier delivery of a 4-ton, 14,7-metre span double-girder electric overhead travelling crane for the dewatering building, and two articulated hoists for the poly-storeroom and service-water pump station.

All five machines were ordered from BB Cranes by PCI Africa, one of the continent's leading water technology designers and contractors, and the company managing the multi-million Rand expansion of Zandvliet's daily capacity from 72 million to 90 million litres.

Commissioning of several sections of the project already under way will take place in 2021.

Zandvliet Wastewater Treatment Works is responsible for the southern parts of Kuils River, Delft, Blackheath, Blackheath Industria, Blue Downs, Eerste River, De Wijnlanden, Thembokwezi, Mxolisi Phetani and Khayelitsha.

For the cranes that its expansion needs, there are paint and other anti-corrosion specifications unique to the operating environment. BB Cranes has worked closely with PCI Africa for the past three years to tailor its product to meet these requirements.

Beyond the recent deliveries and orders, the two companies have together submitted tenders for lifting equipment required by a number of other pump station projects in the Western Cape, as well as – beyond South Africa's borders – Botswana and Namibia.

BB Cranes, majority owned by Condra since 2016, was formed in 1992 to marry locally manufactured overhead crane girders and electrification systems to components from Condra's Johannesburg factory. Today, the localised crane assembly offered by this Cape Town manufacturer provides Western Cape customers with ready access to local supply and technical support unaffected by exchange rate fluctuations.

The company is working towards ISO 9000 certification, assisted by Condra which is already certified to this standard.

BB Cranes' traditional emphasis on delivering world-class cranes offered from within Cape Town and backed by rapid, effective technical support, remains a core value.

"Although Condra helps with design, BB Cranes remains focused on localised employment and regional customers within the Western Cape," said company general manager Stephen Brink.

Expanding on the recent orders for Zandvliet, he said that the company was ready for an anticipated increase in demand for cranes, hoists and other lifting equipment associated with pump station upgrades and the need for increased wastewater purification capacity.

"We are close to site, our facilities are top-notch, and BB Cranes' sales support and after-sales technical service teams are already trained and in place," Brink said.

"We are looking forward to an increase in business."

The Condra 4-ton, 14,7-metre span double-girder electric overhead travelling crane already installed at Zandvliet Wastewater Treatment Works.

Robotic e-commerce warehouses for faster delivery

ROBOTIC warehouses are turning small urban spaces into “micro fulfilment” spaces, says Inospace CEO Rael Levitt, who owns and manages 26 business parks in South Africa and abroad.

The demand for fast order fulfilment and delivery services skyrocketed during global lockdowns, ushering in a new era of challenges and opportunities for the beleaguered real estate sector. Robotic micro-fulfilment warehouses are now rolling out globally, and providing efficient automated selection of items to enable faster delivery to consumers.

Micro-fulfilment centres are much smaller than warehouses, which typically need to be on the outskirts of cities. Instead, micro-fulfilment centres are compact and can be set up within cities, ensuring quicker service to a large segment of customers

In addition to the low cost per square metre, these types of robotic fulfilment centres significantly boost operational efficiency. They also need only a handful of employees at a time. An operator at a counter - one of just four “touchpoints” - assembles incoming orders from arriving bins, picks the items from them, then scans and bags them. Bags are lowered and robotically ferried to a second touchpoint, an outbound terminal.

Micro-fulfilment centres, operated by robots and usually smaller than 1 000 m2, are emerging as the future of last-mile delivery logistics. The strategy, operated through software and executed via automation, powers the strategy known as micro fulfilment. It is aimed at speeding up the delivery of goods to consumers in cities through operations that pack large numbers of products into tight, urban spaces.

By squeezing those operations into small urban warehouses, businesses hope to pare down delivery times so online orders reach their destination in hours, not days. Companies storing goods at micro-fulfilment sites should be able to get orders picked and packed in five minutes or less, with only a handful of workers.

Most micro-fulfilment operations are still being tested, but the strategy is good news for grocery chains and other retailers scrambling to meet rising e-commerce demand during the pandemic. The future market for automated grocery micro-fulfilment centres is estimated to be worth $1.2 billion by 2024, according to market research firm Interact Analysis.

The key is to store products in spaces that only robots, not humans, can reach. There is no vertical airspace between bins and only about 200 mm of space between stacks. Grocery installations typically include three different sections: one for room-temperature products, another for cooler items, and a manual picking area for fast-moving goods.

Grocery chain and retailer Walmart is among the companies testing various automated systems, but non-grocery retailers have been slower to embrace the concept. This is in spite of the fact that the automated alternative requires less space than traditional distribution, and reduces the number of steps for human workers.

E-commerce spike leads to major investment in warehouse space

Paragon Group Director Estelle Meiring.

A massive spike in online sales during the Covid-19 crisis is expected to fuel unparalleled growth in e-commerce operations in South Africa. The general rule of thumb is that e-commerce requires three times the logistics space of traditional storefronts. “Therefore it is reasonable to assume that we will see a much greater investment in warehouse space to support local e-commerce. In addition to this, warehousing demand might be accelerated by the growth of e-commerce in the rest of Africa,” comments Paragon Group Director Estelle Meiring.

Improvements in racking, logistics and building technology have seen an increase in warehouse clear eave heights, often as high as 15 m, as well as an increase in yard depths, sometimes in excess of 45 m. “We have also noticed more requests for cross-docking and an increase in the number of warehouse doors required, as inputs and outputs are maximised,” reveals Meiring. There is a strong move towards sustainability, specifically the installation of photovoltaic panels to reduce reliance on external power supply and cut costs over time. Other key sustainability features include natural light, better building insulation and water conservation. Security remains a major concern.

Another emerging trend is on-demand warehousing, dubbed the ‘Uberisation’ or ‘WeWork’ of warehousing, which sees services and space acquired on a ‘pay-per-use’ basis. This method of warehousing gives customers more choice and flexibility over location, cost and supplier, either as a complete substitute to owning warehouses, or as a partial replacement when a new warehousing location becomes necessary.

“The emergence of on-demand warehousing serves as a response to the increasing number of supply chain challenges that businesses are up against,” points out Meiring. Many users of warehouse space do not want long-term leases in a period of inventory fluctuation and uncertainty. Predictions are that even South Africa’s larger retailers will need immediate space for both slow and fast-moving goods while they assess their long-term distribution plans.

The Cape Town market remains unique in that it still has prime vacant land for the development of large distribution warehouses in close proximity to Cape Town International Airport. These sites are centrally situated to consumers, and are an ideal location for online sales related warehousing, distribution and fulfilment. Additional Western Cape areas that show a lot of promise are the Belville South and Brackenfell and Western Coast nodes. Other parts of the country expecting a major uptake in recently developed industrial areas are Midrand and Pomona in Gauteng and Riverhorse Valley in KwaZulu-Natal.

An interesting trend in the US is that e-commerce and omni-channel retailers are expanding their distribution networks, working from multiple, smaller distribution warehouses closer to customers, rather than from a centralised distribution centre, due to changing demand. Where five-day delivery times were once considered standard, consumers now routinely expect next-day or even same-day delivery. In line with this, Amazon has now started acquiring some failed malls, using the land to develop online fulfilment centres.

“This makes a lot of sense, as these malls are perfectly located close to consumers and major transport routes,” argues Meiring. “Although our e-commerce industry is a lot less mature than that of the United States, it would be interesting to see if we will follow the same trend in years to come, which might change the way we see distribution centre nodes in future,” concludes Meiring.

Vertical lift module market players eye opportunities in automotive sector

ACCORDING to a new market intelligence study, the fast expanding e-commerce sectors, coupled with the well-developed warehousing operations are stimulating the global vertical lift module market growth. The global vertical lift module market is anticipated to witness growth at over 8% CAGR (Compound annual growth rate) during the forecast period from the year 2020 to 2030. The study captures the impact of latest forces on the market, along with offering readers a detailed analysis on the COVID-19 impact on vertical life module market growth.

Key Takeaways from Vertical Lift Module Market Report

- Rapidly developing e-commerce sector is expected to fuel demand during the forecast period
- Rising demand from logistics companies is anticipated to enable market exhibit growth at accelerated pace
- Advancements of automated equipment developing companies are boosting the market growth
- Increasing demand from end-use segments such as warehousing, retail sectors, and others is forecast to drive growth

“Rising demand from highly developed automation companies is enabling growth in the global vertical lift module market. Furthermore, rapidly expanding e-commerce sectors are expected to offer lucrative prospects for market’s growth in the coming years,” said a report analyst.

Advancements in Automotive Sector Fuelling Growth

Shortage in terms of distribution, storage, and sales of parts has been a key challenge haunting automotive manufacturers and dealership departments alike. Several leading suppliers are capitalizing on filly automated vertical storage systems to counter existing challenges. Through this they aim at improving overall customer satisfaction, besides maximizing their profit margin.

With an increasing number of automotive dealers showing interest in investing in vertical storage systems, the market is poised to record impressive growth in the coming years. Also stringent regulations implemented to ascertain secure and safe inventory are encouraging companies across pharmaceutical and medical industries to implement lean logistic and inventory models.

With these companies looking for cost optimization, the demand for vertical lift module is expected to surge significantly in the coming years. This will also offer lucrative prospects for market players to capitalize on.

Some of the leading companies operating in the market are Kardex Group, Systems Logistics SPA, Hanel GmbH & Co. Kg, Modula Inc., Daifuku Co. Ltd., DMW&H, Schafer Systems International, Inc., Ferretto Group S.P.A., and others.

The focus of these market players was continuous investment in technology, along with R&D efforts. However, the COVID-19 impact has meant that many of these companies are now in holding pattern, especially with the growing realization that instead of a one big hit, the pandemic may impact healthcare and economy in several waves. Any major investments in this sector are likely to be in the last quarter of 2021 or early 2022.

Safety first when pumping aggressive or hazardous liquids

SOLID machined air operated double diaphragm pumps Verderair PURE, are known for resistance to aggressive and abrasive media. In order to optimally adapt the Verderair PURE to an application, this pump can be equipped with several options.

In addition to the active pulsation dampeners and stroke counters, there is also an air barrier system (double pump chamber), leak sensor, stroke sensor, remote control and remote drain option.

Examples of use for the Verderair Pure:

- Chemical industry: acids, alkalis, alcohols, solvents, latex, emulsions
- Paper & pulp: glue, slurries, adhesives, polymers, dispersions, resins, sodium silicate, titanium dioxide
- Surface finishing: electroplating baths, acids, alkalis, anode sludge, waste water, flocculants, varnishes, enamel slip
- Water treatment: acids, bases, flocculants
- Electronics: transport liquids, ultrapure media, etching solutions, coating baths, mercury, solvents
- Paints & varnishes: glue, additives, printing inks, varnishes, latex, acids, solvents, resins, pigment slips

For more information contact Verder Pumps South-Africa Tel: 011 704 7500 or visit www.verder-liquids.com/za/en/

Reflections on Cape Town's water crisis

An innovative online resource sharing lessons from Cape Town's water crisis of 2017-2018 is set to help city leaders around the world to build resilience.

TWO Cape Town citizens have spearheaded a unique initiative to capture learnings from the 2017-2018 Cape Town water crisis. The resource they created is now available for use by decision-makers and urban resilience professionals around the world to reflect on critical infrastructure challenges in their own cities.

Peter Willis, an independent facilitator, and filmmaker Victor van Aswegen collaborated to build a distinctive learning resource through the Cape Town Drought Response Learning Initiative. Over a two-year period they assembled the most comprehensive resource of first-hand reflections on the crisis and distilled key insights and learnings from the material.

The resource offers nearly 100 films on various aspects of the Cape Town water crisis, including 39 in-depth filmed interviews and a 16-module Learning from Crisis series, each module of which addresses one of the major themes that emerged during this period.

Topics include the role of data and information in maintaining and building public trust; the measures that were effective in bringing about household behaviour change; the role of business; the impact of the Day Zero communication strategy; the limits to large-scale emergency water supply augmentation projects; inequality and social cohesion in a crisis; underlying systemic issues which exacerbated the impact of the drought; the costs to agriculture and agribusiness; the role of politics and leadership.

Globally, the norm for post-crisis analysis of this nature is that it is commissioned and delivered by government bodies, with findings presented in official reports. The fact that this initiative was conceived and undertaken by two private citizens is noteworthy, as is the accessibility of its content due to the emphasis on film. Willis and Van Aswegen embarked on the project with the aim of producing a public good, out of a conviction that the many lessons learnt during the water crisis in Cape Town were worth capturing and sharing.

"Before Cape Town's water crisis in 2017-2018 came the crises in São Paulo in 2014, Barcelona in 2008, and Australia's large cities in the 2000s. Failure to learn from past mistakes is to self-condemn to repeating those mistakes in future," says Van Aswegen. "Extracting the correct lessons from the experience, and then applying these, is critical."

The Cape Town Drought Response Learning Initiative resources can be accessed by the public at www.drought-response-learning-initiative.org

Advanced pump monitoring sytem

XYLEM's Flygt MAS 801 Pump Monitoring system is the next generation and a new benchmark in monitoring equipment, replacing its popular MAS711 monitoring product. It is claimed to be a revolution for proactive oversight and management of various pump metrics.

"The days of manual inspections and reactive maintenance are disappearing," said Chetan Mistry, Strategy and Marketing Manager for Xylem Africa. "The maturation of Internet of Things technologies and connectivity has been creating new ways to leverage data for making better system-level choices. Xylem and Flygt's MAS 711 helped chart that course, and MAS 801 is taking things even further. Now our customers can monitor multiple pumps through one MAS 801 unit and make quicker decisions using our improved measurement technologies, enabling faster response whilst saving costs."

The MAS 801 can monitor up to ten separate pumps from one central unit, communicating with base stations attached to each pump. From a central screen, a variety of sensor data can be monitored, such as fluid level, temperatures on bearings and windings, and vibration. MAS 801 can integrate pump memory and record what happens with the motor, then visualise the data for operators. Those monitoring the pumps can see all the measures and trends, particularly helpful for predictive maintenance.

MAS 801 can also issue pre-emptive alerts and alarms for specified events or conditions while providing a continuous station health check to detect failures before they can damage station infrastructure.

MAS 801 simplify decision making: by providing information for system-level choices and recommendations, it can predict optimal pump servicing. It uses the existing power cords from the MAS 711 for easier installation and use.

MAS 801 supports a station's evolution into digitisation by establishing a more proactive approach to station diagnostics, streamlining the maintenance experience - all in a convenient plug-and-play solution that is simple to deploy and integrate with existing pumps.

Effective sewerage systems for infrastructure

EFFECTIVE sewerage systems are an essential element of infrastructure planning, development and maintenance. They ensure that communities live in hygienic conditions through the collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of wastewater in a non-hazardous manner to people and the environment. A critical function of sewerage systems is to prevent water-borne diseases from becoming active.

The success of such systems is dependent on the design of the system, good quality materials and products, good installation and construction practice and continuous monitoring and maintenance to ensure their effectiveness is not compromised during their service life.

Rocla, a leading manufacturer of precast concrete products is an ISO 9001(Quality Management System) certified company and manufactures sewerage system products carrying the CMACS Mark of Approval.

Rocla's sewer reticulation products include:

- Reinforced concrete pipes with HDPE lining – offers the advantages of a conventional concrete pipe as well as a plastic pipe in that it maintains its shape under load and is inert to acid attack. They are an ideal product for large diameter gravity pipelines in almost any condition. The standard HDPE lining is light green and 3mm thick. A HDPE capping strip is welded over the joints after installation to protect the exposed concrete at the joints from corrosive products. These pipes are available from 750mm diameter pipes.
- Reinforced concrete pipes with a sacrificial layer – The host pipe is manufactured from ordinary Portland cement (OPC) concrete with either dolomitic or siliceous aggregate and the sacrificial layer is manufactured with dolomitic aggregate in an OPC concrete or calcium aluminate cement (CAC) concrete.
- Reinforced concrete pipes with Xypex BIO-SAN C500 – Concrete pipes with Xypex BIO-SAN C500 are offered for 300mm to 600 mm diameter pipes. Xypex BIO-SAN C500 is a uniquely designed admixture for integral, long term protection of concrete in harsh sewerage conditions with high levels of H2S that causes microbial induced corrosion in pipelines.

Supporting precast concrete sewerage accessories include: Pipes with access hole

- Bends – custom made bends of up to 30 degree can be supplied
- Manholes – HDPE lined manhole chambers, reducer slabs and cover slabs

Rocla is part of the ISG which also includes Technicrete.

New range of roller hose pumps

THE Verderflex ROLLIT is a new series of peristaltic roller hose pump, completing the Verderflex range of hose and tube pumps. Verderflex ROLLIT pumps are lubricant-free peristaltic hose pumps that are easy to maintain and available in a standard (single) and twinhead version. The Verderflex ROLLIT key features are: • Flow rates up to 24500 l/h • Pressures up to 4 bar • Power supply up to 4 kW • Max rotation speed 165 rpm • Max dry suction lift 8 mwc

Simple, clean, fast and flexible: Verderflex Rollit

This simple, lubricant bath free peristaltic pump is great for nearly all applications - especially if you need a quick hose change. The innovative hose clamping shorten hose changes to minutes for fast job changeovers.

For more information contact info@verderliquids.com

Chlorine – potentially dangerous disinfectant – study reveals

HOUSEHOLDS across the USA and other countries where tap water is heavily chlorinated may be drinking a potential health-threatening toxic and carcinogenic cocktail of chemicals sparked by chlorine use, according to recent research. A study from one of America's top research universities underscores the lack of research into the unintended health consequences of chlorine interacting with other chemicals finding their way into tap water, says Bluewater, a global specialist in water purification technologies.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins and the University of California, Berkeley, as well as in Switzerland, said their study, recently published in the science journal Environmental Science & Technology, indicates mixing drinking water with chlorine, one of the world's most widely used methods of disinfecting water, creates previously unidentified by-products that could be 'toxic and carcinogenic'.

"Chlorination has undoubtedly saved the lives of millions of people around the world from diseases such as typhoid and cholera. Yet worryingly little is known about the health consequences sparked by the chemical cocktail created when chlorine mixes with other chemical compounds found in drinking water," said Bluewater PR and Communications Director Dave Noble.

He noted how the scientists behind the Johns Hopkins study concluded that the discovery of previously unknown, highly toxic by-products raises the question of how much chlorination is necessary.

The lab-based study involved chlorinating water using the same methods used commercially for drinking water. The team added amino acid, let the water incubate for one day, and then used mass spectrometry to detect and analyze the chemicals in the water.

Their experiment found the compounds 2-butene-1,4-dial (BDA) and chloro-2-butene-1,4-dial (or BDA with chlorine attached). BDA is a very toxic compound and a known carcinogen that scientists had not earlier detected in chlorinated water. The paper's lead author Carsten Prasse, assistant professor of Environmental Health and Engineering at The Johns Hopkins University, said current analytical chemistry methods "are unable to detect and identify all of these by-products, some which may be harmful and can cause long-term health consequences." He noted one reason regulators and utilities are not monitoring these compounds is that they don't have the tools to find them.

Mr. Prasse called for the development of new analytical techniques that allow 'us to evaluate the formation of toxic disinfection by-products when chlorine or other disinfectants are being used'. He said more research was needed into chlorination alternatives such as ozone, UV treatment, or simple filtration.

In a 2019 White Paper, Bluewater and the Lisbon-based Mirpuri Foundation concluded that plastics pollution posed the #1 threat to human kind because of the way it contributes to the release of so-called Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals, or EDC's, into the natural environment. EDC's block the way hormones function naturally, triggering abnormal development and illnesses ranging from stunted fertility and male/female sex malformations to obesity, diabetes, cancer and heart attacks.

A scientific study indicates chlorination may be creating previously unknown, highly toxic by-products in tap water.

NCPC-SA ends busy year of IEE Project award, ISO 50001 promotion and launch of Global Eco-Industrial Parks programme

THE National Cleaner Production Centre South Africa (NCPC-SA) - the government's national programme that promotes the implementation of resource efficient and cleaner production (RECP) methodologies to assist industry to lower costs through reduced energy, water and materials usage, and waste management – ended off a busy year with the launch of Global Eco-Industrial Parks programme, early in December.

DTIC, partners launch Global Eco-Industrial Parks Programme in South Africa

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) and NCPC-SA, in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), on December 7 2020 officially launched the Global Eco-Industrial Parks Programme (GEIPP) in South Africa.

The DTIC's strong support of the Industrial Park Revitalisation Programme (IPRP) which has already seen investment of R760-million was chosen to host the GEIPP.

To create maximum impact with the GEIPP South Africa Country Level Intervention and to remain focused, one park was selected as "model industrial park" with less intensive technical assistance while two parks with high improvement potential were selected for in-depth technical assistance. All the other shortlisted industrial parks, industrial zones and special economic zones will be included to the extent possible as recipients of capacity building and awareness raising on EIP topics of common interest.

East London Industrial Development Zone was selected as a "model park" while Puthaditjaba industrial Park and Ekandustria were selected as industrial park with high improvement potential to participate in the three year GEIPP

International Energy Project of the Year

Under the NCPC-SA umbrella, the IEE Project (which since 2010 has focused improving the energy efficiency of South African industry) won the highest international accolade for an energy programme – the International Energy Project of the Year, awarded by the global Association of Energy Engineers (AEE).

The award was accepted by national project manager, Alf Hartzenburg at the AEE International Virtual Awards ceremony on Wednesday, 14 October. AEE members and executives from around the world praised the achievements of the IEE Project which since its first implementation projects in 2011, the IEE Project team has assisted industrial companies to save 6.5 TWh of energy, translating to cumulative cost savings of R5.3 billion in these companies.

Promotion of ISO 50001

Also during the year the IEE Project launched an initiative to stimulate the adoption of fast-growing ISO 5001 energy management standard to South African firms - designed to help improve the performance of a company's energy-intensive assets to support cost savings and emission reductions.

The initiative has taken the form of a series of webinars to raise awareness of the benefits of ISO 50001 certification, as well as the processes and costs involved in securing certification through the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS).

Despite the ISO 50001 being the fastest-growing standard globally, it has not been widely adopted by South African firms, with the exception of a few multi nationals. South Africa lags behind in the Standards adoption compared to countries in Asia, Europe and North America, and other African countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

To encourage adoption, the NCPC-SA is offering a financial incentive to the first ten companies to sign up for certification by funding the certification-readiness assessment of those ten firms, as well as contributing R30 000 to the cost of certification with the SABS..

The NCPC-SA's Alf Hartzenburg, who heads up the IEE Project in South Africa, warned that poor energy and resource efficiency is not only undermining the competitiveness of domestic companies, but could also place them at a trade disadvantage as consumers seek assurances of good environmental performance.

This was echoed by SABS senior manager Pieter Haasbroek who admitted that only five companies have received ISO 50001 certification from the SABS.

Where certification has been received and/or energy management systems have been implemented, energy cost savings of between 10% and 20% have been reported, mainly achieved through behavioural changes rather than capital investments.

Of the 142 domestic firms that have implemented energy management systems in South Africa since 2011, the majority are in the automotive, retail and non-metallic minerals sectors, with only two mining companies having committed so far.

Hartzenburg reported that interest among miners had peaked recently, due to rising electricity costs and by South Africa's decision to implement a carbon tax.

He warned that without senior management support and ongoing monitoring and system maintenance, the financial benefits associated with energy efficiency programmes will not be sustained.

"I am hoping that through this initiative with the SABS, we can begin taking our rightful place on this continent as a leader in terms of ISO 50001-certified plants" he said.

Cape Town increases uptake of renewables

CAPE Town is set to take advantage of the recent Department of Energy's decision to allow major cities to purchase electricity directly from Independent Power Producers (IPPs). The decision is anticipated to be a major fillip for the renewable energy and IPP sector. "A lot of hard work still lies ahead to implement this policy, but it is a major step in securing a better energy future for the city," comments Barto van der Merwe, Buildings Director at AECOM.

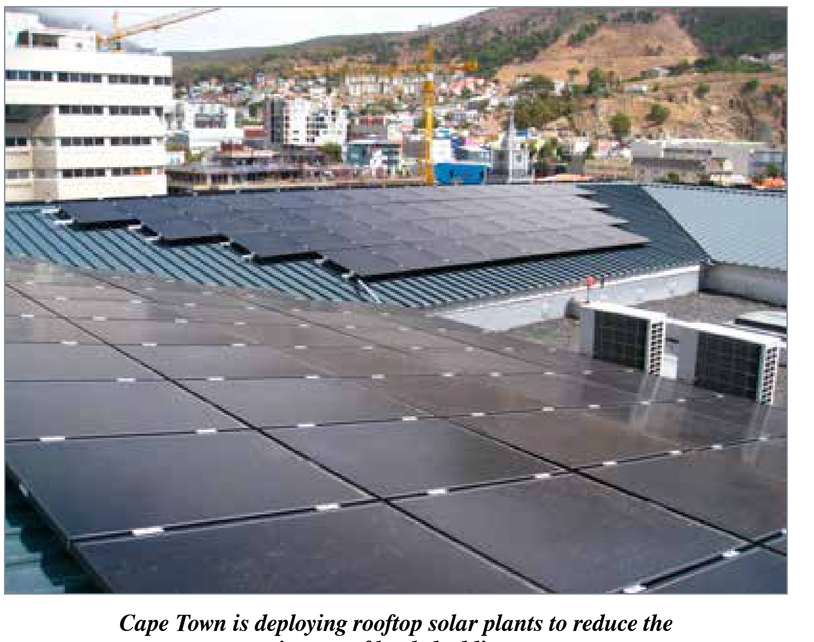
Although Cape Town only plans to procure 300 MW of renewable energy in three to five years' time, the implications of the announcement will immediately have a major positive impact on its economy. IPPs can also take encouragement from the city's compiling of a mini Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) as recently announced, indicating that a longer-term plan for greater self-reliance is on the cards, notes van der Merwe.

Independent energy sources contribute to decreased load shedding and increased energy security. "This is an important consideration for AECOM's international clients when it comes to investment decisions. As such, companies need to carefully weigh up their options," notes Werner Schneeberger, Executive at AECOM. He points to the fact that Cape Town's Steenbras pumped storage scheme, combined with rooftop solar plants, already play a significant role in reducing the severity of load shedding in the city.

"Areas supplied by the city in this fashion are likely to become business hubs. Another factor to take into consideration is that Eskom tariffs have tripled over the last decade, with future price uncertainty a potential deterrent to investment. Power purchased from IPPs automatically comes with price certainty, while wind and solar power is already cheaper than the cost of Eskom electricity," elaborates Schneeberger.

"Cape Town will increasingly be able to shape the power curve by setting tariffs for both producers and users," argues Brian Homann, Renewables Lead at AECOM. He highlights the example that power could be more expensive when production is low and usage is high, such as during the evening peak. It could be cheaper when production is high and usage is low, such as over a sunny weekend when factories are closed but solar power can still be generated. "Such a scenario is dependent on future pricing structure decisions. This will drive investment in smart grid control solutions and storage, and gas peaking plants, as well as allowing more renewables in the energy mix," reveals Homan.

Businesses also need clean energy to meet their sustainability targets in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, adds van der Merwe. "As Cape Town's electricity grid becomes cleaner and increasingly powered by wind and solar energy, forward-looking businesses will want to be supplied by the city."



Cape Town is deploying rooftop solar plants to reduce the impact of load shedding.

This is because transport is a major GHG contributor, with companies increasingly opting for electric vehicles (EVs). A cleaner grid will increase the uptake of EVs in Cape Town, leading to reduced emissions, a cleaner and healthier city and ultimately, a more attractive place for business, he points out.

"Furthermore, any reduction of energy demand on the national grid on the part of major cities theoretically has the potential for Eskom to focus on economic development or rekindling the country's industrial capacity, thus stimulating much-needed growth. AECOM is pleased to see that Cape Town is taking a lead in actively implementing its energy and sustainability strategies. We welcome and support this positive development of greater self-sufficiency in terms of energy supply," concludes van der Merwe.

AEC pushes for natural gas adoption and jobs creation

THE African Energy Chamber (www.EnergyChamber.org) was in Mozambique recently on a working visit to meet with the country's government authorities, representatives of the oil sector and local entrepreneurs and services providers. The Chamber was advocating sound local content policies and development and a broader push for gas monetisation in order to fight energy poverty and create jobs.

With the revised development plan for the Temane PSA now approved, Eni's 3.4 mtpa Coral South FLNG and Total's 12.88 mtpa venture, Mozambique LNG projects have the potential of positioning Mozambique to become an African gas leader. While Mozambican gas exports are expected to benefit more than just South Africa, the monetisation of its gas at home is also set to unlock local value for Mozambicans.

The Chamber believes that gas monetisation will change the economic outlook of Mozambique and its people. Natural gas remains the best hope the country has to fight energy poverty, improve security and offer opportunities to young Mozambican women and men.

Laser system precisely measures extruded products

From Plastics Today Magazine

A laser-based measurement system performs online diameter control and flaw detection of opaque or transparent extruded products. The Aeroel Extruline system from Marposs prevents the production of out-of-tolerance products by detecting and locating diameter flaws along the product's entire length.

It is suited for use with glass pipes, medical tubing, sections, electric cables, and similar products.

The non-contact technology enables measurement of moving products — hot or soft — without damage.

Out-of-tolerance conditions trigger an alarm, helping to reduce scrap and rejects later in the process.

The diameter and ovality of stock from 0.1 mm to 149 mm can be controlled either via a single- or dual-axis laser gauge, depending on the diameter range and type of product. Product vibration and movement do not affect the process. The gauge is installed just after the extruder head, eliminating any contact with the guiding roll and resulting in faster and more effective regulation, according to Marposs.

Marposs is represented in South Africa by RGC Engineering (Pty) Ltd. Tel. 011 887 0800.

Compressors for the plastic and packaging industry

COMPRESSED air is widely used in the plastic and packaging industry, especially in the forming and blow moulding of objects (any type of bottles and containers) and in packaging and wrapping systems. It is used to pneumatically transport raw materials from the stocking areas (for example in the case of PVC moulding), to fill the moulds and eject parts, to create the vacuum, for packaging and palletisation. It is particularly useful also during part cooling, with a significant increase of process efficiency.

The plastic and packaging industry is characterised by systems operating in continuous mode, 24/7, and compressors must be able to guarantee an operation without interruptions while maintaining consistent air delivery performance. In addition, the advanced control systems, allow managing aspects concerning safety, machine downtime and backup processes, besides changing the use of the machines and optimising the efficiency and consumption while minimising the wear over time.

> "It is particularly useful also during part cooling, with a significant increase of process efficiency."

Another aspect to take into account is that plastic containers are often used for packaging food and pharmaceutical products, therefore, it is necessary that the compressed air used for their production is of high quality and free from oil residues or other pollutants that may deteriorate the final product.

The wide range of Mattei compressors has particularly suitable features to cater for the industry needs, the main of which are:

- greater energy efficiency thanks to the vane technology that allows savings up to 15% and higher environment standards compared to other rotary compressors;
- reduced maintenance costs thanks to the construction design that minimises the interventions for component replacement;
- consistent performance: the rotary vane compressors ensure high air outputs and performance levels that remain constant over time, with no need to overhaul the compression unit;
- wide and versatile range that allows meeting the most diverse compressed air requests;
- supervision and control systems that allow for a more efficient and economic configuration of the compressor room;
- compressed air free from impurities thanks to a system that separates the oil from the air in different stages and an efficient filtering system, ideal for critical processes that affect the quality of the finished product;
- possibility to create customised solutions, for specific applications or critical environmental conditions.

Reduction of operating costs

Mattei rotary vane compressors use oil-lubricated white metal brass bearings that are not subject to wear over time (contrary to what happens to the rolling bearings or thrust bearings of screw rotary compressors). This feature ensures consistent operating performance, allowing the compressor to operate for over 100 000 hours without replacing components or performing significant overhauls. Energy efficiency and reduced maintenance costs allow Mattei compressors to claim the lowest life cycle compressor cost on the market.

For more information visit www.rotorvane.co.za

Accreditation boosts service offering revenue

NOVAMARINE, a marine safety and survival equipment provider based in Cape Town and Durban, has recently been approved as an accredited service partner for CSM safety equipment. CSM currently has over 200 international servicing stations globally and has added NovaMarine to its service network. NovaMarine's 55-years experience, ideal location, multi-skilled technicians, and extensive client-base, makes the company a perfect fit.

Shanghai Star Rubber Products Co. Ltd is the specialised manufacturer of the CSM brand of marine inflatable life rafts and inflatable and non-inflatable rubber products.

All products are compliant with ISO 9001:2008, and the products have been approved by classification societies such as ABS, CCS, DNV-GL, LR, NK, RS, and Rina.

While the national lockdown affected most industry sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NovaMarine was earmarked as an essential services provider during this time and even extended its service offering to include a sanitising service for vessels. In addition, NovaMarine recently received its South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) Certification for Inspectable, Refillable Gas Containers. This also includes approval as a high-pressure test station for testing of CO_2 cylinders.

CT ship repair facilities back on track

THE Port of Cape Town operates three dry-dock facilities; the Robinson Dock in the V&A waterfront,(one of the oldest dry-docks in the world and ideally suited for the repair of smaller ships), a Synchro lift adjacent to the V&A Clock Tower precinct,(commissioned in 1975 and capable of handling a minimum of five ships at a time) and the Sturrock Dock, situated in the Duncan Dock. This was commissioned in 1945 and is one of the largest dry-docks in the southern hemisphere, ideally suited to accommodate larger ships up to 320 m in length.

During peak periods the Cape Town Ship repair facilities have up to 2 000 employees on site on a daily basis and more than 20 contracting companies active in daily operations, resulting in a tremendous contribution to employment and resultant positive impact on the economy of the Western Cape.

Prior to the initial national lockdown in March 2020, the ship repair facilities averaged 21 vessels per month. However, this number dwindled substantially over the subsequent six months. October 2020 saw a resurge in the ship repair facilities with 16 vessels having undergone repairs and refurbishments in the ports repair precincts.

Ship repair Manager, Zweli Khuzwayo said, “We have overcome the initial challenges of the pandemic and are responding well to the demands of the industry. With a motivation intervention and awareness campaign for our employees and port users, we managed to normalize operations under strict COVID-19 protocols.

Port Manager, Mpumi Dweba-Kwetana is optimistic about the future of the ship repair industry in the Port of Cape Town and declared her commitment to safe operations and growth of the industry. “With our facilities on offer and optimistic customer base there is huge growth potential for the ship repair industry providing much needed employment opportunities and boost to the local economy. Over the next 10 years an additional investment of R1,4 billion is earmarked for our ship-repair facilities, which will further bolster confidence and position the region as a major player in the ship repair industry” she said.

> “Port of Cape Town - huge growth potential in ship repair business.”

Newbuilding activity picks up pace

ALLIED Shipbroking reports news of fresh deals. In the dry bulk market, the positive momentum that has been shaped in the freight market and given that the worst part of the pandemic situation has already passed, have all helped boost interest amongst potential buyers.

The moderate growth noted in the fleet over the last couple of years in combination with the anticipated revival of the global economy in the coming years has left some space for speculative ordering to take place. Eleven new units were added to the global order book recently, with the main focus given to Ultramaxes and small bulk carriers. In the tanker market, the current fundamentals may not be as positive, but what seems to be a market floor, buyers are seemingly preparing for the coming rebound. Meanwhile, the gradual drop in newbuilding prices has also helped in reviving interest in the market. However, sentiment is still raw and it will take some time before interest finds a stable foothold. An impressive number of VLCCs have been being ordered recently (15 units), with most of them though being at the LOI stage.

Spokesman Banchero Costa added that “South Korean yards were busy with order for tankers. Daewoo signed a LOI for 10 x VLCCs with delivery from end 2022: vessels to be LNG fuelled and priced at $100 -m. Vessels will be employed against long TC to Shell. Hyundai received an order for 2 + 2 VLCCs from Athenian Sea Carriers with deliveries during end of 2022. With increasing demand for tonnage, container players started to place more newbuilding orders. MSC has ordered 6 x 23,000 teu ULCCs to be built by Hudong Zhonghua, Jiangnan Shipyard and Jiangsu New Yangzijiang.

From Hellenic Shipping News

Waste management companies urged to help limit landfill fires

FIRES at landfill sites happen maybe more often than you think, and no landfill goes unscathed. There have already been several landfill fires this year in South Africa alone.

There are several contributing factors which can lead to fires, but whether as a result of arson or the exposure of materials on site, the huge potential impact can be largely avoided with the implementation of adequate preventative measures. It is how these fires are managed and the extinguishing process applied which will determine the extent of the damage.

The effects of incorrectly handled fires are not limited to health and the environment but impact on society and business too. In some cases, nearby highways, schools and businesses have had to close. But on an effectively managed landfill a fire will be controlled quickly and limited damage suffered.

Landfill fires sometimes lead to local residents being advised to stay indoors for health reasons. In the case of a landfill fire in Pietermaritzburg earlier this year those living close to the site and in ill health were asked to evacuate their homes; the same fire also resulted in the temporary closure of a nearby provincial highway. An air quality report released following the fire revealed that high levels of cancer-causing chemicals were present in the air even four days after the fire was extinguished.

"This incident should serve as a case study example for operators in the waste management sector of what the potential effects of a fire could entail and what measures; such as having trained staff and other fire-fighting resources on site, should have been in place," says Reg Gerber, National Landfill Manager at waste management company Averda's Vlakfontein site.

Aerial view of Vlakfontein site.

Landfill sites are an important part of the waste economy in South Africa, which makes the responsible management of these sites all the more important. The GreenCape 2020 Market Intelligence Report quotes government statistics which put the waste economy's contribution to GDP in 2016 at around R24,3bn while it provided 36 000 formal jobs and support for 80 000 informal jobs and livelihoods.

"We all have a part to play in the protection of these sites, the people that work on it and the communities that live in surrounding areas. It starts with paying close attention to what we send to a landfill site – for example, the reckless dumping of hot ash or coals as part of our products sent to a landfill site can lead to a fire," says Gerber.

The warmer summer weather and endless sunshine also bring with it the risk of flames being sparked by broken glass shards which act as magnifying glasses. The same warm and dry weather can also create an atmosphere in which the reckless dumping of a mixture of chemicals could lead to spontaneous combustion.

"I urge businesses and members of the public to pay extreme caution when disposing of chemicals and never to include them as part of normal domestic refuse. They need to be disposed of in a legally regulated manner which eliminates the potential of fires that can cause pollution and environmental damage," says Gerber.

There are clear regulations in place, he adds, which determine the preventative measures that have to be in place – especially when it comes to the potential danger of landfill fires.

"A well-run site will ensure that daily cover up is done, to ensure that no refuse is left exposed to the elements and to potential risk of fire or combustion. Our staff working on site have access to large stockpiles of soil or to water in order to help smother any fires. Well-run sites should have trained firefighters as part of their teams to ensure a quick, on-site response. It boils down to proper preparation being done."

But what are the potential effects of a fire when it breaks out on a landfill site? This depends very much on the type of materials being disposed of as well as the size of the fire.

"It is important to douse any fire as fast as is possible, before it gets out of control. On landfill sites, it could potentially burn down into the ground which has the effect of creating deep caverns of burning material. It destabilises the top-soil and we have seen examples where the ground caves in and equipment can fall into the cavern," says Gerber.

The presence of chemicals or even burning tyres could contribute to air pollution, which could be harmful to staff and pickers on site as well as to neighbouring communities.

But perhaps the biggest potential area of concern is the damage that fires can have on liners. They are critical parts of any landfill site which help prevent any pollutants from seeping into ground water networks. If a fire is able to damage or destroy the liner, the potential environmental damage could be disastrous.

While the potential impact of a fire on a landfill site might seem overwhelming, it is possible to take steps to prevent it from happening in the first place.

"South Africa's environmental management legislation has very detailed plans on how to manage waste and landfill sites, and how to respond whenever a fire breaks out. My recommendation is that everyone become familiar with these regulations. If you are sending any waste to a landfill site, make sure the site is properly managed and regularly audited. We all have a part to play in preventing landfill fires," says Gerber.

Polystyrene recycling increasing

POLYSTYRENE recycling in South Africa increased by 19 % during 2019, thanks to the tremendous growth in end-markets using post-consumer polystyrene. According to the latest plastics recycling figures for the year ending December 2019 (released earlier by Plastics|SA), South Africa's plastics conversion rate shrunk by 1.8 % (1,841,745 tons of polymer) compared to the previous year. 337 745 tons of plastics were recycled material into new products during this year.

"South Africa experienced very difficult trading and manufacturing conditions in 2019. Factors such as the economic downturn, ongoing load shedding and the rising cost of electricity, fuel and labour had a particularly negative impact on the local recycling industry. Despite these deterring factors, we are very proud of the fact that we managed to increase our reprocessing of polystyrene to 6,653 tons last year," says Adri Spangenberg, CEO of the Polystyrene Association of SA (PASA).

Both Expanded (EPS) and High-Impact Polystyrene (HIPS) have traditionally been classified as "plastics that are difficult to recycle". Because the material is light-weight and often bulky, collection and transportation are challenging and can result in bottlenecks in the supply chain. To address this crucial logistics issue, the PASA began fulfilling the role of a facilitator in 2019.

By putting recyclers, collectors and suppliers of polystyrene in contact with each other, the various end-markets that use post-consumer, recycled polystyrene started to enjoy a more consistent supply of recyclate and were able to increase their capacity.

The 39 recyclers of polystyrene reprocessed 3 699 tons of EPS (e.g. meat and fruit trays, hamburger shells, take-away cups and containers) between them. In cubic meters, this equates to 3 237 12 m shipping containers!

The décor market continued to be the largest end-market of EPS packaging materials, with 42 % of all the recycled material going into the manufacturing of items such as picture frames, curtain rods, skirtings and profiles. However, Adri reports that they saw a dramatic increase in the demand for recycled polystyrene used in the building and construction industries, and predicts that this is likely to develop into the biggest end-market during the next reporting period.

Lightweight concrete bricks made from recycled polystyrene.

"Towards the end of 2019, recyclers such as Envirolite Concrete began expanding their operations around the country. Owing to the fact that they are able to use post-consumer EPS and HIPS in every colour or grade, and thanks to the convenient locations of their factories, we were able to direct more materials to them with shorter lead-times," Adri says.

These lightweight concrete bricks are made from recycled polystyrene coated with a special cement mixture. Incredibly strong, waterproof, fireproof and offering excellent insulation properties, these bricks are increasingly being recognised by architects, property developers and building contractors as alternative green building materials that are environmentally safe and suitable for a variety of different building applications – ranging from low-cost housing projects to designer homes and even shopping malls.

Interesting facts:

- 20 kg of recycled polystyrene is used to produce 1 m3 in volume (1000 x 1000 x 1000 mm)
- Lightweight cement factories require seven people to produce 10 m3 of bricks per day
- It only takes 1 day to build 42 m^2 home, compared to 3 days when using conventional bricks.

Mounting plastic waste risks lives

Kate Stubbs, Marketing Director at Interwaste

IT has been reported that 300 million tons of plastic is produced - and about 8 million tons of plastic waste enters the sea - each year. In fact it has been stated that plastics threaten at least 600 different wildlife species and this number is expected to increase 100% by 2050. If this continues and at this rapid rate, we face a future with more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050.

Since 1950, 7 800 million tons of plastic has been produced worldwide, where 60% of all plastics produced ends up in landfill sites while the rest is discarded on land and in the sea. According to an international scientific study on marine plastic pollution, South Africa is leading in the generation of the highest volumes of mismanaged plastic waste – being ranked 11 on the list of 20 countries globally. This is concerning as it counteracts efforts made by the country to eradicate pollution and create a long-term sustainable waste management model – one that places the circular economy at the center and that focuses on a sound reduce, reuse, recycle model.

Government efforts

The Department of Environmental Affairs is looking to introduce a complete ban on single-use plastics. Furthermore, the levy on plastic use has also increased over the years to encourage the use of more environmentally friendly solutions where many retailers in country are seen making efforts to create 'plastic free' stores to promote waste minimisation, re–use, recycling and recovery of waste, among other things. So, while Government is driving this through legislation to curb the use of plastic by all public and private sector entities, we need citizens to also change their mindset and become active in recycling all their reusable products, as far as possible, and contribute to national recycling initiatives and programmes.

Keeping the clean room more than clean

INDUSTRIAL, manufacturing and scientific Clean Rooms by the very nature of their activities are required to maintain extremely high levels of 'cleanliness'. This means that it is imperative to monitor differential pressure, temperature and humidity to be compliant with local and international Clean Room regulated standards.

The Delta OHM HD50CR multi-functional Clean Room Logger/Transmitter device offers the user highly accurate Clean Room monitoring measurements from a device designed and manufactured to the best in Italian engineering quality. The HD50CR assures that the correct values for accurate monitoring are documented for quality purposes.

Any measurement recorded out of the requested range will trigger an alarm for immediate and corrective actions to be taken via a predetermined list of email addresses which can be configured upon installation.

"The main advantage of the Delta OHM HD50CR device is its webserver flexibility" said Jan Grobler, Managing Director of GHM Messtechnik South Africa. "Configuring the instrument is very simple, if both connected to the network, this can be done through any device that has been granted access to the instruments webserver, be it a smartphone, PC or laptop" said Grobler.

The system is password protected to eliminate misuse and mistakes and the configuration can also take place offline by connecting the instrument to a PC where the free downloadable software can be installed. The instrument is preset to get a dynamic IP address from the network DHCP server. A static IP address can be set by using the webserver feature of the instrument or the HD35AP-S application software. The IP address is displayed at the end of the list of quantities that can be scrolled by using the "up arrow" key.

With its red, electroluminescent four keys, the HD50CR offers a differential pressure reading range of +- 125P (0.01 Pa Resolution) with an accuracy of +- 0.35% typ. of measuring span. With Zero Drift self calibration and a temperature drift of +- 0.5% typ. of measuring span the device's units of measurement are

Pa, mmH20, mbar, inH20, mmHg and hPa and is suited for air and natural gas monitoring and measurement.

The instrument will calibrate automatically at regular intervals (default 60 minutes, the interval is configurable) the zero of the differential pressure, temporarily disconnecting the pressure inputs through an internal solenoid valve.

The USB characteristics of the Delta OHM HD50CR are HID type with front mini-USB type B connector, with the RS485 being Modbus-RTU Slave and the Ethernet via a RJ45 connector with wi-fi optional. A variety of measuring/logging intervals are available. There is an also an optional T/RH Probe.

" The HD50CR provides a perfect solution for the tracking of any out of range values and provides evidence for any quality audit that may be conducted" said Grobler "Delta OHM has developed the HD50CR specifically for Clean Room applications, and optional modules can be provided to meet higher regulations that may be applicable to the pharmaceutical industries. The HD50CR is a perfect and reliable choice to ensure Clean Rooms are fully and accurately monitored to maintain their standards concluded Grobler.

The HD50CR is well suited to Clean Room establishments across all industries, but in particular to laboratories, food and pharmaceutical manufacture, chemical and petrochem.

Further information is available from: Jan Grobler, Managing Director, Messtechnik South Africa. Tel: 011 902 0158 email: info@ghm-sa.co.za

New high-end sensors with MIPI interface

VISION Components presents various new camera modules that combine high image quality and frame rates with the advantages of the MIPI CSI-2 interface and consist of the sensor board and a fully integrated MIPI adapter board. Thereby high-end image sensors from the Sony Pregius and Sony Starvis series, which have no native MIPI interface, can be used for flexible embedded vision designs based on popular processor boards. The low-cost and easy-to-integrate VC MIPI camera modules come with monochrome or color sensors and are suitable for commercial solutions and long-term available like all VC cameras.

Featuring a 20-megapixel resolution, 4K video, and a global reset shutter, VC MIPI IMX183 is perfect for applica-

Vision Components integrates additional Sony Pregius and Starvis sensors with high image quality, light sensitivity, and frame rates in its VC MIPI camera modules.

tions with maximum image quality and speed requirements – including medical and laboratory technology, smart agriculture, and drones.

The Sony Starvis sensor's backside illuminated (BSI) technology ensures high light sensitivity and a wide contrast range. VC MIPI IMX226 and VC MIPI IMX178 with 12 MP and 6.4 MP resolution respectively exhibit the same technologies. Vision Components has integrated a full four Sony Pregius sensors for applications such as smart traffic monitoring, presence detection, and access control to cover different requirements and price segments.

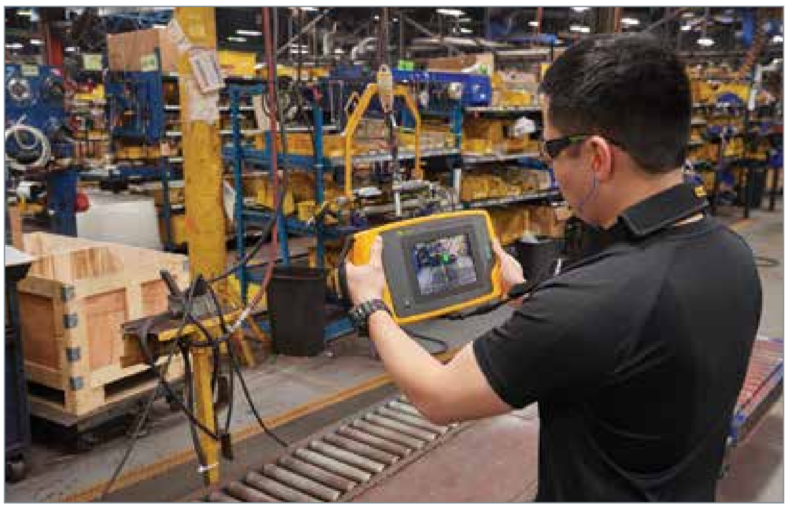
These sensors feature resolution of 5 MP (IMX250, IMX264) and 3.2 MP (IMX252, IMX265). The 250 series offers fast frame rates, such as the IMX252, which reaches 151.4 fps at full resolution.

The 260 series, on the other hand, targets price-sensitive applications with lower speed requirements. On request, the sensors are also available as IMX-250mZR and IMX-264mZR versions with an on-chip polarizer. Two new global shutter camera modules are geared at industrial applications: VC MIPI IMX273 (1.58 MP) and VC MIPI IMX392 (2.3 MP) with 201 fps at 8 bits.

Even more VC MIPI camera modules are already on the road map. In addition, the manufacturer also encourages requests for specific developments.

More information: www.mipi-modules.com

Simple detection of leaks in compressed air systems



COMTEST's Fluke ii900 handheld sonic industrial imager – fast, simple detection of compressed air, steam, gas and vacuum leaks in compressed air systems. Intuitive interface allows technicians to isolate sound frequency of leaks to filter out background noise. In only hours, maintenance techs inspect the plant, even during peak-operations.

Using SoundSight™, this industrial imager locates issues using sound. Leak identification with SoundMap™, displayed in colour over visual image of equipment allows fast visual location. With the visual image, it is easy to scan a large area quickly and even identify leaks from a distance.

The Fluke ii900 is specifically designed for industrial maintenance teams, maintenance leads, plant maintenance managers and plant operations managers, who rely on compressed air, gas or vacuum in their routine operations and finds application in:

Manufacturing: Aerospace, Automotive, Glass, Machinery, instrumentation and appliances, Plastic and rubber, Mining and mineral processing

Process Manufacturing: Cement, Chemical processing, Food and beverage, and Pulp, paper and wood.

With minimal training, technicians can check air leaks in routine maintenance. The ii900 means a comprehensive check for compressed air leaks, while simultaneously conducting gas/vacuum leak identification.

Contact COMTEST Tel: 010 595 1821 for more information.

Conductivity sensor for CIP monitoring with IO-Link

- *Reduces inaccuracies associated with a time-based cleaning process*
- *Improves process performance with flexible measurement points*
- *Compact, high-quality sensor design prevents failures and unplanned downtime*

Applications

The sensors are used in cleaning processes (CIP) in the food industry. They detect the concentration of cleaning agents, check the rinsing water for residues and for product validation.

Potential

Precise, fast and reliable measurements during the process help to improve plant availability and optimize cleaning cycles. Reduced amount of cleaning agents, lower energy consumption during rinsing and lower water consumption result in considerable cost savings.

Benefits when using

Simple order process, extremely short delivery times, user-friendly integration into the application.

Advantages of LDL at a glance:

- Much shorter commissioning time
– No need for additional evaluation electronics
– Simple wiring using M12

Robust and compact design

– The fully welded stainless steel housing prevents water ingress

For more information contact: ifm South Africa: E-mail: info.za@ifm.com or visit the website: http://www.ifm.com

Reducing the cost of human error in the supply chain

WHILE the global FMCG sector is under pressure from regulators and consumers demanding full product traceability throughout the supply chain, retailers also insist on quality stock on demand at profitable prices.

'There are a number of reasons why brand owners need to incorporate marks or codes on their products or packaging,' explains Pyrotec PackMark's general manager, Brandon Pearce. 'To protect manufacturers and consumers, coding and marking ensures security throughout the supply chain. It also makes traceability possible, providing a record of reliability for products, and makes efficient stock control possible.' For consumers, 'best by' and 'use by' dates confirm that the product is safe to consume. These markings also help consumers to derive the most value from their purchases and reduce food waste.

For coding and marking to be effective it needs to be error free and, despite the automated machinery on today's production lines, human error is always a possibility. 'This is where the advantages of centralised data management through integrated machinery networking come to the fore,' explains Pearce.

'Besides a vast portfolio of Markem-Imaje's coding, marking and labelling equipment that's exclusively distributed by Pyrotec PackMark in South Africa, we also offer Markem-Imaje's CoLOS® software applications that are engineered to complement its coding equipment,' Pearce adds.

'CoLOS® software allows manufacturers 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 Pearce.

CoLOS® consists of a number of software possibilities 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. What's more, CoLOS® provides real-time data about production processes by linking production plans to individual printers on a 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.

CoLOS® offers seamless integration for diverse industries and it supports all production control systems.

Go Nature Go Carton campaign launched

Stefan Fageräng, MD of Tetra Pak Southern Africa

TETRA Pak South Africa has launched the Go Nature Go Carton campaign to highlight that growing populations need access to food packaging that keeps the contents safe, nutritious, and available. Yet packaging can cause problems for the planet.

By 2050 the world's population is predicted to reach 9,1 billion, which will require an increase of 70% food availability. With 33% of food lost or wasted each year, high-performance packaging plays a critical role in today's global food delivery system.

"The world needs a package that maximises the use of materials with a reduced impact on nature," says Stefan Fageräng, MD of Tetra Pak Southern Africa. "We believe that fibre-based carton packages are a more sustainable option currently on the market today. Even so, they contain thin layers of plastic and aluminium, in order to secure food safety - which is where we see the potential to do better."

This means developing a carton that can represent the ultimate solution for nature and climate, responding to challenges such as:

- Using only renewable or recycled materials, not draining our planet of limited resources;
- Supporting carbon-neutral production and distribution;
- Ensuring a resilient food system that expands food access and secures food safety while reducing food waste;
- Helping support full recycling to keep materials in use; and
- Focusing on the use of materials with a reduced impact on nature.

"Tetra Pak has a long and proven history of pioneering innovations. Our transformative approach to packaging changed the world once – keeping food safe for everybody and ensuring food waste was minimised," says Fageräng. "With Go Nature Go Carton, we are accelerating our evolution to create the world's most sustainable food package. We know that what we do works for people, but we need to create a carton that works even better for the planet."

Tetra Pak's journey to develop the world's most sustainable food package includes:

- Maximising the use of materials that reduce the impact on nature - increasing the paper-based and plant-based content in our packages, and sourcing these raw materials in a way that protects biodiversity and natural environments;
- Securing carbon-neutral production and distribution. Tetra Pak will reach net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and 100% renewable energy by 2030, striving to achieve net zero for the value chain by 2050.
- Continuing to unwaveringly protect food and ensure food safety and availability for a growing number of people around the world while preventing food waste with farm-to-table processing technologies.
- Developing a fully recyclable package with a supporting collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure everywhere, to keep materials in use for as long as possible; and
- Reducing the amount of plastic and aluminium, while increasing the paper-based content in packages, since waste management systems across the world are far from optimal and not all materials can be infinitely recycled.

It is not enough to have a circular packaging model that is blind to energy intensity, carbon emissions and end of life impact. We need a holistic environmental approach that subsumes a radical decarbonisation of materials, to reduce the impact on our planet - today and tomorrow.

Paper industry faces huge losses

Diversification and innovation are necessary to succeed in emerging packaging applications

DIGITAL media and paperless communication have caused a major decline in the pulp and paper industry over the past decade. This shift, alongside COVID-related pressure, is projected to cost the industry $26 billion per year over the next several years. In its latest report, "Diversification of the Pulp & Paper Industry," Lux Research outlines how companies can innovate to succeed, despite the decline in demand for paper products.

Pulp and paper companies have a few options to compensate for the decline in pulp's value. Among those options are increasing the value of kraft pulping products through molded pulp product (MPP) packaging and nanocellulose products or changing their processes to a biomass fractionalization route that enables the hemicellulose and lignin components of biomass to be valorized alongside cellulose.

"Alternative pulping products could represent a $46 billion industry," says Charles Willard, lead report author and Senior Research Associate at Lux Research. "In a market that is in constant decline, failing to innovate and find new sources of demand could mean death."

MPPs offer a sustainable packaging option but have undesirably high air permeability and water absorption rates. Plastic coatings can be added to provide moisture resistance, but this limits the recyclability and overall sustainability of the product due to the difficulty in removing the materials from the paper, which would contaminate recycling streams. In order for MPPs to have wider use options and penetrate the traditional plastics packaging market, sustainable and durable coatings and additives are needed.

For more information, visit https:luxresearch.com

We have enough food in SA to feed everyone: yet the food deficit at household level is widening

By Andy Du Plessis FoodForward SA Managing Director
E: andy@foodforwardsa.org

SOUTH Africa produces enough food to feed all its people. Farmers, agri processing plants, food manufacturers, retailers, warehousing and logistics companies, food distributors, and thousands of other businesses that operate in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, all typically generate huge amounts of 'waste'. Since most of this food, if intercepted in time, is good for human consumption, we prefer to refer to this as surplus food. This food becomes surplus because of inherent weaknesses throughout the consumer goods value chain.

South Africa has a net surplus of food as a country – yet food poverty at the household level is widening, and now even more rapidly so because the pandemic is decimating our economy and jobs at an alarming rate. About one third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted. Approximately 50% of this food loss takes place during harvesting. Processing, packaging, distribution and retail account for a further 45% of wasted food. The remaining 5% of food waste is the responsibility of consumers (WWF Surplus Food Report 2018). Clearly, our efforts to divert food must be directed at the pre-consumer phases.

Before we delve deeper into why we have so much surplus food and why it's not getting to those who need it, it's important to clarify what we mean by surplus food, because there are huge misconceptions, misunderstandings and even misapprehension around this issue.

Surplus food is NOT expired food, lower grade food, or rotten food. It is perfectly good food. Because of unforeseen circumstances throughout the food value chain, more than 10 million tons of food is lost or wasted annually. Some examples of why food becomes surplus include:

- Overproduction
- Poor forecasting
- Specification requirements
- Incorrectly labelled products
- Damaged goods
- Errors in manufacturing, packaging or logistics phases
- Short-dated products and confusion around date labelling

Sadly, almost all of this good quality edible surplus food is dumped in landfill or incinerated. If timeously intercepted, surplus food can be diverted to address the growing problem of hunger and food poverty across South Africa - which is what FoodForward SA has been doing for more than 11 years now. We recover edible surplus food from our supply chain partners and redistribute it to registered charities that use the food to make meals for vulnerable people in under-served communities.

According to the Department of Environment, Forestry, and Fisheries' (DEFF) 2020 Waste Management Report, in 2018, South Africa generated 55 million tons of general waste, with only 11% of this waste being diverted from landfills. More than 50% of this is organic waste, of which food waste is in all likelihood a major contributor. The wasted resources used to produce this food that ends up in landfills and the negative impact it has on our environment are serious warning signs that must be heeded and addressed with urgency. We have too many South African households experiencing acute food shortages not to tackle this problem. We're also experiencing severe constraints regarding the availability of landfill space.

We need to be more innovative and creative around how we manage surplus food and intercept it early enough for it to be usable. One way to manage this better is the introduction of laws that make dumping and incinerating edible usable food illegal. France, four years ago, was the first country in the world to ban supermarkets from throwing away or destroying unsold food, forcing them instead to donate this to charities and food banks (The Guardian International Edition: 2016). Campaigners now hope to persuade the European Union to adopt similar legislation among member states.

What is very encouraging and exciting is that, following France's bold move, countries like Norway, Australia, Italy, Denmark, Dubai, Japan and South Korea have all either set hard targets for the reduction of food waste by companies or created an environment that makes it easier for companies to donate surplus food. We need similar action in South Africa.

Another important recent development in South Africa is that food manufacturers, suppliers and retailers have committed to a landmark voluntary agreement to reduce food waste and loss. The agreement will mark the beginning of initiatives to ensure that surplus food which is still safe for human consumption can be donated to serve needy families in South Africa. The Consumer Goods Council of South Africa's (CGCSA) Food Safety Initiative (FSI) has already partnered with the Department of Trade and Industry to secure funding from the SA-EU Dialogue Facility to support the initiative. FoodForward SA has been part of these discussions for a while now and we are excited for the opportunities that this will bring to organisations like FoodForward SA. This initiative speaks directly to what FoodForward SA focuses on and which we believe is a more effective and cost-effective way to address food insecurity.

A third area where we can be more proactive is to have accurate data collection at the actual origin of the various waste streams and volumes. We can put proper measures in place for improved implementation of food waste management. Transparency in terms of disclosure, monitoring and reporting of 'waste'/ surplus food is critical.

The DEFF is working towards reducing carbon emissions and mitigating climate change, which is key to a more sustainable socio-economic development plan and ensures the stability of the country's natural resources, systems and environment. One of the targets set by DEFF is to prevent waste and where waste cannot be prevented to ensure 40% of waste is diverted from landfill within 5 years, 55% within 10 years and at least 70% within 15 years. While this is a step in the right direction, these targets are not enough given the magnitude of the problem. More stringent targets are needed within the next 5 – 7 years.

Food security and national development are mutually dependent. Nutrition is critical to educational outcomes and success in the job market. If we fail to ensure that all our people in South Africa have access to sufficient nutritious and safe food, it will have devastating consequences for our development as a nation.

We, therefore, call on all the actors within the consumer goods supply chain to work with organisations like FoodForward SA that have a national footprint and impact, along with the required infrastructure and logistics capacity, to donate surplus food timeously so that we can use this food to address food insecurity at a national level and realise the right to food for all our people.

SA is in a dire situation

A Judge speaks

A document written by Retired Judge X provides a sobering look at the situation in which we find ourselves.

Consistent with Judge X's strong view that judges should speak only through their judgments (a view he has deviated from only because of South Africa's very grave current situation of hopelessness) and his view that he has said all he wishes to say publicly, he wishes to remain anonymous.

The document:

- states that judges should speak only through their judgments but that the situation in SA is so serious that he cannot remain silent
- explains simply and clearly why SA is in a dire financial situation and why the masses are suffering terrible poverty and an absence of hope for the future
- calls for dramatic far-reaching changes to ensure massive local and foreign investment to create jobs
- exposes the lie of the socialist/communist that there can be equality of wealth and resources
- states that the situation is too serious to await the delay of 4 years until the next election
- states that South Africa can become highly prosperous to the advantage of all

Ed: While our editorial policy would normally exclude an anonymous contribution, in this case the contents are so relevant to our current political and economic situation that an exception was made.

The full document can be read by clicking on the link: https://saindiresituation.weebly.com/

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- Filters & Filtration
- Financial Services
- Fishing Industry
- Fleet Management / Servicing & Maintenance
- Flooring & Handrailing
- Lifting, Rigging Sling & Chain
- Hydraulics / Pneumatics & Fluid Control
- Industrial Gases
- Lighting & Illuminating
- Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Petrochemicals / Oil & Gas
- Property; Commercial & Industrial
- Pumps & Valves
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- Seals & Gaskets
- Tooling / Machine Tools & Equipment
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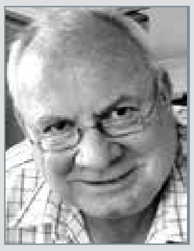
OPINION

Witches and cool heads

ON THE CONTRARY



Pieter Schoombee

"YES! Yes! Yes! Look who's here. Welcome back and Happy New Year!" greeted Luke the Dude in his normal, formal manner. I was entering the local Pub & Grill for the first time since Christmas with the family, this time a mere few of them.

"Greetings good fellows of the circle of convivial conversationalists!" I retorted, quite happy that all was as I left it. "What adventures have I missed?"

"First round coming up!" the Governor exuberated while filling my glass. "Will it be the usual tall blonde then?" he enquired as he handed me a large lager. Knows his customers, our Governor. He had that extra buoyancy that comes with the sudden jump in his profit margin at the reappearance of another regular. Not solely my doing of course, what do you mean?

My compatriots had also kept the festive cheer up, I am sure, with the assistance of the holiday loose scrum. Socially distanced, naturally. Which brings us to the two witches.

"Anything interesting happen in my absence?" I enquired again from nobody in particular.

"Useless!" colluded Jon the Joker in winking welcome, "you missed our bewitching temporary regulars. Quite a sight they were, not to mention sound."

"Thank goodness we were spared two of the other five senses," huffed Irene the Queen, who evidently did not take to the ladies in question.

"Heavily drenched in perfume then, if not heavenly?" I asked.

"More like smelling salts," opined Bob the Book, "but a cunningly disguised blessing just the same, I have no doubt."

"Pray tell," I invited Jon the Joker who had, after all, introduced the theme.

"Two wicked witches," resumed Jon, "with wheezes and whistles. From the smoking by the sound of it. The Queen of Hearts smoked a malodorous pipe, non-stop. The Other Queen received a similar, in fact a rhyming nickname I cannot repeat in ladies' company. She never smoked and did not have to."

In his usual chair under the No Smoking sign, The Prof lit his pipe in defiance.

"Despite The Other Queen's constant whining about smokers," said Jon, saluting The Prof with his beer, "the wicked twosome were thick as thieves. Both had a crown and arrogated themselves the title 'queen'.

"The Queen of Hearts has a science-defying – in size and style – big wig she calls 'a beautiful head of hair' and 'my golden crown'. The Other Queen has a massive, but stylish mind you, doek she calls 'my corona'. She sneers at ignorant peasants who don't know that 'Corona' is Latin for crown."

"She does too," laughed Miss Lily, "all the way down her large nose. And both have the same habit of disturbing the peace by screaming high-volume slogans just when you are taking a sip. I lost some good red wine down my chin because of that."

"Why on earth?" I enquired, intrigued.

"Political reasons apparently," informed Jon the Joker, taking back his narrative. "We took to calling their shouts 'slogans' instead of 'shrieks' because they contained words, repetitively.

"In the middle of an otherwise normal sentence, the Queen of Hearts would scream 'I won! I won bigly!' – blasting the froth off your beer while causing not a wiggle in her hair-do. Sorry, her crown. When questioned, she would trumpet forth about Demons cheating and rigging elections, I don't know. Maybe she got voted out as Wicked Dictator of the United Coven of Witches."

"And the other one?" I risked.

"Oh, she was closer to the world we know, where the earth is flat and state capturers go free," informed Jon. "She would down her double rum shot – 'Cuba Libra' she called it – gargle a bit and belt out: 'Ban alcohol! Ban tobacco! Beat them up! The Corona Queen is in town!' How should I know? Maybe one more narcissist in a command centre. Higher and mightier than thee."

"Don't mention 'high' in here," cautioned Luke the Dude, "the Governor will ban you pronto. Depending, of course, on how much you add to his bottom line. In your case, the ban will last only till your next round."

"Useless!" disagreed Jon the Joker. "No free rounds today, but nice try." The Big White Dog whiffed her lie-detecting bark.

"So what happened, why aren't they here?" I insisted.

"Can't really say, Boyo," pondered Colin the Golfer, "people get bored with the performance, don't they? Started ignoring them. Then they just faded away. Someone did spot them at The Cat and Cauldron, plotting a triumphant return to calling the shots, so to speak."

"Speaking of narcissists, swindlers and politicians," said Stevie the Poet, "at least one event that could again change our lives is due this year – municipal elections in the second half. Time to get our emotions in line or face the consequences."

"What are you talking about, my learned friend," frowned Luke the Dude.

"Look," argued Adv Stevie, "we are peed off with the DA about Schweizer-Reneke, about the De Lille farce, about Coligny, the EFF coalition deals and the witch-hunts on Kohler-Barnard and Zille. In the recent election I registered a protest vote myself. But all that chaos was brewed in the DA of the over-promoted Mmusi Maimane. Trouble is we got stuck there, in our obsolete anger, and now we bad-mouth by habit.

"The plain fact is that the DA has had a successful palace revolution. The party itself rose in rebellion against ANC Not-so-Lite and reformed.

"Look for yourself. The DA of John Steenhuisen, Gwen Ngwenya and the Western Cape leadership is again the DA of Suzman, Eglin, Slabbert, Leon and Sidego. Not to mention Helen Zille, also restored to her original self. We have to respect that, for our own sakes. An uninformed vote is a vote for the ANC and city-to-town squalor."

"I do not agree," disagreed Big Ben.

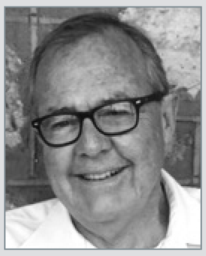
"Of course you don't," agreed Stevie. "You are entitled to your opinion; it is your right. Still, opinion does not change facts. Cool heads are needed, lest we smart-ass ourselves into an epidemic of corruption and failure for all."

In his impartiality, The Prof nodded.

Email: noag@maxitec.co.za

From the industry that some love to hate, a Happy New Year

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN



Keith Bryer

IF there is one industry that people who call themselves progressives love to hate, it's the petroleum industry.

They are too rich, they say. They make stuff that harms the planet. They manipulate governments. They sponsor counter-revolutions. They overthrow socialist governments. They buy and then suppress alternative fuels. They are the old empires in a new guise. They provoke wars. They form cartels. They keep liquid fuel prices artificially high – the list is as long as overheated imaginations can make it.

This is not to say that oil companies are saints. They are not.

But there is another side to oil companies and the role they play in the world, especially in changing lives for the better.

First, my cards on the table: I used to work for an oil company. Before I did, I held many low opinions of oil companies. I joined the company when it seemed that there would only be a peaceful change in South Africa when major world companies said, "Enough is enough!" to the apartheid Government. I worked in the public affairs department.

So what do I think now, having seen the operations of an oil company from the inside both here in South Africa and London?

Let's start (and probably finish) with the state of the world's poor who number about three billion people. That is 40% of the world's population. They use wood or charcoal made from wood, for cooking and heating. They live indoors in a foul atmosphere, especially bad for the health of their children. This air pollution kills four million people every year.

The swiftest way to change this appalling situation is for their countries to adopt business-friendly policies and grow their economies as fast as possible, abandoning utopian socialist theories that promise "jam tomorrow" but is unable to produce "jam today".

Growing economies need workers. If they are allowed to hire and fire relatively easily, entrepreneurs invest their money and create jobs.

As economies grow the poor lift themselves out of poverty. Often the first thing they purchase is a liquefied petroleum gas cylinder for cooking and heating. That simple device immediately cleans the atmosphere in their homes. Eyes, lungs, and the general health of the family dramatically improve. Doctor's bills drop, as do visits to the local clinic.

The next family purchase is a petrol-driven two-stroke motor scooter. These are used to get to work, take the kids to school, and take the gas cylinders to get refilled.

Notice how life has changed for the better all because of petroleum products.

So far I have mentioned liquid fuels in the home. But apart from cheap LPG and cheap petrol, there is another petroleum product that is having an even greater impact for the better on the lives of the poor — natural gas.

Those who hate oil companies have been predicting the death of oil companies because crude oil is about to run out (it isn't) keep quiet about the world's humongous, and largely untapped deposits of natural gas.

It is one of the great ironies of history that natural gas has come into its own as a result of the climate change scare and the fingering of carbon dioxide as the main culprit (hotly debated).

The resulting rush to find alternate methods of generating electricity has produced highly-erratic methods like wind and solar, which require back-up power for when the wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't shine. The back-up is provided by petrol and diesel generators. Many countries in the developing world are looking at natural gas generators. These are cheaper than diesel-powered ones and emit far less carbon dioxide than conventional coal-fired power stations.

Put simply, LNG power stations can bring electric light and power to poor countries quicker and cheaper than coal, oil, or wind, or sun.

In developing countries with competent government, LNG power stations are increasingly the choice to make.

Of course, the United States shale oil boom, which has turned it from an oil-importing country to an oil-exporting one in a remarkably short space of time, has lowered the price of crude oil and all its products. The major beneficiaries have been poor countries and those who live in them.

Ed:
Coming up in the February edition, in the Opinion page – inside back cover – is a thought provoking piece by John Kane Berman, entitled Clean energy's dirty secrets, where he notes that 30 kg of coal can store as much energy as a 500 kg Tesla battery, and in the process, he slaughters a few renewables holly cows! Don't miss it.