



**Much  
Asphalt**

The road to the future ...

# SurfaceTalk

SUMMER 2006

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BRANCHES COUNTRYWIDE



## LIFT OFF AT OR TAMBO

3 650 tonnes of asphalt placed in a single shift between 21:30 and 06:30 on runway and taxiway rehabilitation project – story on page 3



A Murray & Roberts company

# Delivering customer value

This year has seen the start of what is expected to be a sustained period of high workload and stretched capacity not only for Much Asphalt but for the whole industry. Thanks to our dedicated staff across the country, we have delivered value to our customers and to our shareholder, Murray and Roberts.

Our investment in plant and laboratories over the past few years has also paid dividends this year with improved quality control and a significant drop in customer complaints. Hand in hand with this is the major investment we have made in 2006 in training in all aspects of customer relationship management.

We were also proud to announce the opening of our Polokwane branch on 1 October (see page 6 of this issue) in response to a need to broaden our geographic spread into new areas where our customers need us.

As a Proudly South African company we are committed to transformation and this year we achieved Level 8 compliance in terms of the DTI scorecard on our first attempt. We are setting ourselves higher targets and expect a significant improvement at our next audit. It is also pleasing to see more women entering and adding value in an industry that is traditionally male dominated.

We accept full responsibility for keeping our people safe on all our sites and safety training is an ongoing part of our commitment to our employees.

We will be starting 2007 with a positive order book and we look forward to another year of successful partnerships with all our customers. Thank you for your support and friendship through the past year and may you enjoy a safe and restful festive season.

– Phillip Hechter



Much Asphalt  
chief executive  
Phillip Hechter.

## Staff training to give you a better service

In the last issue of *Surface Talk* we told you about our customer service audit and staff training that was commencing to improve internal and external customer relationships.

The training is now nearing

completion and some 35% of Much Asphalt's staff has already completed the course with Kirton Associates, the marketing consultancy that is working with us. The idea

behind the training is to give individuals the tools to enable them to set and achieve goals and to strengthen customer relationships through knowledge, training and personal input. The importance of teamwork is also high on the agenda.

The pictures show teams during training sessions in Eerste River and Benoni.



Eerste River (back, left to right): Charlie Kirton (representing Kirton Associates); Wayne Hardman; Rick Jackson; Nicki Duncan; Stanley de Goede; Jan Snyders; and group marketing director John Onraët; (front): Renaldo Goodwin; Jonathan Daniels and Glenn Williams.



Benoni (back, left to right): Elias Moloi; Sello Pietersen; Ria Bezuidenhout; Tom Gilbert; Colleen Kirsten; Willem Erasmus; Phillip Nel; Christo du Preez and Cedrick Maebane; (front): William Nenjerama; Hennie Greyling; Melanie Thomson and Miriam Nel.

## H/O training centre completed

The first phase of Much Asphalt's training and conference centre at our head office in Eerste River, Cape Town, has opened its doors and is already proving its value. The new facility can seat up

to 50 people comfortably, contains state-of-the-art sound and projection equipment and will soon be wired for DSTV, video and DVD presentations. The centre will also be connected

to the local network to allow real time training in all aspects of the operation, including plant batching operations where the UCON displays and mimics can be viewed as they happen.

# Production is essential to this mix

The recently renamed OR Tambo International Airport is gearing up to receive bigger aircraft and more people.

Not only the buildings and parking facilities are receiving attention, but also those all important runways that get passengers safely off and onto the ground. Two contracts currently under way by a joint venture between Rand Roads and Black Top Surfaces involve rehabilitation of a 3 400m long runway (03R21L) and parallel taxiway (Taxiway Yankee). The asphalt paving material is being supplied by Much Asphalt.

added, while the taxiway contract involves strengthening and widening.

Most passengers will be unaware of these projects as work can only take place between the hours of 21:30 and 06:30. This means that work in hand on any particular night, including earthworks, layerworks and surfacing, has to be completed and all equipment cleared by the end of the shift to allow the runway to reopen to air traffic.

Tom Gilbert, Much Asphalt's regional manager for Gauteng, Limpopo and the Free State, says the runway

we work very closely with the design engineer to achieve the desired performance criteria."

He adds that Much Asphalt has special night shift teams operating the plants. The logistics of ensuring that aggregate and bitumen supplies are on hand for the additional shifts also have to be carefully managed.

## Record shift

The record for asphalt placed in one shift on the runway contract alone is 2 450 tonnes, achieved on

plants. The 2 450t of material placed translates into about 163x15t loads. The Much Asphalt plants, producing a combined 320tph, required more than 7,5 hours to produce the required quantity.

During the same shift, Kevin adds, approximately 1 200t was also placed on the Yankee Taxiway contract, bringing the combined total asphalt manufactured during that shift to 3 650 tonnes.

He reports that both contracts are on schedule and within budget. The taxiway is expected to be completed by the end of



The contracts were awarded by the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), with Stewart Scott International as consultant for the runway project and Arcus Gibb for the taxiway contract. The runway is being strengthened and widened to accommodate future aircraft including the new A380 Airbus, the crossfall is being improved and two Rapid Exit Taxiways (RETs) are being

contract calls for a total of 107 000 tonnes of surfacing material and the taxiway a further 60 000 tonnes. "The material is being produced at our two Benoni plants, with a combined output of 200 tonnes per hour, and our Kempton Park plant, which has a capacity of 120tph," Tom explains. "The asphalt product required for these projects is designed for the special needs of aircraft and

19 August 2006, according to Rand Roads managing director Kevan Rocher. This indicates the high degree of productivity that can be achieved by several teams working in tandem at different locations in night time conditions in mid-winter.

The Rand Roads/Black Top Surfaces joint venture has a complement of 57 tipper trucks collecting asphalt from Much Asphalt's two operating

December 2006 and the runway by March 2007.

The difficulties associated with working night shifts only are not new to any of the parties involved. The team comprising Stewart Scott International, Rand Roads, Black Top Surfaces and Much Asphalt successfully completed a similar contract on Runway 03 Left at Johannesburg International Airport some two years ago.

# Much celebrates an industry first

Friday 13th was a lucky day for Much Asphalt at Eerste River. On 13 October we celebrated the SANAS accreditation awarded to our Central Laboratory with our customers and friends. We were the first commercial asphalt supplier in the country to receive ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation.

Central Laboratory manager Alec Rippenaar said that fulfilling the requirements for accreditation was not always easy.

"We had to change the way we have done some things for years and change can be painful. But we went through the process for our customers and they are already seeing the benefit. Credit is due to the whole Central Laboratory team for making this happen. Now we are turning our attention to our regional laboratories."

The celebration was held in Much Asphalt's new training centre at Eerste River, giving customers an opportunity to view this facility for the first time.



*Pictured on site were (from left): Central Laboratory manager Alec Rippenaar; Much chief executive Phillip Hechter; Marlan Pillay, accreditation programme manager at SANAS; and Henry Appolis, group technical manager at Much Asphalt.*

## George branch under pressure after floods



*This aerial view shows the magnitude of flood damage to the Kaaimans River Pass on the N2 between George and Wilderness.*



Thandi Mokgalagadi, Much Asphalt's George branch manager, says the heavy rains and flooding during August and September put the plant under pressure as contractors rushed to repair the damage, and caused havoc with asphalt deliveries.

"The damage to Kaaimans River Pass between George and Wilderness on the N2 route and

on the George/Knysna alternative route, Saasveld Road, put us to the test," says Thandi. "But the George team pulled together and we made it through."

As a result of the damage to the Kaaimans River Pass, no trucks over 5 tonnes were allowed to use this section of the N2 route and most of Much Asphalt's scheduled work at the time was on the other side of the

pass. "Some contractors had to revert to Port Elizabeth to obtain premix or travel a 400km detour, which ended up being a very expensive exercise for them," she adds. "Of course, as soon as the pass reopened to heavy vehicles, we were faced with huge demand not only to catch up on scheduled work but also for emergency road repairs all the way to Plettenberg Bay."

Thandi says the emergency repair work involved about 5 000 tonnes of asphalt from the George plant alone. "We supplied almost 1 000 tonnes of BTB just for repairs to Saasveld Road while the Kaaimans River Pass was closed and it was no easy task because of the urgency and the fact that the rain was still coming down while the road was being repaired."

# Hot asphalt for the Karoo



*This Nomad built by CEI in the USA, with a capacity of 120 tonnes per hour, is one of two in Much Asphalt's mobile asphalt plant fleet. A locally manufactured mobile 100 tonne hot storage silo travels with the plant to ensure optimum on-site asphalt capacity.*

Much Asphalt will use a 120 tonne per hour mobile plant to produce the asphalt for the periodic maintenance (overlay and reseal) of the N1 freeway between Touws River and Laingsburg next year. Mobile unit manager Georg Kilian and his team will represent Much Asphalt on site.

The Bitumen Rubber overlay will start at the end of January 2007. Patching is now in progress and is being supplied out of Brewelskloof, Worcester. Some 52 000 tonnes of Bitumen Rubber Asphalt and 2 500 tonnes of conventional asphalt will be placed by the end of June next year.

Aggregates will be supplied from Kloof Quarry in Bijstein nature reserve, which is to be developed under subcontract by Blasting & Excavating. Blended Bitumen Rubber binder will be supplied into our mobile plant by the main contractor, the Hex River Joint Venture between Road Mac Surfacing and Haw & Inglis.

The plant is a nominal 120 tonne per hour Nomad built by CEI, the second one in the fleet imported by Much Asphalt from the USA. The plant includes a locally fabricated mobile 100 tonne hot storage silo. Specific modifications were carried out to make the plant compatible with local conditions and to meet the requirements of this project. A fully equipped laboratory and mobile weighbridge are included in the site setup.

The engineers are Potgieter Hattingh Inc.

## ULM saves time on N2 resealing



*Paving in progress on the N2 using 18mm ULM Ultra-Thin Friction Course.*

The East London branch of Much Asphalt is nearing completion of its largest contract in five years, involving the supply of 14 500 tons of Road Mac Surfacing's ULM Ultra-Thin Friction Course for the resealing of a section of the N2 Freeway between Bert Kipling Road and the N6 interchange.

According to Nathan Jacobs, manager of our East London office, this is only the

second time that the Ultra-Thin Friction Course has been produced in the East London area. The product is a technically superior and highly cost effective alternative to chip and spray and is paved at an average thickness of 18mm.

The ULM product was designed in France, where samples of all aggregates and bitumen were sent prior to commencement of work.

Bert Kipling Road crosses over the N2 between East London and King Williams Town, while the N6 Interchange links the N2, N6 to Queenstown and the North East Express Way.

The contract, awarded by SANRAL to Road Mac Surfacing Cape, has involved approximately 11km of dual carriageway. The consultants are Kwezi V3.

# Mobile screening plant reduces waste

South Africa's raw material resources, including aggregates and bitumen for asphalt manufacture, are under increasing pressure. This has in turn raised awareness of ways to reduce waste, such as recycling.

To this end Much Asphalt in Gauteng has commissioned a double-deck screening plant, the Model 2612D Fold 'n Go, manufactured by Astec Mobile Screens of Illinois, USA. This plant is capable of screening material at a rate of up to 250 tonnes per hour into two graded fractions and one oversize material.

"We are using this plant to screen waste tailings from asphalt production and recycle material returned from site, adding specialised sands and stones required for high specification mixes," explains

the double-deck screen to process waste material allows Much Asphalt to include the recycled product into its asphalt production without reservation. "We can now screen waste material down into the same

Bitumen Treated Base Course includes 10% recycled material. "This requires us to screen more than 8 000 tonnes of recycled material alone," says Brian.

Apart from the obvious cost savings and increased waste efficiencies resulting from the use of recycled material, the environmental benefits are significant. "We are used to seeing stockpiles of waste material at asphalt plants growing year on year and becoming a growing environmental and financial problem. This will become a thing of the past with the use of the Fold 'n Go screening plant."

## Recycling material from milled roads

Roodepoort branch manager Brian Neville.

"In this way we are converting our waste asphalt back to a usable material and recycling material from milled roads and highways under rehabilitation for reuse on the same contract."

He points out that the use of

fractions we would normally use, without in any way compromising the quality of the final asphalt product."

One major contract where screened material is being successfully used is at OR Tambo International Airport, where the design for the

*A new screening plant makes recycling a viable option to reduce both waste and dependence on scarce raw material resources such as aggregates and bitumen for asphalt manufacture.*



## Polokwane branch opens for business

Much Asphalt officially opened a new plant in Polokwane (formerly Pietersburg), Limpopo Province, on 1 October 2006.

The plant is located in the WG Werne quarry about five km outside Polokwane. Tom Gilbert, regional manager for Gauteng, the Free State and now also Limpopo, has been responsible for developing the new facility. Reporting to Tom is

our new Polokwane branch manager, William Nenjerama, to whom we bid a warm welcome.

The prevailing rock type in the area is granite and this will be used to manufacture the asphalt. At present we are only producing Medium Graded Asphalt (within COLTO spec), but BTB Asphalt will be added in the near future. The plant has a capacity of 80 tonnes/hour

and is capable of producing 600 tonnes per day with ease.

An accredited full length weighbridge is on site and a fully operational laboratory will be commissioned by January start-up.

"Our primary objective is to supply the immediate market in Polokwane and surrounds," says William. "The plant will be operational six days a week,



*William Nenjerama*

as well as Sundays on a request basis, and our Medium Graded Asphalt will sell for very reasonable market related prices."

# Tom Gilbert: Asphalt junkie

Tom Gilbert joined Much Asphalt as regional manager for Gauteng and the Free State in April this year. He was immediately faced with the daunting task of not only getting to know these operations but also developing the new Polokwane plant and ensuring that it started producing on schedule on 1 October.

Tom comes to Much Asphalt with a wealth of knowledge that will stand him in good stead in coping with the challenges of strong asphalt demand leading up to the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

He matriculated at George Campbell Technical High School in Durban joining Protea Asphalt (Natal) under the directorship of Graham Rutland in 1988. In 1991 he completed his National Civil Engineering Diploma at the Natal Technikon, Berea Campus.

During the 12 years from 1991 to 2003, Tom worked for various companies in the Murray & Roberts group, including Colas, Protea and M&R Roads and Earthworks. He was also responsible for the successful introduction of Novachip (generally known as UTFC) into the country in April '99.

In 2003 he joined Hillary

Construction as operations director in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces. In this capacity he also ran Polokwane Surfacing, the company responsible for all the Hillary Group's bitumen related operations. Tom moved from Polokwane to Johannesburg to join Much Asphalt this year.

Tom's entire work experience has centred around the asphalt industry, yet he says he would not change this for anything. He particularly enjoys the outdoor work environment and misses this luxury in his management position. He describes himself as "very democratic and a good listener, up to a point". It is important for him that his team makes decisions and he takes team meetings seriously.

"I intend to meet our growth predictions by 2010 and at the same time maintain a nil fatality rate and clean HSE record throughout my region. This industry will flourish up to 2010, so much so that our aggregate suppliers may have difficulty coping with our demand. But it is also important to prepare for what may be ahead of us after 2010."

In his private time, Tom enjoys some social golf, the



Tom Gilbert

challenge of cycling long distance events like the 94.7 and the Argus, swimming long distances like the Midmar Mile, and keeping up the stamina needed for these activities in the gym and by running. "I'm also currently building a model boat, the Titanic, which is 1.07m long and made completely from

plywood and plastic. It has taken me some three years thus far, but I'm having fun with it."

Tom is married to Sally and they have three children, Jason (11), Jaime-Leigh (10) and Lincoln, born on 6 September this year.

## PLANNING FOR A GREENER FUTURE

*The staff at Much Asphalt Port Elizabeth took Arbor Week seriously this year. During the week of 1 to 7 September, young trees were bought and each employee planted his or her own tree at the Much Asphalt premises, marked by the name of the individual on a special plaque. "The camaraderie built through this initiative was great," says regional manager Colin Brooks. "Not only does it provide us with a lasting reminder of the importance of Health Safety and Environmental awareness, but it renewed team spirit throughout the PE plant."*

## SANRAL MBIZO WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR

*The theme of SANRAL's annual Cape Town Mbizo on Friday 27 October was **Let's Bridge the Gap** and the venue was, appropriately, the Huguenot Toll Plaza. Much Asphalt's team for the cook-off competition slaved away at its weber braai menu and, while we didn't take the cook-off trophy, a good day was enjoyed by all. Thanks, SANRAL, for a memorable event. We're already back at the drawing board preparing for next year!*



*The Much Asphalt cooks were (from left): Adelaide Martin, John Onraët, Simone Dedericks, Stanley de Goede, Melvin Johnson and Shadrack Andries*

# Training for a sustainable future

Ayden Volbrecht, HR and training consultant to Much Asphalt, says the company is making a determined effort to develop talented youngsters, particularly from previously disadvantaged groups, and that employees are taking the challenge seriously.

"Much Asphalt's senior management fully supports the development of our young people to ensure our sustainability in the face of a national skills crisis," says Ayden. "We can create training

technikon level education. Stephanie Alexander is already studying management accounting on a part time basis and Rozaan Jones will start her studies in civil engineering in 2007. We also provide three technikon students per region in which we operate with in-service training every year.

In addition we have two black female bursars studying civil and construction engineering at South African universities.

Construction Materials Testing Learnership Level 2 through the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA). The first learnerships will be complete by early 2007.

In the past 18 months we have also employed 25 matriculants with mathematics and science nationally and these candidates may be enrolled in the learnership at a later stage.

Three learners in KZN branch are undertaking a Mechanical Fitters Learnership Level 2 and Elliot Hessi of Eerste River successfully completed his trade test to qualify as a fitter under Section 28 of the Manpower Act. "This is a great achievement, based on his work experience and the training he has received at Much Asphalt," says Ayden.

"More women are also rising through the ranks in our laboratories," he adds. "We now have a black woman, Anna Khunou, in a supervisory position in Roodepoort. Pamela Jamjam in Contermanskloof and Anesia Barnes in the Central Laboratory have been identified as potential supervisors."

Several internal development programmes are also producing excellent results. We have 15 young employees on our **Tomorrow's Managers** programme, and another 11 people on our **Senior Management Development** programme. Since 2003 we have also sent 27 members of staff on the Murray & Roberts **Mandev** programme that provides mainly management and supervisory skills.

"I personally feel very positive about the future for Much Asphalt employees,"

says Ayden. "It is up to each of us to strike a balance between work and training commitments. While this can be difficult, particularly in today's buoyant economic climate, I think the staff of this company have been energised and empowered by the opportunities they have access to. This, in turn, will have very positive consequences for all our customers."



*Elliot Hessi of Eerste River completed his trade test.*

and development opportunities, but the individuals must find out what is available to them and take ownership of their own destinies."

The development options that have been made available at Much Asphalt influence every member of staff. "It is important that our people see themselves growing within the company and our workplace skills plan aims for each person at Much Asphalt to undertake at least one training initiative per year," says Ayden. "There are some, of course, who complete more than one course in a year."

Much Asphalt has identified two female staff members for

Three new trainee managers and two branch managers are currently being recruited to meet the increased market demands expected in the short term future as well as the challenges of keeping pace with constant technological change and development.

It was for the same reason that a decision was taken more than 18 months ago to employ people with matric as a minimum qualification in future.

Our drive to recruit more laboratory assistants and to formalise the qualifications of all our lab staff is well under way. All permanent lab staff are currently undertaking

## LONG SERVICE

*Congratulations to the following Much Asphalt employees, who received long service awards this year.*

### *10 years*

*Matime Maebane (Benoni)  
Happiness Mtshali (Coedmore)  
Emanuel Msalela (Empangeni)  
Simon Maxengana (George)  
Jonathan September  
(head office)*

### *15 years*

*Mukesh Maharaj (head office)*

### *20 years*

*Setlabo Malebati (Benoni)  
Sonwabo Tshayinca  
(Bloemfontein)  
Daniel Monaila (Eerste River)*

### *25 years*

*Anne George (head office)  
David Mofokeng (Benoni)  
Zenzile Nkinga  
(Contermanskloof)  
Sedrick Andries (Eerste River)  
Julius Motaung (Kokstad)*

### *30 years*

*Thomas Msimanga (Coedmore)*

### *35 years*

*Henry Appollis (head office)*

**Do you have any interesting news regarding Much Asphalt's people, products or projects?  
If you do and you'd like to tell everyone else about it, please contact Lynne Hancock  
at 082 441-5813 or e-mail [lynne@lhcom.co.za](mailto:lynne@lhcom.co.za)**