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BRANCHES COUNTRYWIDE

Massive asphalt laboratory upgrade almost complete



Much Asphalt has almost completed an R2.5-million programme to upgrade 11 of its laboratories countrywide.

Some of the key deliverables of the R2.5m upgrade programme included:

- ❑ A new 250m² laboratory building, complete with work tops and finishes, at the company's Benoni branch,
- ❑ A new 180m² laboratory building including work tops and finishes in Eikenhof,
- ❑ Extensions and renovations to the laboratory buildings at Eersterivier, Port Elizabeth, East London, George, Roodepoort, Coedmore, Empangeni, Pietermaritzburg and the Central Laboratory,
- ❑ State-of-the-art new testing equipment in all the laboratories as well as,



A R2.5-million programme, launched in 2004 by Much Asphalt to upgrade all its laboratories countrywide, is nearing completion.

As a major materials supplier to the construction industry, the company relies heavily on its ability to offer quality materials monitoring and testing. It is a key component of the company's quality assurance programme and involves, amongst other things, process control monitoring of incoming raw materials and outgoing

finished product monitoring and testing.

The upgrade programme involved 11 of Much Asphalt's branch laboratories – including the soon to be SANAS accredited Central Laboratory situated at the company's head office in Eersterivier, Cape Town.

According to the company's technical director, Chris Lange, the programme also included the segmentation of the laboratories into small, medium and large facilities. Each facility was assessed in

terms of what possible improvements could be made and checklist forms were drawn up so that the branches could determine the needs of the facilities in terms of:

- ❑ Aggregate, bitumen, fuels and finished product test equipment,
- ❑ Buildings in terms of layout, size, finishes,
- ❑ Laboratory staffing needs and,
- ❑ Laboratory staff training needs.

- ❑ Ongoing staff recruitment and training.

"Our laboratory technicians are trained in the specialised field of asphalt mix designs, aggregate and soils testing, certain bitumen and heavy fuel tests.

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A Murray & Roberts company

They are also trained to calibrate the asphalt plant feed systems and set up the plant to produce mixes to the required specification and control the process.

"In order to retain and attract top materials technicians, and also upgrade the level of existing staff, we needed to provide top class facilities. We also needed to increase the skills levels of those employed in the materials and quality assurance sector of the business. To this end we have set ourselves the objective of having all our laboratory supervisors and senior technicians qualified in materials testing to NQF level 4 and the assistants to a minimum of NQF 2 level," he says.

In line with this thinking, 47 Much Asphalt technicians will shortly be registered for the NQF level 2 learnership and, as soon as the NQF level 3 and 4 learnerships have been finalised, the company's senior technicians will also be registered.

The laboratories are seen as being key to providing the expertise the branches need in order to provide consistent, good quality service and products to the company's customers, says Chris, adding that the company is committed to a consistent and ongoing programme to improve the skills level in its laboratories.

Standing the test of time

This year is a very special year for Much Asphalt as we commemorate 40 years of the Much Asphalt brand.

In the light of this wonderful achievement it is fitting that we recognise and pay tribute to the previous leaders of Much Asphalt and the pioneering work they did to build up the Much Asphalt brand.

We, as the Much Asphalt family, wish to thank and recognise the previous leaders of the company for the groundbreaking work they did to ensure that the name, Much Asphalt, has not only survived for 40 years but also continues to grow from strength to strength. We would therefore like to thank, and honour;

Max Pike (1965-1986),
Dave Orton (1986-1992),
Jan Beukes (1992-1998).

On budget

I am pleased to report that at the half-year stage of our financial year we were fortunate to be very much in line with budget. While we expect another challenging six months ahead we are confident that, with the continued support and dedication of our employees, we will continue to meet our shareholders expectations of our business.

During the past six months we have experienced many exciting developments within the company. The commissioning of our groundbreaking new twin drum continuous mixing drum plant at Roodepoort tops the list.

Our commitment to strive for technical and operational excellence continues unabated. During the next few months, virtually all our sites will be focussing on upgrading our laboratories and resources in order to complement our state-of-the-art mixing facilities. In conjunction with this, it is our aim to have our Central Laboratory at Eerste River receive accreditation from the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) by June this year. Once again Much Asphalt, will be the first commercial asphalt producer in southern Africa to achieve this.

Our people

We are also extremely happy with the progress we are making in terms of our Human Capital Development. Our commitment to developing our people is non-negotiable and it has been very satisfying to see the resultant improvement in efficiency and productivity. It is also very rewarding to see our commitment to Employment Equity and our Graduate Development Programme delivering the expected results. In a recent announcement advising of internal promotions and organisational changes, five of the nine changes involved employees from the H.D. I group and five of the nine employees had previously been part of our Graduate Development Programme. In what is surely another first for our industry we were very proud to appoint Thandi



Much Asphalt chief executive
Phillip Hechter.

Mokgalagadi to the position of Branch Manager at our George branch. We wish her every success with this new venture!

There are also a number of other positive interventions taking place within Much Asphalt that affect virtually every other aspect of our business. This should ensure that a constant, positive energy flow exists within the business at all times. We must therefore not allow the occasional obstacle or difficult contract to foster a negative mindset. Accept them as challenges that can and will be overcome. In the process we, as individuals, will have gained knowledge and Much Asphalt will in turn have gained respect.

Thank you

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank all our clients for their continued support. In the light of this sentiment I would also like to remind all our employees that no matter what we do internally the ultimate measure of our success lies in the repeat business of our customers. Everything we do, and the manner in which we do it, can have only one objective in mind and that is to be the asphalt supplier of choice to the industry.

Thank you all for your loyal and ongoing support.

Much Asphalt has doubled its Port Elizabeth's plant storage capacity in order to meet increasing customer demand for asphalt in the region.

Much Asphalt doubles PE plant's storage capacity



Much Asphalt has doubled its Port Elizabeth plant's storage capacity in order to cope with increased demand.

According to Chris Lange, the company's technical director, the plant can now store up to 325 tons of asphalt— more than double its previous capacity of 150 tons. The company has invested more than R900 000 to boost its storage capacity.

"This increase in storage capacity means we can start the day with 300 tons in storage, ready to go, which gives our customers a head start in the mornings," he says, adding that the increase has also given the plant increased versatility in terms of the product mix that can be stored.

Not only has the plant's output

capability been significantly increased, but it can also continue mixing product for an additional 1.5 hours every day.

Customers have, says Chris, saved money in the long run as the increased capacity has improved productivity by significantly reducing the standing times of customer's trucks.

"This increase in storage capacity, has greatly benefited our clients in the Eastern Cape, and aligns with our overall policy of offering a world class service.

"We realised that we were encountering problems in meeting customer demand for product and we are committed to making the necessary adjustments, where necessary, to ensure that we will be able to meet their needs both quickly and efficiently," says Chris.

Freddie Durrow (24) a mechanical engineer who graduated from the University of Pretoria at the end of 2004 has joined Much Asphalt for a period of six months under the Murray & Roberts Graduate Development Programme (GDP).

He is one of 12 graduates taken on by Murray & Roberts under the GDP. Each graduate is assigned a mentor who assists the graduates in gaining hands on experience at the coalface.

Chris Lange is Freddie's mentor.

Freddie, who comes from farming stock in Clocolan in the Eastern Free State, attended Ladybrand School where he played first team rugby as outside centre. His interests are varied and include cycling, running and tennis.

During university vacations he worked at a mechanical engineering firm – mainly building test rigs for the automotive industry.

Freddie will stay with Much Asphalt's Port Elizabeth team until the end of June and then he will be assigned to another Murray & Roberts company until the end of the year.

Should all

things go well Freddie could join the team on a permanent basis.

Freddie joins the Much Asphalt team



Freddie Durrow.

Are you a member?

Are you a member of The Society for Asphalt Technology (SAT)? Phillip Hechter is the Chairman of Sabita, the industry representative body, and John Onraet is the President of SAT, a society for individuals. To join SAT visit www.socsat.co.za for application forms.

Rehab of Echo runways at Jhb International completed

The rehabilitation of the busy Johannesburg International's Echo runways is finally complete with more than 43,000 tons of asphalt having been supplied by Much Asphalt.

According to Jannie Grobler, regional manager of Much Asphalt in Gauteng, the key to the company's success on this contract lay in its ability to supply more than 1 500 tons of high quality asphalt each and every day.

This he says, was made possible, by dedicating the company's Astec Double Barrel Premix Plant at Benoni to the contract.

The Astec plant performed extremely well under pressure and production rates of up to 190 tons per hour, with very low fuel consumption (at least 10% lower than standard drum plants), was reported.

The use of reclaimed asphalt pavements (RAP) was allowed on this

contract and this provided the client, ACSA, with substantial savings.

According to Jannie this plant has the capacity to recycle up to 50% RAP, not only saving the client money but also offering the additional benefit of being environmentally-friendly.

"Our capacity to deliver at the required production rates dictated by our customer is non-negotiable," says Jannie, adding that the company is ready and willing to make available whatever resources are necessary to meet the needs of any contract. The contractor on site was Blacktop Surfaces.

Besides the excellent productivity achieved, says Jannie, the innovative designs and high quality of the premix used on site are worth mentioning. The asphalt used on these runways were specifically designed and constructed to cope with the heavy load of the new Airbus A380 and this was done without the need for expensive modifiers.

A continuously graded (26 mm nominal aggregate) BTB mix was used for both the upper and lower BTB layers and, by using different types and amounts of bitumen, the bottom BTB was designed to be more resistant to fatigue while the

top layer of BTB was designed to be highly resistant to deformation. In order to achieve these high performance parameters a grading was selected that was coarser than the lower limits of the standard Colto grading envelope.

The wearing course of the contract was also continuously graded (13,2 nominal aggregate) using a 40/50 penetration graded bitumen and a VMS target of 5%, that was compacted to 93% of Rice.

"The design of wearing courses on airport runways are always a bit of a paradox as the layer must not only be highly resistant to deformation which is generally

difficult to compact, but it is also extremely important that low in-situ voids are achieved during construction (i.e. the mix must be well compacted) to ensure that the mix remains durable and impermeable to water," says Derick Pretorius of Arcus Gibb, the engineers on site.

An elegant solution to this

- VIMS at 300 gyrations of the Superpave Gyrotory compactor of 3,5%,
- Repetitions to 10 mm rutting at 60°C of the CSIR wheel tracking device of up to 10,000,
- MMLS rutting (100k repetitions at 50°C, wet testing) of less than 2,5 mm and,



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Rehabilitated runways will cope with the heavy load of the new Airbus

paradox was to increase the thickness of the wearing course to 50mm (where the standard wearing course is 40mm) in order to make the compaction process more efficient.

A 30mm bitumen rubber mix, with the same aggregate as the wearing course, was eventually found to be the most cost effective solution for the runways 18-meter wide shoulders. This non-structural layer was specifically designed to treat the reflective cracking on the shoulder.

During the design process very demanding performance based specifications were set. These included:

- 4Pt Beam fatigue repetitions to failure at 5°C at 350µ of 200, 000.

Very stringent quality control parameters were also specified, including a bitumen tolerance of $\pm 0.2\%$ and a VIMS tolerance of $\pm 1\%$. However, the engineer on site and Much Asphalt set up a joint laboratory at the plant to ensure that these specifications were constantly monitored and met throughout the production process as opposed to the traditional practice of accepting or rejecting the product after it has been placed.

"Close co-operation between all the parties involved in this complex and demanding contract brought excellent results," says Jannie.



Welcome back Francois

It's a hearty "welcome back" to Francois van der Spuy who has rejoined the Much Asphalt team after a stint away running a family business.

Francois (47) first joined Much Asphalt way back in 1981 as a trainee based at the company's Eerste River plant in Cape Town. He went on to manage several major projects on the company's behalf. These included the Mmabatho International Airport, the Bulembu Airport in the then Ciskei and the Port

Elizabeth bypass.

During his 15-year long stint with Much Asphalt Francois was also, at various stages, responsible for managing the Contermanskloof, East London and Eerste River plants.

He resigned in 1996 to run a family business but rejoined the company in November last year.

Francois is currently managing the EB Cloete contract in KwaZulu-Natal where after he will join the mobile operations team.



Francois van der Spuy has rejoined the company.

Bloem goes from strength to strength



Much Asphalt's Bloemfontein branch has benefitted enormously from its recent R1-million upgrade programme.

Much Asphalt's Bloemfontein branch was established in 1994 and has, since then supplied more than 200 000 tons of asphalt for various projects in the Free State.

Originally established as a 30 ton per hour plant with a storage capacity of 90 tons, the plant can now produce 70 tons of asphalt per hour thanks to a recent R1-million Rand upgrade programme. Included in the upgrade was the electric heating of the bitumen lines and tanks as well as

covering of the cold feed bins.

Today the plant has seven permanent members of staff on site with three of them having more than 20 years of service to their credit. A further two members of staff have 15 years of service each. According to Brian Neville, formerly Bloemfontein's branch manager, multiskilling has played a vital role in the successful operation of the plant.

"With such a small staff complement we had to

introduce multiskilling across the board and, thankfully, it has been very successful across all levels," he says.

Some of Much Asphalt's major clients in the Free State include Road Mac Surfacing, Black Top Surfacing, Peter Contractors, Wascon Civils Free State, the Provincial Administration, South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) and the Mangaung Municipality.

Large projects completed in the region by Much Asphalt

includes the upgrading of Bloemfontein airport's runway with nearly all the work being done at night, the rehabilitation of the N6 between Smithfield and Rouxville and the resealing of several roads in and around the city of Bloemfontein.

"The Bloemfontein branch prides itself on its exemplary safety record to date as well the low lost time generated by breakdowns," says Brian, adding that the branch takes pride in being a part of the company.

PE clinches safety award yet again

The Port Elizabeth Branch has once again won the trophy in the Master Builders Association's Annual Competition – and it has also been awarded a Master Builders South Africa (MBSA) 5 star grading in the process.

The assessment, which was carried out via a surprise visit, leaves no time for any “window dressing” and Colin Brooks, Regional Manager of the Eastern Cape, completed the branch's entry form without informing anyone – so no-one knew there was an audit pending.

The branch supplied thousands of tons of asphalt to clients in the region between July and April and a new 175t hot storage bin was constructed and erected on site one month before the audit! Needless to say the branch was very busy and then had the audit to contend with as well – and they still managed to score an overall rating of 93.2%. Well done!

East London branch highly active in the Eastern Cape

The East London branch is currently working on two major projects in the Eastern Cape, supplying a total of 7 600 tons of asphalt.

Work has started on the second phase of the Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) declared in the vicinity of East London itself and the branch is supplying around 3 600 tons to this project. It is also supplying a further 4 000 tons of asphalt for work being carried out on the upgrade of the N2 to Kei Mouth.

“The Eastern Cape has suddenly become very active and our team on site has risen to the challenge of supplying good quality asphalt on time and on budget,” says Nathan Jacobs, branch manager.

Shown right are the summarised results of the audit and the assessment criteria used.

MBSA Audit Results: 25 April 2005	Weight	Points Possible	Points Achieved	%
Admin and legal requirements	27.7%	122	109	89.3%
Public safety and emergency preparedness	14.1%	62	50	80.6%
Site plant and machinery	12.3%	54	54	100.0%
Personal protective equipment and clothing	11.4%	50	50	100.0%
Electrical safeguarding	10.0%	44	44	100.0%
Workplace, environment, health and hygiene	9.5%	42	41	97.6%
Emergency/fire prevention and protection	6.4%	28	28	100.0%
Education, training and Promotion	5.5%	24	20	83.3%
Housekeeping	2.7%	12	12	100.0%
Ladders	0.5%	2	2	100.0%
		440	410	93.2%

Long Service Awards

Several long service awards have been made recently. They ranged from a very creditable 10 years to an incredible 30 years!

10 years

- ☐ Tsietsi Magotho – Bloemfontein
- ☐ Lindile Jonashe – Eersteriver
- ☐ Raj Kapoor Rajcoomar – Head Office
- ☐ Breyten Dirks – Pietermaritzburg
- ☐ Colin Brooks – Port Elizabeth
- ☐ Johnson Burwana – Port Elizabeth
- ☐ John Mthembu – Empangeni
- ☐ Nkosinathi Shweni – Eersteriver

15 years

- ☐ Anita Valentine – Admin
- ☐ Bennie Greyling – Benoni
- ☐ Sonny Oliver – Contermanskloof
- ☐ Vivien Seiderer – Eikenhof
- ☐ Vuyisele Mngwandi – Eikenhof
- ☐ Leon Westraadt – Mobile
- ☐ Georg Killian – Windhoek
- ☐ Louis Blume – Port Elizabeth
- ☐ Francois Meyerhoff – East London
- ☐ Spencer van Eden – Head Office
- ☐ Garth Miller – Eersteriver

20 years

- ☐ Mapudi Phasha – Eikenhof
- ☐ Marimuthi Dhaver – Margate
- ☐ Boy Matya – George
- ☐ Mshiyeni Mvula – Roodepoort
- ☐ Richard Homba – Eersteriver

25 years

- ☐ Alson Dladla – Coedmore
- ☐ Stanley de Goede – Eersteriver

30 years

- ☐ John Onraet – Head Office
- ☐ Johannes Buthelezi – Eikenhof

People on the Move

Much Asphalt has announced several promotions, moves and changes over the past few months. These include:

- ☐ John Onraet has been appointed as Mobile Director in addition to his existing portfolio of Marketing Director,
- ☐ Jannie Grobler has been appointed as Regional Manager for Gauteng,
- ☐ Brian Neville has been appointed as Branch Manager of the Roodepoort plant,
- ☐ Christo du Preez has been appointed as Branch Manager of the Kempton Park branch,
- ☐ Colin Brooks has been appointed as Regional Manager of the Eastern Cape,
- ☐ Thandi Mokgalagadi has been appointed Branch Manager of the George plant,
- ☐ Leon Cloete is the new Branch Manager of the Bloemfontein plant,
- ☐ Garth Miller is now the Regional Manager of the company's operations in the Western Cape,
- ☐ Rick Jackson is the new Branch Manager of the Eerste River plant,
- ☐ Wayne Hardman is now the Branch Manager of the Contermanskloof branch and,
- ☐ Greg van Wyk is the new Branch Manager at Coedmore.