

# Seven TLBs in seven years works a charm for Fakeni Construction

**We often hear of the elusive seven years of good luck but a plant hire owner in Limpopo can vouch for this in a most unusual way – buying a new Bell Tractor Loader Backhoe each year for seven years in a row, which has certainly brought him success and good fortune.**

After obtaining his matric in his home town of Sekhukhune, between Polokwane and Lydenburg, Klaas Maphanga went to work for Eskom at the Dhuva power station near Witbank. There he became a turbine operator before spending four years at the old Transvaal Navigation Colliery as a labour relations assistant.

“I however had this urge to be self-employed and I ended up running a fleet of taxis,” he says. “This in turn gave me the financial freedom to pursue other business interests and in 2007, I started Fakeni Construction, concentrating on plant hire in the Sekhukhune area.”

“After doing research into what the local market required, I shopped around for a tractor loader backhoe (TLB) and the most competitively priced machine at that stage was the Bell 315SJ 4x4, which I promptly bought,” he adds. “It was a pleasure dealing with Russell Conn of the Bell Equipment Customer Service Centre in Nelspruit who understood my business needs and how the machine could fulfill them.”



*Klaas Maphanga (left), owner of Fakeni Construction, with Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Russell Conn.*

It should be mentioned that the town of Sekhukhune borders the relative new mining areas in the Burgersfort, Steelpoort and Lydenburg triangle and with lots of development taking place here, there was a big and growing demand for plant hire, especially for equipment with as much versatility and reliability that the Bell 315SJ TLB offered.

“I soon saw the benefit of buying a new machine as my growing client base realised that my new Bell 315SJ TLB, delivered on its hire rates with maximum uptime,” he continues. “I decided there and then that I would buy another similar machine the following year as the demand increased.”

And so one Bell 315SJ became two the following year, three the year after and so it went until the year 2014 when Klaas bought his seventh Bell 315 TLB, with the most recent two, being later Bell 315SK models.

Fakeni Construction hires its Bell TLBs out in a radius encompassing Nelspruit in the east and Polokwane to the north and everywhere in between. The company prefers dry rates but monitors fuel quality through its own well-trained operators who adhere to strict daily preventative maintenance schedules. Operators are rewarded for clean and well-maintained machines.

While the machines are under warranty, they are serviced by technicians from Bell Equipment in Nelspruit and thereafter, Fakeni Construction's own diesel mechanic sees to servicing and minor repairs.

Even though the machines are hired out on dry rates, fuel consumption is monitored as a responsibility to clients and owner alike. Klaas is of the opinion that preventative maintenance leads to high mechanical availabilities which in turn impacts positively on repeat business from a loyal and growing client base.

Fakeni Construction's Bell TLBs are used for loading and stockpiling material, housekeeping and digging trenches for services, irrigation and water reticulation. His client base includes the larger construction companies working in the area, local municipalities and mining companies. Individuals working in construction and agriculture are also not turned away.

Listening to what his market demands, Klaas is adamant that buying excavators next is the way to go and here he again will speak to Bell Equipment. Let's hope that a steady stream of seven excavators in seven years will present similar good fortune as that which seven Bell TLBs have in the last seven years.

