

uMhlathuze rural roads get a massive boost with Bell machines

A fleet of nine Bell machines has been delivered to the City of uMhlathuze in Richards Bay on the KwaZulu-Natal north coast where they will be used by the local Municipality's Department of Infrastructure and Technical Services as the backbone of its Rural Roads Maintenance Programme.

The two Bell 670G Graders, four Bell 315SK Tractor Loader Backhoes and three Bomag BW2114-40 Rollers, which were supplied with a padfoot shell, were procured through two Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), Simunye Fleet and Ihophe (Pty) Ltd, as part of a tender process which also included six water tankers and two tipper trucks.

The City's Fleet Manager, Eugene de Jager, explained that uMhlathuze currently has five graders, one of which

is out of operation. He said the new fleet will ensure that the Rural Roads Maintenance Programme is kept up-to-date. He also explained that the padfoot shell, which can be attached to a roller, was procured to allow more flexibility because it can be moved from site to site more easily than having to transport an entire machine.

Speaking at the handover, Mayor Mduduzi Mhlongo said that the Municipality had budgeted R20 million to be spent on earthmoving machinery during the 2014-2015 financial year. The yellow metal fleet will be further bolstered by a further R20 million in the coming financial year.

He added that the Bell machines are evidence that the Municipality is here to work and is dedicated to uplifting its rural areas, particularly with regards to the maintenance of its 600km network of rural gravel roads.



From left: Gary Bell (Chief Executive: Bell Equipment), Philani Gumbi (Public Sector Sales Manager: Bell Equipment), Balefilwe Raphala (General Manager: Simunye Fleet), Mayor Mduduzi Mhlongo, Cllr Nicholas Madondo, Deputy Mayor Zethu Gumbi, Cllr Prince Mathenjwa, Cllr Jabu Mkhabela, Cllr Shadrack Zulu and Speaker Mfundo Mthenjana.



Cutting the ribbon at the machine handover are (from left): Balefilwe Raphala (General Manager: Simunye Fleet), Gary Bell (Chief Executive: Bell Equipment), Ayanda Ngidi (Director: Ihophe (Pty) Ltd), City of uMhlathuze Mayor, Cllr Mduduzi Mhlongo, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Zethu Gumbi and Speaker, Cllr Mfundo Mthenjana.

According to Mayor Mhlongo, the machines were procured through SMMEs as part of the Municipality's drive to develop SMMEs, particularly enterprises run by the youth, local people and those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. He also acknowledged the importance of having the Bell factory based in Richards Bay in terms of local economic development as the company is an important creator of employment for the City.

Mayor Mhlongo said: "We are grateful to have Bell Equipment in our City. A huge company such as this could have established anywhere but they chose uMhlathuze and we benefit from having them here. We are the only City in the country to produce this kind of equipment and it is with great pride that we host Bell in our City."

Bell Equipment Chief Executive, Gary Bell, assured the Municipality that their decision to buy Bell machines was the right choice in terms of the product offering and would have a positive impact on the economy. "Bell Equipment not only creates employment but we have 208 companies that support us locally and another 543 companies that support us in KwaZulu-Natal. Through buying Bell machines you have created more opportunities for the community, for the City and for our country."

In addition he said that the City could look forward to a long and productive life from its Bell fleet because of the strong technical team and customer support network at Bell and the company's association with Simunye Fleet and Ihophe.



Bell Equipment Chief Executive, Gary Bell, presents City of uMhlathuze Mayor, Cllr Mduduzi Mhlongo, with a model replica of the company's new E-series generation Articulated Dump Truck. Looking on are (back left): Ayanda Ngidi (Director: Ihophe (Pty) Ltd), Balefilwe Raphala (General Manager: Simunye Fleet) and Philani Gumbi (Public Sector Sales Manager: Bell Equipment).