

Pre-owned B40Ds show their mettle for Erftrim

The Bell B40D Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) is generally viewed as a machine that has made its mark in especially the African opencast-mining market with its proven reliability in tough, unforgiving circumstances.

Its outstanding resale value as a pre-owned machine has now been highlighted as an added benefit for this legendary machine. An African opencast-mining operation in particular has high praises for its fleet of pre-owned B40Ds that still deliver on the mantra of tough, reliable machines, even when pre-owned.

Danie Pienaar and his long-standing friend, Jason Venter started Erftrim Plant Hire some 10 years ago. One of their biggest client's was Erftrim Civils and Construction, a company owned by Jason's father Piet Venter.

"Jason's father Piet had done a lot of the construction on the Muhanga coal mine outside Middelburg," Danie

Pienaar tells us. "This gave us a link to mining and we realised that to grow the plant hire business we would need to increase our fleet of machines and perhaps change our focus to concentrate on the opencast-mining side of the business."

Their fleet, although modest in size, consisted of ADTs, excavators, water bowsers and rigid tippers, ranging from 10 to 15 cubic metres.

"Exposure to mining prompted us to look at the possibility of undertaking contract mining and we took this decision in 2010," Pienaar says. "We decided to buy four Bell B40D ADTs which were pre-owned and had been imported from the United Kingdom. Flip Kruger our chief mechanic, who has lots of experience of Bell manufactured equipment, was very supportive of our decision and he told us that if there was one machine ideally suited to our needs, then it was the Bell B40D ADT, even a pre-owned one."

Erftrim took delivery of their first four pre-owned Bell B40D ADTs in late 2010. The machines were re-assembled by the Used Division of the Bell Equipment Customer Service Centre at Jet Park, under the watchful eye of Iain Jackson. Machine hours varied between 2 500 and 3 500 hours.

This strategic move enabled Erftrim Plant Hire to move into the competitive field of contract mining with successful operations that are building them a reputation for continued delivery through their reliable earthmoving and material hauling equipment.

"Our clients see us as serious players in this competitive field," Pienaar adds. "We believe a large part of our success lies in the fact that the Bell B40 ADT is the machine with the best pedigree in the market."

Erftrim has dramatically grown their fleet of Bell ADTs in the last year and it now numbers 18. The fleet consists of six Bell B40C and 12 Bell B40D ADTs. Where they were initially tasked with only hauling overburden, clients are now having them haul coal as well when production pressures are high. This, according to Pienaar, they see as true testament to faith in their company's abilities.

Financing their fleet had been done through Bell Finance and Wesbank. Taking delivery of a Bell ADT, even a pre-owned one, does not mean one can put it into

service straight away. According to Pienaar, a host of safety equipment as specified by the particular mining client has to be fitted and this included a reverse camera, GPS collision warning system, air-conditioning, two-way radio, fire extinguisher and handrails. This all adds to the cost of the machine but Pienaar and his colleagues are satisfied that they were able to buy the equipment at a reasonable price.

Haul distances generally don't exceed 2km and fuel consumption averages around 25 to 27 litres per hour, depending on the material carried. Erftrim's fleet of Bell ADTs is used daily in three 8-hour shifts with strict daily maintenance checks taking place during shift changes. Headed up by Flip Kruger, Erftrim's eight diesel mechanics ensure that their fleet delivers high mechanical availabilities.

"We and our clients can truly say that in the wet underfoot conditions and narrow pits that we find in the Mpumalanga coal fields, our Bell B40 ADTs are the ideal haulage tools with their all-wheel drive traction, even under full loads," Pienaar says. "We're also excited about Bell Equipment's agreement with Liebherr which could soon see our Bell B40 ADTs loaded with serious loading tools."



Erftrim took delivery of their first four pre-owned Bell B40Ds at the end of 2010 and has high praises for its fleet that still deliver on the mantra of tough, reliable machines.



Erftrim's Chief Mechanic, Flip Kruger with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Carel Venter and Danie Pienaar, a partner in Erftrim together with Jason Venter (absent).