

Bell TLB helps Knysna Municipality get to grips with service delivery

The crown jewel of the popular South African Garden Route is undoubtedly Knysna in the Western Cape and the town's dynamic leadership has as its vision the mantra of "Where people and nature prosper."

And any town's citizens will prosper when a local municipality is as committed to service delivery as the Knysna Municipality. This was shown earlier this year when the town took delivery of a new Bell 315SK Tractor Loader Backhoe (TLB) for that purpose, ensuring sustained service delivery to its citizens.

"We as the Knysna Local Municipality were pleased to learn that the Bell 315SK 4x4 Tractor Loader Backhoe we've just acquired is a South African product, and we're excited at the prospect that this new machine will add value to our commitment of sustained service delivery to

all our citizens," said Cllr Georlene Wolmarans, the Executive Mayor of the Knysna Local Municipality during a ceremony to mark the delivery of the machine in April.

Servicing a vast and hilly geographical terrain of some 46 000 square kilometres and bordered on one side by the Indian Ocean, the Knysna municipal borders extend from between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay to the north-east, Rheenendal and Karatarra to the north and west of Sedgefield. The area is home to around 24 000 households and over 70 000 people.

The Municipality's responsibilities include providing water and sanitation services, managing storm water, maintaining public areas, beaches, three cemeteries, providing electricity in urban areas and maintaining main roads passing through towns and secondary roads. For servicing these areas, the Knysna Municipality has a



Cllr Georlene Wolmarans is pleased that the Bell TLB is a South African product.



The Executive Mayor of the Knysna Local Municipality, Cllr Georlene Wolmarans (top centre) cuts through the ribbon on the new Bell 315SK 4x4 Tractor Loader Backhoe. Also pictured are (from left): Bruce Ndlela (Bell Equipment Director: Public Sector), Shaun Maree (Manager: Roads and Public Works), Cllr Esmé Edge (Deputy Mayor) and Cllr Peter Myers.

small existing fleet of yellow machines comprising two older Bell Wheeled Loaders that see limited use in solid waste management, four TLBs and some six-cubic metre tipper trucks. The need for a new TLB had prompted the issuing of a tender for such a machine.

The Bell 315SK 4x4 TLB is widely known as a versatile state-of-the-art tool and although it will probably see service in most of the mandated service areas of the Municipality, it is the Department of Roads and Public Works that was most keen for its immediate use.

“We as the Department of Roads and Public Works within the Municipality have the important tasks of maintaining water supply and roads,” says Shaun Maree, the Manager: Roads and Public Works. “We extract water from two rivers in our area, cleanse it, distribute it, treat it and return it to the rivers in an environmentally responsible way.”

Both gravel and paved roads need to be maintained and many challenges exist where roads traverse the steep hills to the edge of their design. National roads passing through the towns have to be maintained on behalf of provincial and national government structures.

“The motivation for issuing a tender for a new TLB had come late in 2015 when we realised that when making up the shortfall in our yellow fleet by hiring in machines from plant hire companies, these costs spent on plant

hire were hampering us from owning our own equipment,” Shaun explains. “We’re excited about using our new Bell 315SK TLB and one of its first tasks will be to load silt from the Bongani River, one of our main water sources, which we dredge at least twice a year.”

According to Shaun, Bell Equipment had won the tender by adequately meeting the tender requirements of functionality, meaning matching the required technical specifications, having local agents with adequate technical backup and parts availability close at hand, the correct BBBEE credentials and price.

“Our Bell 315SK TLB was bought with a standard 12 month/2 500 hour warranty and all servicing in that time will be done by mechanics from Bell Equipment’s Customer Service Centre in nearby George, which we feel guarantees us technical support,” Shaun adds. “Our operators adhere to strict daily checklists regarding preventative maintenance and should the machine be moved to another department in the course of a working day, that checklist is done again.”

To the visitor, Knysna does indeed seem like a place where people and nature prosper and the feeling of a responsible Municipality taking care of its citizens’ needs by investing in new and proven earthmoving equipment to fulfill its mandate of sustained service delivery was tangible.