

Bell ADT product knowledge gives McKenzie Plant confidence to invest in B45Es

A new trend in the plant hire market in South Africa is seeing a call for larger haulage vehicles as project managers from mining to large construction projects realise that these tools lower the cost per tonne of material moved.

This trend is also recognised by one of the most well known voices in South African plant hire that of Stuart McKenzie who, along with Lance Hosking, owns McKenzie Plant based in Richmond, KwaZulu-Natal.

“We’ve been running the smaller Bell Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) such as the Bell B18 and B20 models through all their progressive ranges since 1986 but have in recent years also bought larger Bell ADTs due to demand from our clients,” Stuart McKenzie says. “Our clients do their homework thoroughly on the volumes of materials they need moved according to project schedules and have of late called for larger haulage vehicles to do this more cost- and time-effectively.”

During the last decade McKenzie Plant has also invested in Bell B30 and Bell B40 ADT machines, with most ADTs in the proven D-series range. “As mentioned, demand for larger ADTs has kept our 15 Bell B40 ADTs very busy all over South Africa and even though this fleet’s individual machine hours vary between 4 000 and 17 000 hours, we’ve enjoyed great production from them,” Stuart adds.

“The larger trucks are used in varied roles such as chrome mining, railway and dam construction, airport

upgrades, road construction and quarrying applications. With many of our Bell B40D ADTs now reaching high hours, we’ve created a rebuild centre for this specific model as we believe extending its working life is a feasible goal due to its proven, rugged design and quality of build.”

During 2017 McKenzie Plant received an order to supply three large ADTs for an overburden stripping mining contract in a hard-rock mining application. With demand for Bell B40E ADTs high, McKenzie Plant opted for the larger Bell B45E ADTs and took delivery of three of these machines in August 2017.

“Based on our knowledge of the Bell ADT product, it was an easy decision to make to acquire these Bell B45E ADTs. They are running for 16 hours a day and despite a few teething challenges, their mechanical availability regularly tops 96%,” Stuart says. “We’re new to the Bell B45E ADTs but are happy that we can monitor their performance by way of the Bell Fleetmatic® system, which reports average fuel consumption of 17,1 litres per hour under big loads of heavy overburden. This is pleasing to our clients too as we hire out the machines on dry rates.”

McKenzie Plant has their own operators for their machines and all those driving the Bell B45E ADTs have undergone training by instructors from Bell Equipment. According to Stuart something the operators have had to get used to is the tip angle sensor in the Bell B45E ADTs, which refuses to tip the load should the truck not be standing level. As far as safety on any modern mine is concerned, this feature is welcomed.

McKenzie Plant’s three Bell B45E ADTs were bought with standard warranties and any early niggles have been effectively dealt with by technicians from Bell Equipment in Jet Park, Gauteng.

“We’re proud of the fact that a long association with Bell Equipment has really paid off for us as our many loyal clients know they can rely on us having equipment that offers sustained service,” Stuart says. “We’re currently operating a fleet of 62 Bell ADTs from the B18 to the B45 and recently, when buying some used low-hour Bell B30E ADTs from Bell Equipment, we took possession of our one-hundredth Bell ADT. That’s what we would call proof of confidence in a proudly South African product!”

