

IPP Mining & Materials Handling Handling praises longevity of Bell ADTs

Opencast contract mining is generally conducted in a challenging business environment where contractors alike look to extract the maximum life and availability out of their yellow machine mining fleets.

A well-proven return on investment brought about by the unrivalled quality of design and build found in Bell Equipment's Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) has seen a Witbank-based contract mining and quarry-owning company stay with the marque that has served it so well over many years.

IPP Mining & Materials Handling had started its life in 2006 as IPP, an acronym for its founder's name and business namely Igor Pinto Projects. In keeping with the evolving South African business climate, IPP Mining & Materials Handling came into being in 2015 with a strong Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) component. The company's top management currently comprises

Wiseman Khumalo who is the Chief Executive Officer, Igor Pinto the Chief Operating Officer and Daniel Menezes, the General Manager.

"Our vision is to become one of the largest contributors to South Africa's mining sector," says Daniel Menezes. "This can clearly be seen in the wide range of services we offer beyond a normal contract mining repertoire of load and haul."

These services include opencast mining and rehabilitation, upgrading and operating railway sidings, civil construction of infrastructure projects and pollution control dams, material handling and plant and equipment hire.

"We're proud to say that we got to deploy all the above services on the first opencast coal mine in Botswana where we're still actively operating, in addition to a wide range of sites in the Mpumalanga coalfields which are conveniently close to our head office," Daniel adds. "But we're ambitious and now own a quarry that produces aggregates, and we recently acquired coal reserves with which we plan to trade with in local niche markets but also export."

Daniel is adamant that a company such as theirs is heavily dependent on its haulage equipment and this is clear from the large number of Bell ADTs that they own. "Since before I started here the company has always bought Bell ADTs for the simple reason that they are designed and built for our local challenging conditions and are famous for their longevity," he says. "We own mostly Bell B25D, B35D and B40D ADTs and have now started acquiring the E-series trucks, which have impressed us."

"Bell ADTs have a reputation for offering their owners a long working life and we've capitalised on that over the years, buying into Bell Equipment's rebuild programme, utilising the Bell ReMan offering," he adds. "We will start looking at rebuilding a Bell ADT once it has reached between 12 000 and 14 000 hours of service and we focus largely on overhauling the engine, transmission, drop-box, differentials, hydraulics and cab controls

before sandblasting the chassis and respraying the entire truck."

He points out that some of their Bell ADTs have successfully undergone a second rebuild delivering production hours stretching to 36 000, further cementing the trucks' reputation for durability.

"In 2020, we were awarded a new mining contract on a large coal mine in Mpumalanga and while confident of the performance of our existing fleet of Bell ADTs, we felt replacing some older models would be the correct way to go, which saw us consulting Carel Venter, the knowledgeable sales representative at Bell Equipment in Middelburg who has looked after us in terms of sales and sound advice for some time now," Daniel says. "We decided on eight new Bell B40E ADTs that would be the perfect haulage vehicles for a 74-ton excavator that would load them with topsoil, overburden and coal in the mining pit."

Daniel points out that their clients requested that a mixture of ADTs and rigid haul trucks (RDTs) be deployed at this new operation but when the summer spanning 2020/2021 proved to be usually wet, with higher than expected rainfall making the underfoot conditions slippery and potentially treacherous, their new eight Bell B40E ADTs kept the production going due to their proven all-wheel drive traction, even in very wet conditions.



Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Carel Venter (left) with IPP Mining & Materials Handling General Manager, Daniel Menezes.

“We chose Bell Equipment’s Fleetm@tic® Classic package as our monitoring system of choice and the accurate information we continually receive from this system shows that our new Bell B40E ADTs consume around 19 litres of diesel an hour with haul distances that vary between 500m and 1km,” he says. “The Bell B40E ADTs have been governed to not exceed 40km/h through the machine configuration on the central display unit and they’re currently working an average of 400 hours per month at mechanical availabilities in the high 90%.”

Referring to the longevity of their Bell ADT fleet, Daniel talks confidently of the lessons the company has learnt over time, that preventative maintenance is key in ensuring a decent return on the capital invested. To ensure this takes

manpower and IPP Mining & Materials Handling follows its maintenance policy of committing one mechanic to only seven machines where possible.

“We really take good care of our yellow machines and operators adhere to strict daily checklists before starting a shift,” Daniel explains. “When a machine is not running, no one gets paid and that is not good business practice.”

“Ideally our aim would be to have a Bell ADT fleet that spans a 50:50 ratio of older and rebuilt machines to newer models and we’re working towards that,” he says. “But when it comes to buying ADTs, it really is a no-brainer – we buy Bell ADTs and we should know as our current fleet numbers 123 trucks.”

