

KELE Mining Solutions highlights benefits of choosing Bell ADTs

A relatively new player in the field of contract mining is using data driven technology to achieve improved safety, productivity and efficiency coupled with the proven reliability of haulage vehicles designed and built by a homegrown original equipment manufacturer.



KELE Mining Solutions is a subsidiary of KELE Group Holdings. The group was founded in 2017 by the dynamic husband and wife team of Jomo and Kefilwe Khomo. With its head office in Pretoria, KELE Group Holdings consists of KELE Exploration, KELE Engineering & Construction, KELE Mining Solutions, KELE Logistics Solutions and KELE Technologies.

KELE Mining Solutions has shown phenomenal growth and is currently working on no less than 10 mining sites, mining and handling a diverse portfolio of minerals which include iron ore, platinum, chrome and manganese. The KELE Mining Solutions division already boasts a fleet of loading and haulage equipment numbering 60 and ranging from 100t rigid trucks to 30t Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs).

One of its flagship projects is a material handling and mining contract on an iron ore mine in the Northern Cape where it deploys an eight-strong fleet of Bell B45E ADTs that is monitored by state-of-the-art technology.

"When we started work on this site, we were hiring similar Bell B45E ADTs from the previous contractor which was not ideal but it gave us a head-start on cash flow," says Tlepe Mpe, KELE Mining Solutions:

Head of Operations and a 30-year veteran in the mining industry. "Contract mining is, by its nature, capital intensive and it took us a while to be in a position to first buy four Bell B45E ADTs, followed by a further two and then two more, totalling eight."

The company is tasked with moving mined material from stockpiles to a dense media separation (DMS) plant as well as hauling final product to a loading facility from where it is loaded onto trains bound for the iron ore export terminal at Saldanha. It also handles some road maintenance on the mine.

"We chose the Bell B45E ADTs for a number of reasons. Bell Equipment's E-series ADTs have fast evolved with improved reliability and offer a definite advantage with total cost of ownership. Owning the trucks offers a far better return on investment than hiring them, which creates a positive difference on the balance sheet. There is also the added advantage that prospective clients see the owned fleet as an asset."

To comply with the mine's strict safety regulations, KELE Mining Solutions' Bell B45E ADTs were retrofitted with fire suppression and collision avoidance systems, additional bumpers and apparatus for improved visibility.



KELE Mining Solutions: Head of Operations, Tlepe Mpe (left) with Director of KELE Group Holdings, Kefilwe Khomo, in the foyer of the company's head office in Pretoria.

According to Tlepe, their fleet of Bell B45E ADTs is performing admirably in the harsh, hot and dusty environment that one sees on a typical opencast iron ore mine in the Northern Cape. "Because of the high specific gravity of the material, we load our Bell B45E ADTs with between 37 and 38 metric tonnes and even then, they still return fuel burn of 13,5 litres an hour," he says. "Although we run on dry rates, monitoring and controlling the fuel consumption of our fleet is taken seriously. We will always strive to offer our clients the lowest cost per tonne produced and that our fleet of Bell B45E ADTs runs frugally is paramount to that goal."

He also emphasises the positive fact that when buying ADTs or any other equipment from Bell Equipment, KELE Mining Solutions is supporting local content with the downstream effect of creating and sustaining employment in the country. "We feel a definite responsibility to support local content as our KELE Group Holdings is an active participant in the President's CEO's Circle, an initiative to encourage newly established businesses to list on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) within five years."

Most modern mining and vehicle fleets are monitored remotely and here KELE Mining Solutions feels it has a distinct advantage through tapping

in directly to the technological assets its sister company, KELE Technologies has to offer. "We run the basic Bell Fleetm@tic® system and, coupled to other platforms that our technology division offers, we can monitor our mining fleet around the clock," Tlepe explains. "We're looking to upgrade to a higher level of the Bell Fleetm@tic® system as this offers distinct added advantages."

These advantages, according to Tlepe, include providing interventions for both machine operators and supervisors and, in doing so, aiding site safety and taking care of the haulage fleet to promote longevity. Proper maintenance can be planned and scheduled, downtime avoided and returning to an original mantra, ensure the lowest cost per tonne produced which has the long-term promise of renewed contracts.

"Dealing with the sales force at Bell Equipment has been a pleasant experience as they kept us informed of developments along the way in terms of our equipment's build and delivery," Tlepe says. "We're hearing good things from the broader market about other products that Bell Equipment offers, especially the Kobelco Excavators. And yes, should we look to expand our fleet of ADTs, we think Bell Equipment would be part of that too."

