

Sindane Mining Ventures invests in a new Bell TLB

Giving up a ten-year long career in investment banking is a decision that cannot be easy to take unless it's driven by an overwhelmingly and fervent desire to be self-employed in a totally different field, such as working in mining and civil construction.

This is precisely what happened to Richy Sindane who, after spending a decade helping other people's dreams come true, decided it was high time he did the same for himself. Armed with a post-graduate qualification in finance, banking and investment management, Richy set about creating his own business, Sindane Mining Ventures in Waterval Boven, the town of his birth.

"This was back in 2014 and I felt confident that with my experience in banking and investment management, I could make a proper go of entering a challenging new field," Richy says. "I brought in my mother, Rita Sindane, a retired teacher, as the majority shareholder. My sister, Nokuthula, who has always had an entrepreneurial streak, is also a shareholder and handles human



Managing Director: Sindane Mining Ventures, Richy Sindane (left) with the company's Contracts Manager, Nkosinathi Mponshana and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Carel Venter.

resources and safety compliance. She adds great value as she is a trained health and safety practitioner and offers this service to other contractors."

It was however not all plain sailing and the Sindanes had to market their business for almost two years before being awarded their first contract. Starting out with a CIDB rating of 1, the young company landed a subcontract supplying equipment to a pipeline project in neighbouring Machadodorp.

"We were suddenly faced with having to hire in equipment to keep our side of the bargain and our choice was two well used machines, a Bell HD1430 Excavator and a Bell 315SG Tractor Loader Backhoe (TLB)," Richy adds. "Although both machines performed admirably under the circumstances, the Bell 315SG TLB had already done 10 000 hours and needed some major maintenance to keep going. This we did and subsequently bought the machine from its previous owner."

Richy believes buying the older Bell 315SG TLB was a good investment as it helped to get the company established in the area and contributed to more work flowing in. Over a three-year period, the machine proved reliable and now with the backing of a higher CIDB rating of 4, the company landed regular work with the Emakhazeni Local Municipality doing road repair and construction, maintaining storm water infrastructure and looking after five landfill sites. The Emakhazeni Municipality encompasses Waterval Boven, Machadodorp, Belfast and Dullstroom in Mpumalanga.

As a young company, Sindane Mining Ventures had evolved and grown in knowledge and experience, and in a short while moving from a CIDB rating of 1 to 4 and then to an impressive 8 rating. "My experience in banking gave me the knowledge to recognise the importance of surrounding myself with quality people," Richy explains. "As an example, we employ three civil engineers and we pay all our staff well. This means we get commitment from them, leading to projects being finished on time and on budget, which in turn leads to more work."

Sindane Mining currently has a core staff of only eight people with casual labour, numbering around 50, hired in from areas where work is undertaken.

More work has come in the form of subcontracting to the main contractor, improving and widening the N4 highway, a project which will provide work to Sindane Mining Ventures until 2022. Another project for relaying an 8km length pipeline was

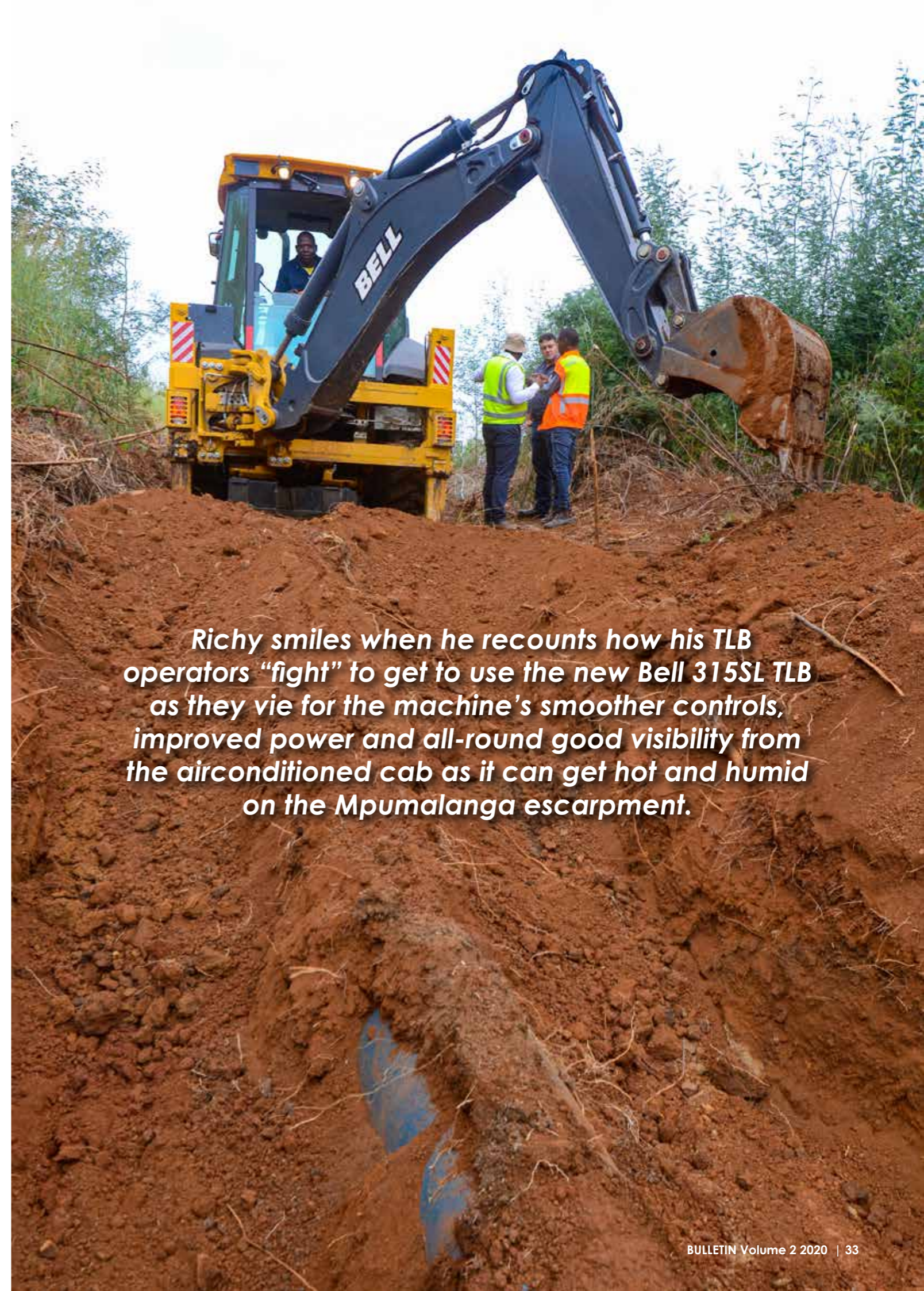
recently awarded to Sindane Mining and that was when Richy and his co-directors decided it warranted a brand new TLB.

"With us buying service kits, consumable and replacement parts from Bell Equipment in Middelburg, we had become familiar customers to everyone at the friendly Bell Customer Service Centre and when we decided to acquire a new TLB, our choice of a Bell machine was an easy one to make," Richy says.

The new machine, a Bell 315SL TLB, was delivered in February 2020 and put straight to work on a project where old asbestos piping is replaced by new HDPE piping. "The project has been accelerated and we need to finish earlier than originally planned but with the work rate of this new Bell 315SL TLB, we're confident of doing just that," Richy says. "We've also been impressed with its fuel consumption of between 6 and 8 litres an hour and we can see why Bell Equipment could justify fitting a slightly smaller fuel tank than on those older machines."

Richy smiles when he recounts how his TLB operators "fight" to get to use the new Bell 315SL TLB as they vie for the machine's smoother controls, improved power and all-round good visibility from the airconditioned cab as it can get hot and humid on the Mpumalanga escarpment. The Bell 315SL TLB's backhoe is used to expose the old pipe and to create launching pits which are dug 70m apart. In these pits, the pipe-busting or joining takes place and just like the actual trench where the pipe is situated, these launch pits all need to be backfilled, a task the Bell 315SL TLB with its generous 1 cubic metre front bucket is made for.

"As our company's name indicates, our long-term goal is still to find work in mining, especially in material handling in mining plants," Richy expands. "Mining companies however take you more seriously when you have a larger fleet of yellow equipment and to this end, I believe our next purchase should be a wheeled loader for which we will certainly look first at what Bell Equipment can offer us for the simple reason that with its excellent product offering, superb service and widespread technical backup footprint, one cannot go wrong with this proudly South African company."



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