

Bell opens its doors in Steelpoort

Down in the eastern limb of Southern Africa's platinum belt lies Steelpoort, a small town as mining towns go but when Bell Equipment opened a new Customer Service Centre there in September 2018, it did so in the most convincing of ways that many original equipment manufacturers can only dream of.

On the day of the opening function, two machines that were on display – a Bell 315SL Tractor Loader Backhoe and a 21-ton Kobelco SK210 Excavator - were sold to two individual buyers while a third customer bought spare parts to the value of R110 000.

The positive mood this flying start created was carried forward by Duncan Mashika, Managing Director of Bell Equipment Africa Sales and Distribution, when he said: "Our company has long subscribed to the mantra of strong reliable machines backed by strong reliable support and that's why we are here in Steelpoort, to offer reliable backup to the machines that we've sold."

He went on to tell the group of some 60 invited guests who attended the function that when he joined Bell Equipment in May 2018, one of the first things he bought for his office was a large map of the country. "This was so that I could see where our footprint was and where we could improve our presence. We cannot offer service and backup when we're not in the right place and because of that we'll welcome any input from our customers to tell us what we're doing right and where we could improve. We're committed to having the correct parts for you, where and when you need them."

John Fleetwood, Bell Equipment General Manager Central Region, echoed Duncan's words when he emphasised that the company had established the new Customer Service Centre to ensure that machine downtime was reduced for customers.

"This triangle created by Steelpoort, Burgersfort and Lydenburg is densely populated with machines manufactured, sold and backed by Bell Equipment as they work in a variety of industries such as mining, smelters, material handling, construction and concrete batching plants," he said. "Even though many of the

companies working in the area hail from Middelburg or even Johannesburg, it is imperative that we are as close as possible to the equipment to service and repair it when necessary."

In increasing its service footprint, Bell Equipment's decision to establish the Steelpoort CSC drew much positive sentiment from invited guests as well.

Steelpoort falls in the Fetakgomo/Greater Tubatse Local Municipality and the Municipality's Fleet Manager, Malepe Lazarus, was excited at the prospect of having a Bell Equipment CSC on their proverbial doorstep. "We run six Bell Graders and seven Bell Tractor Loader Backhoes. Keeping them in good running order is our primary concern in our quest to offer our citizens quality service delivery. We feel that having the new Bell Equipment CSC in Steelpoort will really aid us in this and it is our fervent hope that the branch will grow bigger."

A representative from the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Phashe Raphiri, added: "We as the Limpopo Department of Public Works have a large fleet of earthmoving equipment, mainly graders and Bell Equipment's machines make up over 75% of those numbers. This Steelpoort branch will definitely make it easier and more cost effective for our machines to be serviced and repaired in this challenging landscape."

The Bell Equipment Steelpoort CSC has a personnel count of four who will be supported by Bell Equipment in Tzaneen. Bell Product Support Representative, Francis Mafuma, will lead the small team assisted by one field mechanic with an assistant and Frida Masekoameng, who will run the parts division.

