

Bell Germany Factory expansion on track for mid-2019 completion

The extension of Bell Equipment's Eisenach-Kindel facility in Germany, the company's European Articulated Dump Truck assembly plant, is fully underway following a ceremonial ground-breaking ceremony in late June.

Scheduled for completion in mid-2019, the Phase II extension will add two new halls totalling 12 000m² that will triple the available floor space and provide capacity for bin fabrication and future expansion.

The Eisenach-Kindel factory opened in 2003 as the company's first production facility outside South Africa. Situated in the heart of Europe, the factory not only offered the best access to the existing established Bell markets in Western Europe but has also proved to be an ideal base for emerging Eastern European markets. Additionally, the closer proximity to Bell Equipment's European technology partners and suppliers of drive and control components minimised lead times, improved cost structures and optimised flexibility in terms of production planning.

The initial 10 hectares of greenfield ground at the newly converted industrial area was acquired by Bell initially to accommodate a 6 000m² ADT assembly plant based on importing core fabricated components from the main Bell Factory in Richards Bay, South Africa and sourcing of European manufactured parts direct from suppliers. This factory assembles Bell ADT models, from the smaller trucks to the giant 50-tonner, the assembly line was designed for a maximum output of 20 units a week in a three-shift operation.

The introduction of the Bell E-series generation of trucks and the company's re-entry into the United States and Canadian marketplaces have resulted in increased demand

and the facility now runs two shifts with a staff complement of 140 employees.

Long-term perspectives

To further optimise flexible reaction to customer needs and to better optimise transport logistics and general production efficiencies the company continues to invest in its European footprint. The new European Logistics Centre (ELC), which opened in September 2017 was the first development to support the improving Northern Hemisphere markets. The establishment of its American counterpart, the American Logistics Centre (ALC), to support the rapidly growing Bell dealer network and truck population in the U.S. and Canada is also now operational. Both new bases improve regional customer and dealer support through best parts availability while also optimising worldwide procurement in collaboration with the Bell Global Logistics Centre (GLC) in Johannesburg.

A parallel phase of the company's long-term development plan includes the incorporation of more componentry fabrication to the European factory. The selection and scope of modules and componentry to be fabricated at Eisenach-Kindel follows a detailed evaluation of lead-times, flexibility and ultimately ability to best meet

customer expectations.

Bin fabrication will be the first to be relocated as it has the largest impact in terms of sourcing and transport costs. Almost all high-quality steels for the various bin structures are sourced from European suppliers so the newly established bin fabrication in Eisenach-Kindel will significantly reduce working capital, shipping and stocking complexity. Customisation closer to market is also a significant benefit.



With her presence at the ground-breaking ceremony, State Secretary Valentina Kerst, Ministry of Economy Land Thuringia, underlined the importance of Bell Equipment's commitment for the regional economy. Since 2003 Bell has cooperated closely with the regional development agency LEG Thuringia.



The new 12 000m² factory extension at the Bell ADT plant in Eisenach-Kindel will be operational in mid-2019.



The new extension will be aesthetically integrated into the site's modern industrial architecture.



Bell Management, project partners and state officials attended a ceremonial ground-breaking in late June. From left: Andreas Heinrich, Managing Director: Bell Germany; Aldo Mayer, Director: Global Sourcing and Strategic Projects, Leon Goosen, Group Chief Executive Officer; Christian Weiß, Project Manager Goldbeck-Ost (Construction); Gary Bell, Group Chairman; State Secretary Valentina Kerst; Udo Schilling, District Wartburgkreis; Andreas Krey, LEG Thüringia; Mayor Bernhard Bischof, Hørselberg; André Krings, Managing Director and Head of Production at Bell Eisenach-Kindel.