

## Hot mixes ready on time for fast track N7 project

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BRANCHES COUNTRYWIDE

*Much Asphalt's contractors tipping asphalt for Rand Roads' pavers. (Inset) Laying the BTB.*



Much Asphalt was awarded the contract to supply 61 000 tons of various hot mixes for the R60-million, fast track N7 contract outside Cape Town.

And, because the road was considered a priority, funds were

25 000 tons of COLTO BTB overlay, 16 500 tons of Bitumen Rubber Asphalt (BRA), 8 000 tons of 9.5 mm Ultra Thin Friction Course (UTFC) surfacing and 9 000 tons of 13,2 mm UTFC.



### ***It was crucial that all contractors worked as a team . . .***

expropriated from the Department of Public Works for the Roads Directorate of the Provincial Administration Western Cape (PAWC) and strict provisions were put into place to ensure the project's completion within four months.

However, unexpected delays in the awarding of the contract led to work only being started in February, cutting the amount of time available for the job down from a very tight four months to three. It is expected to be completed by the end of May.

According to Garth Miller, branch manager of the Contermanskloof plant, the company will be supplying 2 500 tons of Bitumen Treated Base Course (COLTO BTB) for mill and fill patchwork,

In terms of the contract all the hot mixes had to be performance validated by Specialist Road Technologies (SRT), Stellenbosch University and the CSIR and sophisticated tests such as the Model Mobile Load Simulator (MMLS), Gyrotory, Wheel Tracking and the Four Point Beam fatigue test had to be carried out.

According to Garth, the MMLS testing on the UTFC mixes was particularly noteworthy as it was necessary to construct a BTB slab, covered with a UTFC slab, which was compacted to the required construction densities.

To do this the two slabs were specially constructed on site at Much Asphalt's Contermanskloof Plant and a Model

Mobile Load Simulator (MMLS) machine - valued at more than R650 000 - and three technicians were specially brought to Cape Town from Durban to carry out the required tests.

"The results of the tests, which took just over two weeks to carry out, helped the engineer responsible for the project to specify the exact, correct mixes," says Garth. *Continued on page 2*



A Murray & Roberts company



*Much Asphalt chief executive Phillip Hechter.*

*Continued from page 1*

To achieve these special mixes, complex hitech aggregate had to be imported from a quarry in Worcester, 120 kilometres away, and two different types of 13mm aggregate also had to be sourced.

In total Much Asphalt supplied between 100 and 120 tons of asphalt every day for the mill and fill operation which covered the whole contract construction area, while a further 830 tons was supplied on a daily basis over two weeks for the BTB overlay. The BRA overlay used 650 tons of hot mix per day and the UTFC operation – which was handled by Murray & Roberts as a subcontractor to Rand Roads – needed 300 tons per day climbing to 450 and then dropping to 325 tons per day.

At the peak of the contract Rand Roads used two paving teams on site and Murray & Roberts added a third team for a short period.

"The contract stipulated that the contractor could only close off 2.5 km of the road every day and that all road closures had to be opened for traffic at the end of each day. This stipulation, and the speciality mixes needed on site, made it crucial that all the contractors working on the project worked as a team to ensure the complicated material handling logistics were under control and working well," says Garth.

*It seems unbelievable that the 1st Quarter of 2004 has now past.*

*Since the last Surface Talk so much has happened in the life of Much Asphalt and its people that I think it is only proper that we take some time to reflect on some of the major issues.*

*Firstly, there was the exercise of re-branding Much Asphalt, in terms of aligning our brand with that of Murray & Roberts. The Murray & Roberts name and logo, wherever it is heard or seen, represents world class products, delivery and service. We are very proud to be part and a parcel of a company which has such an enviable reputation. Wherever the Much Asphalt logo appears in public, the Murray & Roberts logo will accompany it. By association we too will be seen to represent the world-class standards, which is the accepted norm of our parent company.*

## **BENCHMARK**

*We embrace this challenge of benchmarking ourselves against world best practices and acknowledge that we should not become complacent but strive to ensure that the outcome of all our effort shows continuous improvement.*

*In terms of world class practices, I am proud to report that in June 2003 Much Asphalt was awarded an umbrella ISO 9001 – 2000*

*accreditation covering all the company's operations. We are the first asphalt manufacturer in the country to achieve this accreditation.*

*On the 28th February, we supplied the final tonnages required on the contract to rehabilitate the Johannesburg International Airport's main runway. In total our teams supplied more than 125 000 tons of asphalt over a seven-month period, working at night six days a week for the entire duration of the contract. To say that this was a project of world-class proportions, and that we can be very proud of our achievements on this contract, is an understatement. I am sure that all the parties involved on this contract have gained further respect for Much Asphalt and our ability to deliver on world-class projects*

## **CHALLENGES**

*However, the Much Asphalt team will not stop to smell the roses. A new year brings new challenges and we must continue to strive to widen the gap between our competitors and ourselves. In this regard we are busy implementing some exciting new projects. These include:*

- The design and installation of a twin drum asphalt plant at our Roodepoort site. This will introduce drum plant technology never before seen in South Africa and at the same time it will affirm our commitment to having environmentally friendly facilities.*
- Much Asphalt is also on schedule to achieve SANAS accreditation for our Central Laboratory at Eerste Rivier. Once again this will be a first for asphalt manufacturers in*

*South Africa and it will ensure that our plant technology is backed by a superior quality assurance system.*

- Much Asphalt has recently taken delivery of a high-tech, state-of-the-art portable asphalt plant. This is an exciting new initiative, which will enable us to compete effectively in markets that require mobility – a potential growth area for the company.*

## **STRONGER**

*Much Asphalt has had its problems and we cannot wish them away. They have been daunting and are proving to be a true test of our character. However we have, and continue, to learn enormously from these issues which will be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Much Asphalt, as a company, can only be stronger and wiser as a result of the challenges we have faced.*

*We are however, more than just new technology and the delivery of world-class projects. We are, always, about people and I am proud to say that it is our staff who have made the company what it is today.*

*I am extremely privileged to be part of such a dedicated and committed team and the company in turn commits itself to ensuring that its people are given every opportunity to enhance and develop their skills level thus ensuring personal growth whilst at the same time adding value to Much Asphalt.*

*In closing, I can categorically state that: "Much Asphalt is Powered by People" and that it will always be so.*

# Angola visit an 'eye-opener'



*South African company Group Five is currently constructing a huge housing development just outside Luanda.*

Angola is a war-torn country struggling to rebuild itself in the face of international apathy and internal chaos.

So says Much Asphalt marketing director, John Onraet, following his recent visit to the country with Wally Armstrong, marketing director for

economy to a virtual standstill and it is estimated that the country's immediate needs in terms of emergency infrastructure repairs alone would cost in the region of \$2-billion.

"While there can be no doubt that the country is struggling, we were left with the distinct impression that the Angolans were keen to form partnerships and joint ventures with South African companies, with a particular focus on skills transfer," says John, adding that the sheer size of the national debt has so far deterred foreign investors.

According to John, the visit was incredible and people unforgettable. However he also believes that we would have to think long and hard before we deploy our people, equipment and skills in the country.

## ISSUES

"Issues such as non-payment, corruption and a lack of support structures need to be addressed before we can invest in this country and, we also have to consider our employees health and wellbeing," he says.

One possible route to follow would be to align Much Asphalt with another South African contractor, who already operates in Angola.

"We would have to address the issues of payment and employee health first," he says.

## Paving the way at uShaka

The rejuvenation of Durban's notorious Point Precinct is well on its way, with the final phase of the asphalt surfacing of the roads in the uShaka Marine World – considered the hub of the entire rejuvenation project - having been completed in March.

Phambili Surfacing, working in alliance with Much Asphalt, supplied 1 000 tons of continuously medium graded asphalt for the surfacing of the project's roads.



*The new R700-million uShaka Marine World - formerly SeaWorld - which is expected to attract more than 1,4-million visitors when it opens its doors to the public this month.*



According to the company's regional manager for KwaZulu-Natal, Daryl Jorgenson, the intricate nature of the project and its stringent terms, made the manufacture and supply of the asphalt particularly difficult in terms of logistics. "The co-ordination of all the different facets required by such a challenging project, including the very strict time constraints and complicated detail, placed a lot of pressure on the KwaZulu-Natal team.

"In spite of these constraints we were able to provide best quality asphalt, which matches world class

standards, on time and within budget. We were very proud to be involved in this project which we believe, will be integral in promoting Durban and KwaZulu-Natal itself as a premier tourist destination," he says.

The R700-million uShaka Marine World project, which will be opened to the public this year, comprises an oceanarium, a waterpark and retail village. It also includes some 350 metres of beach frontage and is set to house the headquarters of the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR).

Rocla, another Murray & Roberts company, and several other interested South African businessmen.

"Notwithstanding the tenuous peace accords it has established with its neighbours, Angola is still in dispute with the DRC and shelters thousands of refugees. Similarly there are thousands of Angolans living in South Africa. Combine this constant flux of people with the current influx of people from the rural areas into the cities and you get the situation where the country's capital, Luanda – which is geared to handle a population of 500 000 – has more than five million inhabitants. The ensuing chaos is staggering," he says.

Although the country has wealth in the form of oil and diamonds it is, says John, largely exploited by foreign companies and there is little positive cash flow to the Angolan economy.

Coupled with the country's huge war-related debt, this has resulted in bringing the

## U-con up and running



## Pomona interchange upgraded

Traffic congestion has meant that all work being done on the Pomona/Atlas Road interchange on Johannesburg's East Rand has had to be done during off-peak hours.

As a result Much Asphalt in Benoni can only supply asphalt between 9am in the morning and 3pm in the afternoon

According to Willem Erasmus, Benoni's branch

will supply about 8 000 tons of continuously graded medium asphalt. We have already supplied 5 000 tons of this for the Pomona/Petit interchange and will be supplying a further 2 000 tons of black base (BTB) and 2 400 tons of Novachip – a proprietary product - asphalt. Black Top, the surfacing contractor on site, will chip and spray the medium grade asphalt we



manager, his team is supplying continuously graded medium asphalt and a Styrene Butadiene Styrene (SBS) modified SMA.

Rand Roads Grinaker LTA is the contractor on site and Much Asphalt will supply a total of about 30 000 tons of asphalt for this contract as well as 9 000 tons of the modified SMA.

"For Atlas Road itself we

supplied," says Willem, adding that the team expects to be off site by December this year.

Work started on the contract in October 2000 and has been a particularly complex contract due to the restrictions imposed by heavy traffic and the construction of the new bridge and off and on ramps for the highway.

*Due to heavy traffic flow, work on the Pomona interchange is being carried out during off-peak hours.*

Three years ago Much Asphalt was the first company in the Western Cape, from the civil engineering sector, to submit its Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) in the construction Seta (CETA).

Since then the company has consistently exceeded its planned training schedules as set out in its WSP and it regularly receives more than 70% of its training levy back in the form of rebates.

According to Ayden Volbrecht, Much Asphalt's training co-ordinator, all the company's staff attend at least one training session a year

will form an important part of the selection and evaluation process. After a thorough assessment employees will be placed on the correct levels of qualification which will ensure they can successfully achieve a national recognised qualification.

Much Asphalt also has a policy of taking on Technikon students to do their in-service training and has employed a number of these students in trainee management positions.

Other focus areas include mechanical and individual training as well as management development. Twenty members of staff are currently registered with the Murray & Roberts Management Development programme and the company recently developed a training centre in Port Elizabeth, specifically for internal technical training.

Says Ayden: "Our successes to date have included the development and successful implementation of an induction programme as well as a hot mix asphalt course and a very effective Aids and peer education programme."

According to Much Asphalt's CEO, Phillip Hechter, the company's priority is not only technical excellence but also excellence in people.

"While we benchmark our technology and plants against world best practices we are also committed to ensuring that our staff's skills are continuously upgraded. Superior plants, driven by world class technology and manned by skilled people sets the standard at Much Asphalt."

**Training today  
for a better  
future tomorrow**

and more than 1 100 training interventions have taken place over the past three years.

"Much Asphalt's senior management is very committed to the training and development of all staff and supports the training initiatives," he says, adding that the company is entering a particularly exciting phase with the introduction of Learnerships and Skills Programmes.

The Learnerships and Skills Programmes, which will be open to everyone regardless of educational level and age, is specifically aimed at the Blacktop Industry and will concentrate on materials testing, plant operation and manufacturing. Recognition of prior learning (RPL), which includes all previous training and years of work experience,

Much Asphalt's PE plant has been hard at work supplying the asphalt for the various roads, which play a pivotal role in the billion-Rand Coega project.

The project's metallurgical cluster roads, which the company supplied 7 650 tons for, have been completed and work on Neptune Road is halfway completed. To date the company has supplied 4 900 tons for this road and by the end of April it will have been completed with a further 4 000 tons having been supplied.

Work has also started on the N2 intersection with 3 000 tons having been supplied to date and a further 17 000 tons on order.

Says Colin Brooks, PE's branch manager: "We have had no problems with the product we have supplied. It is a team effort of which we are extremely proud considering the short lead times and stringent requirements specified by the contractor."



For the past 44 years Benoni-based regional accountant, Geoff Gooderham, has been

managing Much Asphalt's financial matters - while quietly nursing a passion for trains in his spare time.

Durban born and bred Geoff, joined African Bitumen Emulsions 44

## Much Asphalt invests in US technology



*Much Asphalt has taken delivery of its first, highly mobile Nomad hot mix asphalt plant valued at around R3-million. Imported from the United States, the plant is made up of four portable trailer mounted units and has the capacity to produce 120 tons of hot mix asphalt per hour.*

### Paving the Aris to Windhoek highway

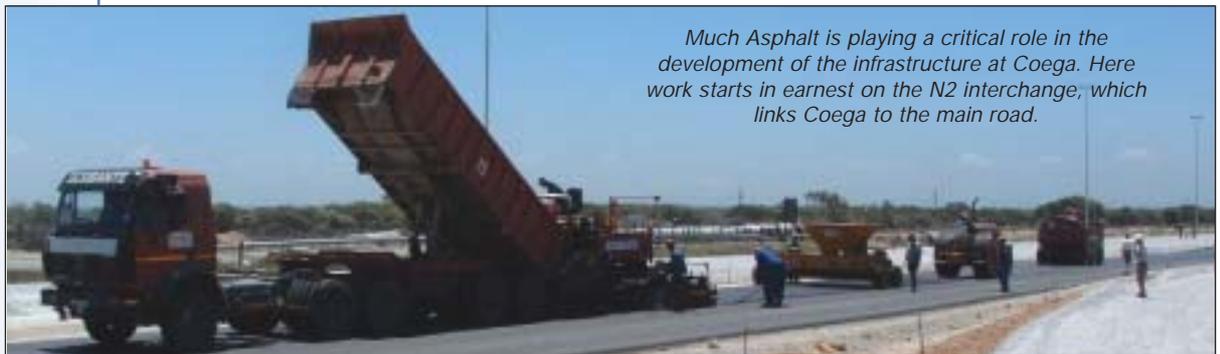
Much Asphalt (Namibia) supplied the 24 000 tons of asphalt needed to pave 22 kilometers of the Aris to Windhoek Road which recently underwent extensive rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The contract valued at R9-million, started in March last year and was completed in February this year.

Reconstruction of the road, which is situated 20 kilometers south of Windhoek, included the widening of four bridges and the construction of several stormwater pipes and culverts as well as 57 extensions to existing in-situ and precast culverts. Climbing lanes for a weighbridge and a traffic circle were also incorporated.

The original contract called for Cape Seal but was changed to 40 mm hot mix asphalt on top of a 300 mm recycled cement and emulsion treated base.

The main contractor on the job was Group Five Roads & Earthworks while Stewart Scott Namibia were appointed as the civil engineering consultants on the project.



*Much Asphalt is playing a critical role in the development of the infrastructure at Coega. Here work starts in earnest on the N2 interchange, which links Coega to the main road.*

### Much money man has a secret passion - for trains!

years ago in his home city. During a period of mergers and rationalisation he was transferred to the Colas head office in Isando. Thereafter he was appointed as financial director of Bitumen Services International (BSI) – a company set up by the Group - with the sole purpose of supplying bitumen to contractors in sub-Saharan Africa.

Although the company was closed down after five years due to its "high exposure risk," Geoff still describes those days as being the most memorable of his working life. "I met many

interesting people and visited places I would never otherwise have got to!

When BSI closed he joined the Much Asphalt team in Benoni, only to be seconded to Bloemfontein where he was tasked with carrying out an in-depth internal audit. For months he spent his weeks in Bloemfontein unraveling a web of financial intricacies in the emulsion business. On weekends he travelled back to Johannesburg to spend time with his family.

"The good thing about all that commuting is that I built up

enough Voyager miles to use it on my real passion in life – trains! For the past few years my wife and I have gone overseas to countries where I can experience a memorable train ride and my wife, Lorna, can enjoy the scenery."

Turning to his plans for his retirement next year, Geoff says he will concentrate on finding an interesting part time job, which with any luck will involve trains, to keep him busy. He also aims to spend more time with his wife Lorna and two children, Beverly (25) and Colin (18).

# from pillar to post



Elias Nkohla, (far left) who joined Much Asphalt's PE plant in August 1974, went on pension at the end of February but will still keep a hand in by working for the company, on contract, until the end of June. During this time he will train Joseph Sepkit (left) to take

over his responsibilities. Joseph was previously based at our George plant and also helped out in Botswana.

While it's a very sad goodbye to Elias, we would like to extend our best wishes to Joseph and wish him good luck in his new position!

On March 4th Benoni held a customer function at its premises to thank loyal customers and staff for their support and commitment to Much Asphalt. Needless to say a very good time was had by all!

*John Onraet, marketing director of Much Asphalt, Dr Fenella Long from CSIR Transportek and Jaco Liebenberg from Stewart Scott International.*



*Gautrans' Enrico Fletcher, Johan Pelsler from Black Top Holdings and Louis Walstrand from SRT.*



*Hennie Kotze from Sanral with Grinaker-LTA's Alan Reed and Gary Catin.*

*Bennie Greyling, Much Asphalt's Gauteng regional director, Tosas' Denzil Sadler and Much Asphalt's Tom van Rijckevorsel.*

Nathan Jacobs has been appointed manager of the East London branch.

He was appointed on November 1st last year and spent his first few months undergoing training in operations under the watchful eye of Colin Brooks in Port Elizabeth.

Nathan (27) who has a National Diploma in Civil Engineering worked for Group Five Roads and was responsible for various road, dam and pipeline contracts. He also spent three and a half years working on various road rehabilitation contracts in Zambia, the last as

site engineer on the 215 km Mpika-Kasama Reseal Contract in the Northern Province. Most recently Nathan was involved with the construction of the Cala-Elliot and Tsomo Ndabakazi Roads in the old Transkei area of the Eastern Cape as site engineer.



Benoni-based Bennie Greyling, regional manager of Gauteng, was recently appointed a director of Much Asphalt.



Over the past year many long standing members of staff were recognised for their dedication and commitment to the company.

## 15 years

- Contermanskloof
- Johnny Beukes
- Richard Jaggars
- Patrick Valentyn
- Coedmore
- Bongani Dladla
- Mhlakaza Ngubane
- Empangeni
- Nkunzebombu Gumede
- Jabulani Ngema
- Eerste River
- Jonathan Daniels
- Thomas Maflika
- Samuel Nkomfe
- Morgan Strydom
- Ladysmith
- Kevin Peterson
- Margate
- James Zungu
- Port Elizabeth
- Joseph Hess
- Colin Johnson

## 20 years

- Head Office
- Willis Machelm

## 25 years

- Head Office
- John Clarke
- Alec Rippenaar
- Ladysmith
- Slow Makofane
- Port Elizabeth
- Daniel Matinyane

## 30 years

- Benoni
- Tom van Rijckevorsel
- Coedmore
- Kenneth John
- Head Office
- John Onraet
- Margate
- Fana Khumalo

## 35 years

- Empangeni
- Solomon Bengu

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