

## editor's comment

# Pregnant with opportunities



Raymond Camping

A colleague of mine recently asked me whether I was pregnant and if so how many months? Strange, I thought, considering I am a man. Glancing down at my expanding waistline though and noticing that I can no longer see my toes over the bump I realised that maybe, just maybe, I have been enjoying the annual eventing season just a tad too much.

Anyway, to cut a long story short, I burped, broke wind and then scratched to make the point that I am a man and can't possibly be pregnant. Then, out of the blue, I replied that I was in fact pregnant with triplets, 13 months, and that I was expecting them any time now.

"You see," I continued, "since the recession started a year and a month ago we have all been waiting for the big day when Change will come along with Opportunity and Fortune." Why? The birth of more prosperous times is upon us judging from the many conversations that I have had (over a cup of tea and cream cake, ribs, beer or whatever). A few months ago reactionary plans were being laid, now proactive exciting new plans are being made.

The air is definitely filled with excitement and anticipation, and business people that I have had the pleasure of interacting with at the many events that have taken place in the last month no longer look worried and drawn.

In fact, in most instances I am sensing a bold, even aggressive, new energy among company decision makers and marketers to go out there and do battle.

It reminds me a little of the no nonsense approach that was fostered in the British population during the Second World War when then Prime Minister Winston Churchill's famous speech united and ignited the nation to "fight them on the beaches, fight them in the skies."

For those sceptics among you I will name some of the companies that spring to mind. If they are your competitors and you are still waiting for change to smack you in the face then be afraid be very afraid. Mercedes Benz springs to mind. At the launch of the all new Actros range of trucks company officials oozed confidence and are eager to get out there with the new product and flog the competition. They are expecting to make

good inroads into the market and further expand their market leadership and market share. Pan Mixer's Robert Eberling took the bold step to hold a market fair with all his suppliers and some customers exhibiting and showing off their goods. This was clearly not a cheap exercise, but was done in the face of some major international concrete equipment shows being cancelled. The investment paid off and over a thousand prospective customers attended – makes you think, doesn't it.

The inaugural GeoAfrica 2009 conference was held in Cape Town and was attended by hundreds of individuals from companies in the geosynthetics industry. Well established companies like Aquatan, Kaytech, Gundle and Golder Associates stepped out and made good contributions, but most notably a sea of new faces from companies in Europe, the Far East and the Americas were present and were asking all the right questions. All of them eager to break into the South African market and Africa. No shrinking violets there, just a bunch of foot soldiers that are taking the fight to the recession to deliver Change, Opportunity and Fortune. ■