

# Show stopper

Electra Mining Africa attracted a large number of local and international exhibitors.



The 19<sup>th</sup> Electra Mining show has come and gone – the biennial event attracted a large number of international and local visitors this year.

Electra Mining Africa 2010 was a hive of activity, from October 4 to 8, when international exhibitors and visitors descended on the MTN Expo Centre at Nasrec, Johannesburg, for the biennial event.

As *Mining Mirror* predicted in the Electra Mining preview in the September and October editions, the event was essentially a showcase for small to medium-sized equipment.

Across the showground, the biggest equipment to be seen was mainly from Chinese manufacturers, such as Sany, which displayed a limited array of mobile cranes and perhaps a loader or two.

Visitors expecting to see massive ADTs and excavators would have been disappointed as the major equipment suppliers to the South African mining sector, such as Caterpillar and Atlas Copco, among others, were not represented there at all.

Although some heavy-equipment suppliers were at the show, many chose not to display their biggest equipment due to the cost of transporting the

machines to the show, renting a space for display and the relatively unsecured rate of return on the investment.

"We missed Bell Equipment, Volvo, Komatsu and Caterpillar at the show but there was some fairly big equipment," John Kaplan, CEO of Specialised Exhibitions (organiser of Electra Mining), tells *Mining Mirror*. "However, this was countered by the larger number of medium-sized exhibitors."

The show focused mainly on companies which provide services and more moderately sized equipment to the industry – hundreds occupied indoor stands in Nasrec's hangar-sized halls. From a full range of basic products and services to some obscure and highly innovative technologies, the 19<sup>th</sup> Electra Mining covered all.

## THE 2010 TURNOUT

Since its inception more than 38 years ago, the Electra Mining exhibition has grown tremendously. In 1972, less than 50 exhibitors occupied around 1 500 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space. The show has since

experienced remarkable growth with exhibitor and visitor records broken in 2002 and 2004, and again in 2008 when more than 41 000 visitors attended – up from 35 000 in 2006 with more than 700 exhibitors from 15 countries.

Covering an area of 35 000 m<sup>2</sup>, this year's show was the biggest Electra Mining in terms of size – up from 30 000 m<sup>2</sup> in 2008. This exhibition space was completely sold out.

A number of exhibitors tell *Mining Mirror* that they will be back to exhibit again in 2012. Kaplan confirms this by stating that a number of exhibitors have already booked stands for the next event – some did so even before the 2010 show started.

However, visitor attendance was down this year in comparison with the 41 000+ record attendance of 2008. "It is always difficult to break records," says Kaplan. "This year's attendance was probably somewhere around 34 000. We normally have between 32 000 and 36 000. Why the 2008 show attracted over 41 000 is a mystery to me."



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## INTERNATIONAL INTEREST

The 2010 show attracted a variety of international delegations from countries like Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Peru, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Taiwan, Turkey, UK, Ukraine and the US, among others.

"It is exciting that this year's show has attracted such a high level of international interest which shows confidence and interest in our market," Kaplan states. "The international exhibitors see South Africa as a developing country with growth potential and a very strong player in the mining industry."

Dedicated exhibition facilities, which are the largest in Africa, are included in the multipurpose venue. Covered space is over 42 000 m<sup>2</sup> and there is an additional 80 000 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor, multipurpose space with several entrances and areas for parking up to 20 000 vehicles.

Government support was also strong with large stand areas occupied by the Australian Trade Commission and Canadian Association of Mining Equipment and Services for Export, as well as the French, German and US pavilions. France was represented for the first time this year. Chinese manufacturers also showed significant interest in Electra Mining as a platform to showcase their vast ranges of mining equipment.

The South African Capital Equipment Export Council (SACEEC) has organised inward buying missions for the past three Electra Mining shows to promote the purchase of mining and capital equipment internationally.

Sybil Rhonberg, MD of the SACEEC, who managed the inward buying mission at this year's Mining Electra, tells *Mining Mirror* that most foreign delegates found significant value in the event and the

facilities provided for networking. "The one-on-one matchmaking meetings were received exceedingly well," she says. "Bear in mind that most of these deals are big, and it may take months before the fruits are actually seen but the seeds have been sown."

A "meet-the-buyer" campaign, introduced for the first time at the 2008 show, provided a sophisticated meeting service for visitors and exhibitors. All exhibitor profiles were captured on a database system before the event and matched to visitor profiles; enabling visitors and exhibitors to set up business meetings in advance.

"South Africa's reputation has wilted in many other parts of the world so visitors from other countries have no idea what to expect," Rhonberg states. "But, when they are confronted by the industry in South Africa, they are most impressed, particularly with South African mining techniques, safety methods and the like."

Locally, Electra Mining seems to be losing importance but gaining stature internationally, she finds. "The local market is rather constrained at the moment – mostly because of political uncertainty. There are not as many big projects so producers are forced to look internationally to keep their businesses going."

## ATTRACTIONS

Gone are the days when Electra Mining's main attraction was a variety of heavy mining equipment. Over the past few shows, the trend has shifted towards exhibitors displaying their wares in more innovative ways instead of simply parking a truck in a lot (which could prove to be a hugely expensive endeavour).

New trends are emerging constantly, such as experiential and entertainment elements which have been incorporated

into exhibitions such as Electra Mining more and more over the past few years. This "edutainment" encourages visitors to really experience what's on show with simulation booths and outside demonstration areas.

"The economic downturn has tightened budgets but this has propelled more creative and effective use of marketing resources which has, in turn, resulted in a successful exhibition attracting good-quality visitors with purchasing power," says Kaplan.

A challenge for the local industry is the increase in international exhibition organisers looking to South Africa as a market. Local players need to protect their products and brands.

"However, the international interest could also be an opportunity," says Kaplan. "We have partnered with international investors to bring new shows and investment into the local industry."

For example, Amada Johannesburg showed the latest in its sheet metal technology, with active demonstrations throughout the show.

Local mining industry supplier SMT Scharf Africa exhibited its flagship product for hard rock for the first time. Scharf's Electric Monorail Transport System operated throughout the show.

Other displays had interactive TV displays, working models of equipment and product demonstrations.

Afrox adopted a "World of Welding" theme this year. Visitors were able to interact with touch-screen displays and view some of the latest in welding techniques presented on the live welding-demonstration bench.

Pan Mixers South Africa showcased its range of block and brick-making machines in a series of live demonstrations which included the launch of the Fiori mining dumper. It also showed off



its Fiori self-loading concrete mixer which comes fully equipped with an on-board weighing system which allows the user to weigh aggregates before they are loaded. It also displayed its Sermac range of concrete pumps from Italy which claims to be the first road-legal 36 m concrete pump in South Africa.

The Immersive Technologies stand had a fully operational simulator for use in training heavy-machinery operators. Visitors were afforded the opportunity to try the simulator throughout the duration of the show.

## NEW PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

With so many exhibitors and so many products and services on display, it was not possible to see all of them.

However, a few interesting new products and technologies seen by *Mining Mirror* are discussed briefly here.

Bearing Man Group (BMG) showcased a range of newly acquired products, including energy-efficient components for power transmission – designed to reduce electricity consumption. BMG Hydraulics displayed new variable and fixed-displacement pumps, industrial and mobile valves, accumulators, low- and high-speed motors, and cylinders. BMG Filtration showed new products which utilise rare-earth magnetic ferrous contamination-control technology.

Polysius exhibited its Polab automatic sample-preparation module which is the smallest laboratory-automation system in the world, as well as the laboratory-size Polycorn high-pressure grinding roll.

Rand Technical Services displayed Procon's belt-weighing technology. The Procon Inflo belt weighers operate without load cells which could result in stable operation over extended periods, and they require little or no calibration.

AC/DC Dynamics launched its new catalogue for electrical distributors and manufacturers. The previous edition was considered an industry standard – the company's 2010/2011 catalogue is almost 50% larger with many new additions.

Green technologies were abundant in this year's show. AC/DC Dynamics showed its latest solar and wind generators. The solar generators were not only available in fixed panels but also in the form of flexible rolls which makes it easy to transport and deploy.

VFP Fuelling & Filtration launched a new Velcon contaminant analyser (VCA) unit at the show this year with demonstrations of the new unit on the company's stand. The VCA uses laser-sensing technology to ensure that fuel used in machinery is clean and dry. In the event of wet or dirty fuel, the system can act as a final-stage quality check downstream of last filtration, shut down the fuelling operation and alert the user.

Yes Tools launched a flange-type body which reduces vibration in deep-hole drilling or drilling of structural steel.

Powermode introduced five single-phase UPS systems from 1 kVA to 20 kVA. This Q-On S-series features a double-conversion online system which converts input AC mains supply to DC power for battery charging.

Talmac Machine Tools launched its first-ever Italian products at the show this year. The range includes brands such as Faccin, Gasparini, Omera and Rolleri which were included in the display and have been made available to the South African market.

SMT Scharf Africa also exhibited two of its new product ranges in southern Africa; the Pfeifer Drako which entails the manufacture and supply of steel wire rope to the mining industry, and its Planeta lifting equipment, including lever

hoists, chain hoists, rope pullers as well as winches.

SEW Eurodrive launched its new DR-series motors in May 2010. It exhibited these products at Electra Mining. Independent of the required energy-efficiency class, these motors are available at all levels of efficiency.

Pacific Mining launched its new water hammer at Electra Mining this year. The water hammer apparently drills smoother, straighter holes with less noise and vibration than conventional drills. It has been manufactured for deep-hole underground drilling and operates at a lower cost than conventional drills.

Harp Machine Tools introduced its new SMTCL VMC850P which has a table size of 1 000 mm x 500 mm and a top speed of 8 000 rpm. It also exhibited the SMTCL turning centre, horizontal boring mill, radial drill with a 2 500 mm radius and centre lathe with a swing of 930 mm x 5 000 mm between centres.

FB Crane Builders & Repairs displayed its new product line of TBM and Amandla steel wire-rope hoists, electric chain hoists, chain and lever blocks, geared and plain crawls, rope pullers, beam clamps, plate grabs, electronic scales and remote-control systems.

Bridon International unveiled its latest innovation in dragline drag and hoist ropes, including its new Tiger BiGT Bristar which has been designed for use as drag and hoist ropes on dragline excavators working in opencast mining.

Becker displayed a range of new products, including EMIS Sales 2002 range of energy-distribution products for the mining sector. The latest patented Becker tri-technology collision-avoidance system was on display as well as the new Kito L5-series lever hoists.

Electra Mining Africa 2010 certainly offered visitors a showcase of note.



Some exhibitors were impressed with turnout while others found the show slow from beginning to end.



Photographs by Liam Fox

## FEEDBACK AND GENERAL SENTIMENT

Specialised Exhibitions was unable to give *Mining Mirror* exact figures and numbers of deals made during the Electra Mining show this year although it did confirm that it would release these details at a later stage – as soon as the findings could be researched thoroughly and collated properly.

*Mining Mirror* gauged from most exhibitors that it was similar to the year before albeit with a lower attendance rate. Some companies said the show was extremely busy while others said that it was rather quiet and slow. It was noted that the stands near the

entrances to the MTN Expo Centre seemed to attract a lot more activity than stands in the back ends of the various exhibition halls. "We generated a lot of leads in the right fields and it is now up to us to turn that into business," Tiaan Tromp, sales director for Becker Mining Systems, tells *Mining Mirror*. "The show also appeared to have a different feel. The previous shows were more sociable whereas it was more business-like this year. We had the guys at the correct level coming to see us."

Peter Guy, Hurco export sales manager, points out: "We generated many new contacts and interest in our local business, as well as servicing our

existing users and potential customers." Byrone Thorne, Rand-Air's marketing manager, says: "The show has definitely been a success for us – the mornings were busier than the afternoons but we had the right people coming to see us rather than general enquiries."

This is promising as previous comments, by companies such as Atlas Copco and Komatsu, which were not present at this year's show, were less than positive.

It would seem that, despite a lower turnout than previous years, Electra Mining 2010 was an overall success. The incentive remains for the show to continue into the future. ●