

ACEN NEWSLETTER

August 2010

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Civil construction sector could shed 25% more jobs – economist

The civil construction industry in South Africa has shed around 10 000 jobs over the last 12 months, says FNB chief economist **Cees Bruggemans**, with many more expected to follow.

He says employment in the industry peaked at around 160 000 people in the middle of 2009. With 10 000 jobs lost, he expects another 20% to 25% jobs to go before employment levels in the civil construction industry start stabilising.

“Our view is that growth

in turnover [in the industry] is heavily negative,” notes Bruggemans.

He says the level of employment of the civil construction industry is currently too high for the amount of work available.

Bruggemans expects employment in the industry to stabilise around the 100 000 to 120 000 job level.

The FNB quarterly report on the state of the civil construction indus-

try in South Africa, released last week, indicates that 67% of respondents to a survey on the subject regard business conditions as unsatisfactory.

The civil industry obtains 88% of its work from the government sector.

The survey shows that the scarcity of new construction work has caused margins to come under pressure, which adversely affects the growth in the overall profitability of businesses that participated in the survey.

By Irma Venter



SA to spend R14,5bn on integrated transport networks

In excess of R14,5-billion would be spent on the development of integrated rapid public transport networks (IRPTNs) in South Africa over a three-year period, Transport Minister **Sibusiso Ndebele** said on Wednesday.

More than R6-billion in funding has been committed to the development of such networks during the 2010/11 financial year, while a

further R8,5-billion would likely be committed for this purpose in the two years after that..

This would be in addition to the R25-billion that would be spent on improving South Africa’s passenger rail service over the next three years, said Ndebele.

“South Africa is fast on its way to becoming the first country in Africa to have rapid public transport net-

works. It is going to change the face of this country and will create more opportunities for work and tourism,” the Minister commented in a statement.

The IRPTNs are at the core of South Africa’s Public Transport Strategy (PTS), which is aimed at accelerating the improvement of public transport services for more than one-half of the country’s population.

These networks would introduce priority rail corridors and bus rapid transit systems in cities.

In the long term, the PTS was aiming to have 85% of a metropolitan city’s population within a kilometer of such a network.

By Chanel de Bruyn



LATEST NEWS ABOUT ACEN



ACEN AGM:

The Annual General meeting of the Association of Consulting was held on the 1st of July 2010 at the Fürstenhof Hotel. The event was a great success. The minutes of the meeting will be published on the ACEN web-site.

ACEN Website:

The ACEN website is updated recently.

All mandated principals should make sure that the information on the website is correct. Should there be a problem it should be reported to the ACEN office. The

web address is as follows:

www.acen.org.na

Finance:

Thank you to all the Membership firms for the payment of their ACEN Membership fees for 2010/2011. All Membership fees have been paid up to date.

YCEN (Young Consulting Engineers of Namibia):

A Facebook (Social Interactive Network) group under the YCEN name has been published. ACEN is trying to encourage young Engi-

neers around the world to interact with each other on a social level.

Executive Officer for ACEN:

It is with great pleasure that the ACEN Council announces their decision to appoint Mr. Pierré de Wet as the Executive Officer of ACEN.

Mr. Pierré de Wet will commence as the EO of ACEN as from Monday, 2 August 2010.

POST-WORLD CUP UPDATE

A survey released on Friday by market research company African Response found that 96% of World Cup visitors to South Africa said that they would possibly return to the country.

The survey included 722 tourists, interviewed in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria and investigated perceptions of the different elements of the South African experience, including roads, accommodation, stadiums, policing and safety, among others.

African Response MD **Beatrice Kubheka** said that the survey confirmed positive post-World Cup press regarding the success of the tournament and its implications for tourism and foreign investment.

Respondents rated the country's stadiums the highest in terms of elements contributing to the overall South African experience, with 87% rating their perception and experience at the stadiums as 'excellent' or 'very good'.

Kubheka noted that tourists interviewed in Johannesburg gave the highest rating at 91%, possibly owing to the impressive Soccer City stadium, followed by Durban and Cape Town.

The guests identified public transport and the conditions of roads as the areas in most need of improvement. Public transport was rated 'excellent' or 'good' by only 54% of tourist and the conditions of roads by only 57%.

Meanwhile, the country's airports also rated high at 84%, accommodation rated 78%, as did policing and security at the games, and even with a lot of negative pre-World Cup press, respondents still rated their perception of safety at a fairly high 67%.

Overall, 79% of respondents agreed with the statement that South Africa was well equipped to host the World Cup.

By Loni Prinsloo

Economic News: NAMIBIA

Strong commodity prices and a recovery in tourism should help Namibia's economic prospects, although lower regional customs revenue could weigh on the budget, a Reuters poll showed.

The economy contracted by 0,8% in 2009 as the global downturn hit mining revenues in Namibia, the world's fourth largest uranium producer and a major diamond producer.

A Reuters survey of 8 economists put growth for 2010 at a median of 3,5, quickening to a median of 4,0 percent in 2011.

Forecasts ranged from 1,7% to 4,5% in 2010 and 2,2% to 4,5% in 2011.

"With an uptick in commodity prices, global demand and tourism, we have revised upward our growth forecast" said Business Monitor International's Alan Cameron.

Namibia's economy's is an export oriented economy that relies heavily on uranium and diamonds.

The Bank of Namibia cut interest rates by 350 basis points between December 2008 and June

last year in an effort to stimulate demand.

The poll showed inflation is expected to average around 5,8% for 2010, before quickening to 7% in 2011.

Headline inflation has been on a downtrend this year. It slowed to 4,3% year-on-year in last month, its lowest level in more than three-years.

By REUTERS



INTERESTING FACTS ON ENGINEERING

Engineers solve practical problems by applying mathematical and scientific knowledge.

The word engineer comes from a Latin word meaning 'cleverness'.

As of 2010, the tallest building in the world is the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, UAE. It reaches an incredible 828 metres (2717 feet) in height.

The building of the Panama Canal, which links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, was one of the most difficult engineering projects ever. It is estimated that over 25000 workers lost their lives during the long and dangerous project, with most dying from disease and landslides.

Golf balls have dimples because they help reduce drag, this allows the ball to fly further than a smooth ball would.

Used for water distribution, the Delaware Aqueduct in New York, USA is the longest tunnel in the world (as of 2010). Drilled through solid rock, it reaches a staggering 137 kilometers (85 miles) in length.

The Hoover Dam, built along the Colorado River between 1931 and 1936 reaches 726 feet in height.

High speed passenger trains in China reach speeds of up to 350 kph (220 mph).

The London Eye in England is the largest Ferris wheel in Europe, standing at a height of 135 meters (442 feet).

The tallest wind turbine in the world has rotor tips that reach over 200 meters (656 feet) above the ground.

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Upcoming Events and

- **INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT SUMMIT: 21-22 OCTOBER, MELROSE ARCH, SA.**
- **RISK SUMMIT: 12-12 AUGUST 2010, JOHANNESBURG, SA.**
- **HOT MIX ASPHALT PRACTICE: 21-22 SEPTEMBER 2010, WINDHOEK.**
- **CT STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING CONFERENCE: 6-8 SEPTEMBER 2010, CAPE TOWN, SA.**
- **ENGINEERING ECONOMICS PROJECT MANAGERS WORKSHOP: 13–16 SEPTEMBER 2010, WINDHOEK.**
- **FIDIC CONTRACTS WORKSHOP: 15-16 SEPTEMBER, JOHANNESBURG, SA.**

GREEN ENGINEERING

Everyone has been affected by this economy, even with all the talk about green careers, all career fields are struggling. One cross section of the job market is a step ahead of others, engineers. People with engineering degrees may have the easiest time switching over their field to green careers. The popularity is growing partly because of government rebates and partly because of the forward thinking of engineers. Some of the most promising engineering markets are a direct result of the greening of jobs:

Thermal Engineer: In a practical work environment, the duties of a thermal engineer may include: design of various types of heaters, from air and water line heaters to applications like freeze protection and temperature control; thermal analysis for optimizing use of power; heat-related safety studies; simulations and predictions.

The work of a thermal engineer contributes greatly to worldwide efforts to find answers to questions having to do with renewable energy. For this reason, the job of a thermal engineer is on top of the green careers list.

Energy Engineer: Since the population and demand are still growing, an energy crisis could be looming. That's why energy engineers will soon be in demand. Energy engineering professionals can look into where we get our energy, how to produce it, and how to use it, allowing us to increase efficiency and reduce damage caused by our need for power. As more and more governments, companies, and organizations realize that they need to work on their energy use and production, more energy engineers are going to be needed.

With the popularity of going green continuously growing, the need for green engineers will continue to grow as well. If you are an engineer looking to change directions, then make sure to look green.