

KwaZulu-Natal T² to host the 2005 Africa T² Conference

The responsibility to host the 2005 Africa T² Conference was bestowed on the KwaZulu-Natal T² Centre at the conference preparation meeting held in Pretoria in February 2004. The 2nd Africa T² Conference is a follow up of the highly successful first conference held in Arusha, Tanzania in May 2001. The Africa T² conferences aim to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences amongst technology transfer centres in Africa and the rest of the world.

The 2nd Africa T² Conference will take place in Pietermaritzburg between 21st and 23rd September 2005 under the theme "Transport Technology Transfer for Africa's Renaissance". Papers will be invited on the following sub-themes:

- Technology transfer: challenges and opportunities
- Socio-economic aspects in transportation
- Integrated transport planning and management
- Appropriate innovations in transportation.

More details on the conference will be available in the 1st bulletin which is due soon. On-line information and the latest updates can be found in the official web site at www.kzntransport.gov.za or through Dr. Simon Oloo at Simon.Oloo@kzntransport.gov.za.

KwaZulu-Natal delegation visits Lesotho

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is poised to significantly expand its labour based construction activities to meet the objectives of the government's Expanded Public Works Programme.

The Expanded Public Works Programme will require supervisory skills in labour based construction that are currently lacking. In response to this need, the T² Centre is in the process of setting up labour based construction and maintenance training programmes and facilities.

The Department of Rural Roads, Ministry of Public Works and Roads of the Kingdom of Lesotho has operated a training facility in labour based construction and maintenance for many years. The training facility specializes in the training of engineers and technicians to supervise labour based construction and maintenance projects. In recent years, the Department of Rural Roads has also run a very successful labour based contractor development programme.



A delegation of officials from the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Transport undertook a study tour to the Lesotho Department of Rural Roads labour based training facilities between 24th and 26th May 2004. The delegation included Dr. S Oloo (Director: T² Centre), Mrs. J Blunt (Manager: T² Training Centre), Ms. G. Xaba (Deputy Director: Social Development) and Mr. H Shange (Responsible for construction and maintenance training at the T² Training Centre). The hosts were led by Mrs MC Pama, Chief Engineer, Department of Rural Roads and assisted by Mr B Seetsa, Senior Trainer.

Many fruitful discussions took place during the visit. The delegation derived a number of

useful ideas on the tour of the labour based training facility. The experiences and ideas gained in the tour will certainly add value in the development of the KwaZulu-Natal labour based training facility.

2004 Bridge Building Competition

As in previous years, the KwaZulu-Natal T² Centre supported the SAICE (Pietermaritzburg branch) annual bridge building competition through a donation of air tickets for the winning team to the national competition. This year's competition attracted 35 entries from schools located throughout the greater Pietermaritzburg district and surrounding towns.

St. Charles College were the winners in both the aesthetic and load category. Their model bridge carried a whopping 58 kg. Mphophomeni Secondary School was the runners up.

The model bridge building competition is unique in its ability to afford an opportunity for a wide range of schools from different backgrounds to come together in a friendly atmosphere of competition and excitement. The T² Centre is proud to be associated with its ideals.



Runners up Mphophomeni Secondary School receiving their prize.

Contract Management Course a resounding success!

The T² Training Centre developed a one day course on contracts management to address skills gaps amongst departmental technical staff in the areas of contract documentation, supervision and management.

The objectives of the course were to:

- Provide guidelines and procedures for the preparation of tender documents and award of tenders.
- Instil correct procedures to be followed during contract execution including measurements, payments quality control, claims and dispute handling.
- Highlight procedures to be followed on project completion.
- Raise important issues with respect to Vukuzakhe and annual contracts.

Subject area experts in the department were utilized in both the development and facilitation of the course. The course generated interest far beyond our initial expectations. Instead of the initially scheduled two sessions, a total of five sessions were run. Participants were drawn from amongst district superintendents, cost centre managers and consultants.

The T² Centre would like to thank Messrs: L. Sydenham; D. Bryan, B. Acutt; K. Ducasse; R. Maipath and K. Kuhn for their tireless efforts in making the course a success.

Train-a-Trainer Programme to be launched

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has undergone significant structural changes in the last ten years. Specifically, the department moved from an organisation that carried out its own maintenance and construction activities to one that increasingly outsourced such activities. In the past, the small proportion of work that was outsourced was given to large mainstream contractors with adequate resources and technical capabilities to implement them. During the last decade, the department has, not only outsourced the bulk of its construction and maintenance activities, but also outsourced to emerging contractors as part of the Vukuzakhe contractor empowerment programme. Vukuzakhe contractors are generally financially and technically poorly resourced and require a great deal of support from the department.

The large number of outsourced projects requires supervision and project management. The emerging contractors

also require management and technical support in order to run successful businesses and deliver on the outcomes of the projects. Because historically the department was not involved in this kind of work, it did not develop appropriate capacity to provide the required level of project management and supervision, least of all, emerging contractor support. The department relies on a group of consultants to provide the required capacity. However, most consultants are trained to act as agents of the client on a project. Since their construction skills are minimal, the support consultants have provided to emerging contractors has been largely inadequate. On the other hand, the large number of projects implemented has resulted in increased consulting costs.

Capacity constraints have limited the involvement of departmental staff in the supervision and management of projects. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the huge consulting costs can only be reduced if departmental staff acquire the necessary skills and capabilities to, not only supervise and manage projects, but also provide technical and business support to emerging contractors. In other words, the department needs to identify and adequately skill construction project managers from within its ranks.



The Train-the-Trainer programme is the brain child of the Head of Implementation, Mr. C. Hlabisa. It is intended to equip a target group of technical staff in the department with the necessary skills to

enable them competently supervise and manage construction projects, and at the same time, provide technical and managerial support to emerging contractors. The training programme combines competencies that traditionally reside with consulting engineers with those that contractors possess to achieve the required

product. There will be greater emphasis on hands-on training, practical exercises and on-site mentoring to ensure that the participants are truly competent in the required skills.

The possibility of linking the training to the SAQA process by registering learnerships for the NQF level 5 National Diploma in the Management of Civil Engineering Processes is under investigation.

Electronic tea claims – is it a first for T²?

As part of its internal training drive, the T² Training Centre held a series of computer literacy courses for its staff over the last 3 months. The intention was to uplift each staff member's computer literacy to a reasonable standard.

The courses, which included basic computer skills, Excel and Outlook, were held over 3 days for half a day allowing the staff to perform some of their daily tasks.

Instructors are now able to draw up their own spreadsheets, type correspondence and effectively use e-mail as a means of communication. The instructors have also acquired the skills needed to operate the T² Centre training bus, which is equipped with all the latest technology.

Not to be outdone, Ms N. Gwala, the tea lady, also attended the courses. She now compiles claims for tea and manages stock levels electronically.

Well done to all T²TC staff!!



Newly computer literate T²TC staff

Asphalt Academy and T² sign an MOU

The KwaZulu-Natal T² Centre recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Pretoria based Asphalt Academy. As part of the memorandum, the Asphalt Academy will provide reduced course rates for departmental staff in return for logistic, administrative and marketing support provided by the T² Centre. In addition, the Asphalt Academy has undertaken to:

- Collaborate with the T² Centre in the organization and facilitation of courses, seminars and workshops it offers in KwaZulu-Natal, and
- Assist the T² Centre with the formulation and development of courses to meet specific needs of the Department of Transport.

Besides broadening the base of courses available for the department and other practitioners in the province, the memorandum of understanding will significantly improve the quality of training in asphalt technology at the T² Centre.

Projects planned for 2004/05
In T²

The T² Centre will be engaging service providers to assist with the implementation of a number of projects during the 2004/05 financial year. A list of the more important projects is given below:

- Bridge condition inspections
- Visual condition assessment of the paved network
- Visual condition assessment of the gravel network
- Coverage 48 hr traffic counts on the network
- Axle load surveys
- Equipping the geotechnical laboratory
- Developing the quarry database
- Developing the gravel road construction and maintenance manual
- Developing of the construction project manager course.

Interested service provider can contact Dr. Simon Oloo on Tel: 33 355 8609 or by e-mail at Simon.Oloo@kzntransport.gov.za