

## ***No-Dig South Africa 2011***

### **Inaugural event gets off to a flying start**

by Caroline Prescott and Joop van Wamelen

**The first *No-Dig South Africa* conference and exhibition was held at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria, 23-24 August 2011.**



Organised by the Southern African Society for Trenchless Technology (SASTT) the exhibition and conference provided an excellent networking and educational forum for engineers to gather information and knowledge on the latest developments, techniques and equipment utilised in trenchless technology.

### **A high-profile official opening**

The conference was officially opened by the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane, Cllr K D Ramokgopa. During his opening speech he said that trenchless technology was “a breath of fresh air” and would doubtless benefit South African citizens as these technologies are utilised in the massive infrastructure programme being rolled out in the country. After his speech, he joined delegates to listen to an introductory overview of trenchless technology presented by the past chairman of the International Society for Trenchless Technology (ISTT), Dr Dec Downey.

Cllr Ramokgopa took time to tour the exhibition. With his engineering background, he displayed a keen interest in the exhibits, asking many questions on the technical capabilities of the equipment on display.

### **The conference programme**

The two day conference programme featured the ISTT’s masterclass programme, providing in-depth overview presentations on condition assessment, horizontal directional drilling, rehabilitation techniques and pipe bursting. The ISTT speakers were Dr Sam Ariaratnam, chairman of the ISTT and Dr Dec Downey.

Each of the masterclass sessions were supported by additional case-study presentations illustrating the challenges and solutions experienced when utilising each of the trenchless methods.

### **A notable exhibition**

Conference delegates and visitors were treated to an excellent display of equipment and services exhibited by more than 30 organisations. Joining the southern African based companies were exhibitors from Germany, Austria, United Kingdom, Singapore and Japan.

Gold sponsors of the event, Vermeer Equipment Suppliers, mounted an impressive display of its “Navigator” horizontal directional drilling (HDD) equipment, both on their indoor stand as well as outside.



*Executive Mayor Kgosientso Ramokgopa (second from right), flanked by SASTT president Andries Lötz and ISTT chairman Dr Sam Ariaratnam, having a good time at the No-Dig.*

Bronze sponsors Insitu Pipelines and Reef Trenchless Technology also supported their presence with outdoor displays of CCTV and HDD equipment respectively.

### **Networking - the trenchless way!**

The networking opportunities were relaxed and convivial, providing delegates and exhibitors with plenty of opportunities to mingle and chat. The outdoor deck, bathed in sunshine, provided the venue for the first day's buffet lunch. An informal cocktail reception was held among the exhibits to close the first day's proceedings.

Special networkers at the conference were the president and the secretary of the Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa, Jannie Pietersen and Debbie Anderson, who attended the conference as the special guests of SASTT. Mr Pietersen had hitherto been entirely unaware of trenchless technology but was very taken with the concept - and with the *No-Dig*.

### **Conclusion**

At the close of the event, the president of SASTT, Andries Lötz commented: "SASTT is delighted that *No-Dig South Africa 2011* has achieved its aim to provide a specialist forum for the trenchless-technology community in South Africa. We have undoubtedly raised the profile and awareness for the industry through this event and we are looking forward to welcoming new members to the society as a result of its success."

*No-Dig South Africa 2011* was organised on behalf of SASTT by UK based Westrade Group Ltd who are internationally known for their expertise in delivering trenchless-technology events in the UK, Middle East and Far East.

"It has been a pleasure to organise this inaugural event in South Africa and we are looking forward to working with SASTT to build on its success to deliver an even bigger event in 2013!" said event director Caroline Prescott.

When reviewing the event, the board of SASTT unanimously concurred that another *No-Dig South Africa* and ISTT masterclass must be held in 2013.

### **SASTT's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 28 February 2012**

The board of SASTT has agreed that the annual general meeting for 2012 must be held on Tuesday 28 February 2012, which is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inaugural meeting in Rosslyn in 1992.

An ideal way to mark this anniversary would be if a site visit could be held before the AGM. The venue of the AGM should then be close to the locality of the site visit. The meeting could be followed by a braai.

SASTT is seeking sponsorships for the anniversary event. SASTT has not seen a site visit for many years, for a variety of sad reasons. It would be wonderful to rekindle our early idealism and to make a new start!

### **Using the logo of SASTT**

One of the benefits of the corporate membership of SASTT is that members are entitled to display the logo of SASTT on their stationary and at their exhibition stands.

Some members do so consistently but the majority seem to be unaware of this prestigious privilege.

If members would like to mend their ways, they may write to the editor, who will send them a copy of the logo for use as discussed above.

## **Another benefit of SASTT membership**

SASTT has been recognised by the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) as a voluntary association. Among other things this means that SASTT is accredited by ECSA to assess the quality of papers at conferences and seminars for the purpose of awarding CPD points to engineering professionals.

It would be particularly appropriate if corporate members of SASTT were to utilise this benefit to add weight to events they wish to present. There is no longer a need to seek assessment outside of SASTT.

## **Successful lecture organised by SASTT**

### ***The current status of pipe survey work by Graham Beattie***

The event, held at Greenstone, Gauteng, was attended by nine people.

Graham gave an inspiring account of how his company had collaborated with the Tshwane University of Technology and the University of Pretoria to develop hardware and software for an economical home-grown device for the trenchless inspection of pipes, incorporating off-the-shelf acoustic; laser; and video devices. In the process, they had afforded a team of enthusiastic students internships with the company.

As usual, after the talk and questions had been completed, the audience spent more than an hour over snacks - swapping trenchless stories.

SASTT ought to be able to do more of this kind of thing. If *you* have something good to show or tell, please speak to the editor.

## **The annual drilling school of 2012**

The editor has been advised by Craig Burnie of Vermeer Equipment Suppliers (Pty) Ltd that the annual horizontal directional drilling course will be held from 27 to 29 March 2012.

This is an event not to be missed by trenchless folks, from drillers to engineers. You really should diarise this now, even if you want to attend it again to get up to date after a few years!