



Pipes XI conference sets the bar

SAPPMA'S (Southern African Plastic Pipe Manufacturers Association) Pipes XI Conference that took place at Emperors Palace in Gauteng this September has set the bar high for the future of South Africa's water infrastructure and engineering professionals.

More than 300 delegates from around South Africa were treated to two days of in-depth and world-class presentations delivered by 18 international and 17 local experts on issues relating to plastic piping, water infrastructure and engineering courtesy of the Plastic Pipe Conference Association (PPCA). They also sponsored the best speakers of the recent PIPES XVIII conference in Berlin last year, to present in South Africa at this spin-off conference.

According to the PPCA's Zoran Davidovski, they have had six spin-off conferences around the world since the first one was hosted in Beijing in 2009. "Just as connections are vital in the pipe industry, so too are the connections made between people and professionals in this field, and for this reason we are pleased to see the South African industry so well represented at this year's conference," he said, stressing the importance of attending and hosting international conferences.

"Survival needs invention, and the best way to be inspired and to learn is by allowing yourself to be educated and your mind stretched by learning from your local and international peers".

Highlights of the conference included a keynote address by guest speaker and well-known economist, Dr Roelof Botha, who looked into his proverbial crystal ball to predict whether or not the state capture will force the South African economy into a recession. Botha offered a closer look at the socio-political landscape of the country and how this would impact the local economy and the plastic pipe industry specifically.

"The next 18 months will be turbulent, but this doesn't mean there won't be opportunities for growth. What we are currently experiencing in our country is a deepening of a democracy. It is important for us to invest in skills transfer, public-private partnerships and to restore the functionality of our leadership. With effective leadership, smart policies and team work, there can still be a bright future for South Africa," Botha encouraged.

SAPPMA CEO, Jan Venter said the Pipes XI conference once again highlighted the importance of pipes and pipelines in civilisation and infrastructure. "Water distribution, waste disposal, irrigation and telecommunications all rely on pipelines to function. An extensive network of reliable water and sewage pipelines are essential for establishment and growth of civilisation. Although we find ourselves operating in a tough business climate and the economic recovery has not

been what we hoped it would be, the importance of what we do remains undiminished. We take a long term view on these things, and will continue

to fight for maintaining the standards and integrity of the plastic pipes being manufactured and installed locally," Venter said. <<



Speakers at the Pipes XI conference painted a bright picture for South Africa.



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