

the bulletin

BESSA BULLETIN - VOLUME 1 - 2026



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Dear Customers

With global tensions causing uncertainty, Bell Equipment is focused on the positive and influencing what is within our control. Our Richards Bay factory has made steady progress gearing up Bell Grader production and deliveries to the market in all three sizes. Deliveries of the Bell Tri-wheeler are now normalised and our TF302 Timber Forwarder is growing in popularity among our forestry customers.

While the South African coal mining industry is under pressure and fuel prices are set to soar, gold mining is experiencing a resurgence thanks to the strong gold price, and the construction industry is continuing its upwards trajectory as public and private sector funding is invested into much-needed infrastructure projects. We are also pleased that lower interest rates are contributing to an improvement in overall sentiment and positivity in the market.

Service is one of our top priorities. Building 'strong, reliable machines' is only part of our commitment. Equally important is providing 'strong, reliable support' to the people who rely on our machines – you, our customers. For this reason, our Bell eThekweni branch in Durban has moved to new premises at the Dube Tradeport to be more centrally located.

BESSA is proud of our 23 strategically located outlets across South Africa and Eswatini – the most extensive dealer network in the region and the backbone of our support. As the customer comments in the following pages bear testimony, our people at each outlet are trusted partners who make it their job to understand your business, the local conditions, operational challenges and priorities. From operator training to aftersales service and parts support, our dealers are committed to keeping your equipment running productively and cost effectively.

Regular customer engagement is a key for BESSA. In early February, while the industry was gathered in Cape Town, we met with mining customers in a social setting and thank everyone who attended. Later, we exhibited at the Bieliemieli festival in Reitz, in the Free State, an exciting new addition to our calendar.

In April we are at the annual Institute of Quarrying Southern Africa (IQSA) conference in Durban and the Focus on Forestry conference in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, followed by NAMPO Bothaville in May.

Connecting with you at these events, and the smaller community-based happenings that we support, is always a highlight for our team. We truly value the relationships that keep our industry moving forward and look forward to seeing you there.



Ashley Bell
Group Chief Executive

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Contents

Leading construction company orders first Bell Grader.....	04
Matla Sechaba's journey in load and haul with Bell ADTs	08
JCB fleet provides the foundation for DP2 Construction's growth	14
Enterprising Eswatini women create opportunity with a Bell Slew Loader.....	19
Lesotho's Founda Construction loads up with new JCB 3CX Backhoes	22
New JCB Excavators boost Vaal Central Water's service delivery	27
Lanser Civils loads up on JCB Backhoes for infrastructure contracts	32
Kobelco Mini Excavators impress Hamilton Plant Hire with short tail swing	36
JCB and Kobelco fleet help Rise Construction rise to the top	40
JCB Backhoe opens doors for Khabowd Projects	44
Four new B30E ADTs impress Kijima Construction in mining application	46
Kobelco SK220XD-10 proves essential for large-scale vegetable farmer	50
Skogger and Kobelco provide ideal forestry solutions for Dendotron	54
MCB Excavations drives growth with Bell products and backup	60
Fairways, friendships and fantastic customers	64
Promo Shop	66



COVER PICTURE:

The plant division of WBHO Construction, the largest civil and roads construction company in Southern Africa, has bought four of Bell Equipments dynamic new G140 Graders.

Read the full story on **PAGE 04.**

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Leading construction company orders first Bell Graders

The team managing the Plant division of WBHO Construction, the largest civil and roads construction company in Southern Africa, was so confident their company had nothing to lose when buying the first four machines of Bell Equipment's dynamic new G140 Grader range that they signed the purchase order on the back of a restaurant menu before the machines had even gone into full production.



Established in 1970, WBHO Construction covers activities across the full construction spectrum through its building construction, civil engineering and roads and earthworks divisions. The company has well-established branch offices across South Africa and operates in Botswana, Zambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, Tanzania and the United Kingdom.

We sat down with Mark Scates, the GM of WBHO Plant, and Michael Minne, a Senior WBHO Plant Manager, along with Bell Equipment's Sales Representative Chris Botha, to hear what influenced their decision to acquire the four new Bell G140 Graders.

"WBHO was an integral part of the development of our entire new Grader range as the design engineers at Bell Equipment consulted with the five top South African companies using Graders, to get their input," Chris says. "This essential feedback was used to refine certain key elements in the design and workability of the new Bell Grader range."

The development of the Bell Grader range of machines proceeded steadily and by October 2022 plant managers from the same five companies were invited to a two-day hands-on demonstration of three prototype machines across the full range where they could operate the Bell Graders and give their input and suggestions.

"We were impressed by the machines' power across the board and especially that of the G140 model, which is the size machine we were interested in," says Mark Scates. "I recall us making some suggestions on the Bell G140's transmission and these were subsequently implemented in the production models."

Michael Minne was impressed by the serviceability of the Bell Grader. "Bell Equipment's graders come with a sealed premium circle as a standard feature and this greatly reduces the maintenance on the machine," he says. "The ergonomics and comfort of the cab along with its good all-round visibility certainly got our vote."





Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Chris Botha (left), and WBHO's GM Plant, Mark Scates (right), with WBHO Senior Plant Manager, Michael Minnie, holding the restaurant menu on which the order for the first four Bell G140 Graders was signed.

Having the sealed premium circle greatly reduces adjustments to it when using satellite grade control systems and the seal also sees to it that there is less exposure to dust and the environment. This means that the premium circle only has to be serviced every 500 hours.

During a corporate fishing trip to St Lucia in northern KwaZulu-Natal in February 2023, the deal on Bell Equipment's first four G140 Grader models was sealed when the order was signed on the back of a restaurant menu in the town.

"Other factors like pricing, availability, warranties and support all played a role in our decision," Mark points out. "With Bell Equipment's machine being so competitively priced, this meant quite a big saving to us and the machine's warranty makes its purchase even more attractive."

Mark goes on to explain that WBHO's current grader fleet stands at 50 machines, all in the 140 range, which is a clear indication that they know the product and capability of this size of grader. He adds that their replacement policy on graders varies between 12 000 and 14 000 hours.

"The four new Bell G140 Graders have all been bought with warranties to 10 000 hours/60 months, which greatly reduces our exposure when the machine is nearing the end of its life in our fleet," he says. "We don't do rebuilds, so the added assurance this warranty provides is a real game-changer for us, as we've become accustomed to the great service we receive from Bell Equipment on our other machines bought from the company."

WBHO took delivery of its first Bell G140 Grader at the end of January 2025 when the machine was delivered to a major roads project on the N3 at Key Ridge between Durban and Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. "This was probably the most closely watched Grader in the world at that time as technicians from Bell Equipment's branch in Durban really molly-coddled it," Michael says.

"Our second Bell G140 Grader went to another roads project between Thabazimbi and Bela-Bela in August 2025 with numbers three and four also deployed on roads contracts near Mkhondo (Piet Retief) and Ermelo respectively.

"Feedback received from our grader operators is that although they're new to the Bell machines, they're adapting quickly and enjoying the power the machines deliver."

Working on road construction sites, the Bell G140 Graders do everything from flattening heaps of fill material to final cuts prior to asphaltting. Both Mark and Michael have been more than impressed with the fuel consumption figures the new Bell Graders are returning.

"The new Bell Graders operate at a better fuel efficiency than the existing fleet," says Mark. "Given that our graders work, on average, 1 980 hours in a given year, this saving in diesel amounts to significant numbers with the current cost of fuel."

WBHO is not only committing to Bell Graders but has already experienced the many advantages that the

range of Kobelco Excavators offers. "We've found that 35-ton machines work best for civil construction and 20-ton machines are ideally suited for roads construction projects and, to this end, we now own four Kobelco SK380-XDLC10 and five Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavators," Michael says.

"We're also enjoying the more compact Kobelco SK75SR-3 Excavators which, with no tail-swing, work well in confined spaces such as between concrete columns, bridge abutments and retaining walls."

Michael adds that they find the Kobelco Excavator range advanced in its design with auxiliary hydraulic ports fitted as standard features and adjustments to the machine's many capabilities are adjustable from inside the cab, which adds to safe operating practices. Again, competitive pricing and Bell Equipment's legendary dependable service were key factors in WBHO now acquiring Kobelco Excavators.





Matla Sechaba's journey in load and haul with Bell ADTs

One woman is honouring the legacy jointly created by her late husband to make a success of a load and haul business in a challenging mining environment while harnessing the support of a benevolent mining client and a loyal local community near the mine. And providing the backbone of this business is a growing fleet of Bell B30E Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs).







Lucy Tau met her husband, Mothupi, while they were both working for South Africa's state-owned telecommunications company in Pretoria. Both had tertiary qualifications but after some time working in a corporate environment, they felt the need for a new challenge that centred around being self-employed. Lucy holds a Bachelor's degree with a Psychology major, a post-graduate qualification in project management and an MBA specialising in leadership management.

"We obtained a franchise for a restaurant from a company operating across South Africa and opened a branch in Burgersdorp as Mothupi hails from the nearby village of Mashataung," Lucy tells us. "As the local community knew us, they supported us well, but after five years of counting every slice of bread Mothupi, who was running the restaurant while I remained in the corporate environment, had had enough."

Mines in South Africa are encouraged to support local communities by offering employment and making use of small and emerging contractors who operate in their areas and Two Rivers Platinum Mine, the large platinum mine close to Mashataung village was no different.

"We had heard through the local community that the mine was advertising contracts for load and haul contractors," Lucy explains. "We registered our company, Matla Sechaba Holdings, in 2016 and set out to explore these new possibilities in 2018. We engaged with an existing contractor who offered us a 30% portion of his contract on the mine while also giving us valuable mentorship as we knew very little of how such a contract worked and what was needed in terms of equipment, people, planning and working methods."

According to Lucy, Matla Sechaba means "power of the community" and they chose this name in honour of the support they had received from their local community.

Two Rivers Platinum Mine encouraged Mothupi and Lucy to approach South Africa's renowned Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) for assistance with financing of the yellow metal equipment they needed to get started and recommended that they approach Bell Equipment, as a proudly South African manufacturer of mining haulage equipment, with regards to its legendary tough Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs).

Here Chris Botha, one of Bell Equipment's sales representatives based at the company's branch at Jet Park in Boksburg, takes up the story. "I remember meeting Mothupi when he stopped by our branch in 2018 and was struck by his eagerness to learn as much as possible about our products and what their application should be," Chris recalls. "It was a privilege to be able to advise Mothupi after learning about his new company's role on the mine and I suggested that our Bell B30E ADT range of trucks would be the right size for the application."

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Matla Sechaba Holdings' Bell ADTs are used for an average of 225 to 250 hours a month. By August 2024 the first two had clocked 16 535 and 16 041 hours respectively while the two from 2020 showed 13 815 and 12 648 hours respectively.

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With financing from the IDC in place at favourable rates, Matla Sechaba Holdings took delivery of two new Bell B30E ADTs in late 2018 and could start work as subcontractors.

By 2020, Matla Sechaba was still working as a subcontractor but now for a 50% share of the load and haul of both waste and ore run-of-mine material from the underground workings. This, however, meant that they needed to increase the size of their yellow machine fleet and they again approached Bell Equipment for two more Bell B30E ADTs.

"We were very pleased that, with Bell Equipment backing us, we obtained financing through Wesbank and could take delivery of two new Bell B30E ADTs, which made an immediate difference to our production," Lucy says. "We run two shifts of 10 hours each around the clock and ore is hauled over a distance of 3km while the distance to the waste dumps can be as much as 12km."

Matla Sechaba Holdings' Bell ADTs are used for an average of 225 to 250 hours a month. By August 2024 the first two had clocked 16 535 and 16 041 hours respectively while the two from 2020 showed 13 815 and 12 648 hours respectively. All the Bell ADTs have been bought with Bell Equipment Care Packages for up to 6 000 hours on the wet drivetrain and hydraulics and the most recent ADTs have an added Full Machine Cover (FMC) to 36 months or 6 000 hours. Fuel is supplied by the mine and although its consumption is monitored, the Bell B30Es' frugal use is well within the business plan.

Sadly in 2021, Mothupi passed away due to COVID-19 and Lucy resigned from her corporate role to manage the contract at the mine. "When we first started, Mothupi had shared a great deal of information with me about what makes a mining contract work, but I've had to learn so much more in a short space of time and I'm fortunate to have a lot of support from my team, the mine, as well as the likes of Chris Botha from Bell Equipment," Lucy says.

"Our Bell ADTs get serviced from Bell Equipment's branch in nearby Steelpoort but despite this, my point of entry into Bell is through Chris, who is always available to assist me with technical, accounting, and general enquiries. Chris has proved to be more than just a sales representative and I see him as a friend of mine and of my company as he and Bell Equipment really understand our business and the challenges we face."

By 2024, Matla Sechaba's role on the mine had changed as the company was offered a stand-alone contract that amounted to 50% of the load and haul of run-of-mine ore and waste material.

The mining industry in South Africa must be applauded for its initiatives in promoting small and emerging businesses to succeed and Two Rivers Platinum mine, where Matla Sechaba Holdings works, is no different. "I have the backing of our clients under a development plan for five years and with this assurance, we confidently ordered another Bell B30E ADT in 2024 as we really believe in this great product's design and build that helps us deliver a sustained service to our supportive clients," Lucy adds.



Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Chris Botha, with the CEO and Owner of Matla Sechaba Holdings, Lucy Tau, and the company's Production Manager, Johannes Mmadi.

JCB fleet provides the foundation for DP2 Construction's growth

DP2 Construction, a Cape Town-based civil engineering and construction company, has loaded up with an impressive fleet of JCB machines supplied by Bell Equipment, which has quickly become the backbone of their operations, helping them deliver on a wide range of projects.



The company was started by André and Julian du Preez in August 2016. André entered the industry in 1978 as a learner surveyor when he joined Savage & Lovemore, which later became Group 5. He moved up the ranks and, in 1984, joined Graham Power in his start-up company, Power Construction. He worked for 30 years and retired as CEO in 2013.

Julian, who also worked and studied through Power Construction, resigned in 2016 after 16 years of service, and the two of them started DP2 Construction in August of that year.

Alicia Robertson, the other director and shareholder, studied and worked at Power Construction for 20 years and joined DP2 in June 2019. She is the company's Technical and Administration Director, responsible for all office and legal administration, and the fully functional tender department.

André's son, Julian, takes up the story: "DP2 Construction is a bit of a family affair as my uncle, Jacques, joined DP2 in January 2022, and his mentorship and knowledge that he freely shares are invaluable.

"On our very first contract, which was a subcontract in Ceres, I ended up being roller operator, mechanic, clerk, bricklayer and a general handyman to make sure that the contract ran smoothly."

Since then, DP2 has employed many capable and experienced site agents, foremen, surveyors, and supervisors to maintain focus on the company's core values: performance, trust, quality, and integrity.

DP2 Construction focuses primarily on the private sector where it constructs civil infrastructure like bulk earthworks, water reticulation, roads, platforms, earthworks and other infrastructure that makes housing and retail developments possible. The company primarily works in the Cape Peninsula, the Winelands, and Swartland areas.

"In the last two years there has been a surge in flood repair works in more rural parts of the country like farms and general watercourses," Julian adds, "There has also been work for the film industry where we've constructed platforms and roads for various scenes in different locations. It is fascinating work, which always sees us working under pressure."

DP2 Construction had until recently maintained a strategy of hiring in earthmoving and material handling equipment for their various projects. The amount of repair to damaged infrastructure in and around the Cape Peninsula following the floods of 2023, plus the commencement of various renewable energy projects, had reduced the availability of much of the reliable plant available for hire in the area. When faced with a shortage of plant in early 2024, DP2 Construction's directors put on their thinking caps.



DP2 Construction Director, Julian Du Preez (left) with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, André Jordaan.

"We researched the market and got advice from a former colleague who had been a plant manager for a large civil engineering company. He advised us to look around and see what machines were the most used. We noticed that JCB-manufactured machines were the most prevalent on construction sites, which clearly reflected the brand's quality and popularity," Julian explains. "André Jordaan of Bell Equipment had been calling on us from our inception and it was to him that we turned for further advice on which machines to consider for our purposes."

Working with Bell Equipment, the distributors of JCB equipment in South Africa, DP2 Construction was pleasantly surprised to learn of the different financial options from JCB and ABSA Bank. This convinced them to place orders for two JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loaders, one JCB JS140 Excavator and a JCB CT260-120 Ride-on Roller in February 2024. With financing in place, all the equipment was delivered to DP2 Construction in April 2024. A JCB JS205 Excavator followed in September later in the year.



"Having one's own equipment available at all times is such a bonus and especially our excavators are clocking up the production hours," Julian says. "We have very good operators on the machines, and on the JS140 we have a lady operator who is really gentle on the machine, but gets the job done efficiently."

"As we don't have our own full-time mechanics yet, we've included Bell Care Packages for all the machines, and this gives us the assurance of solid maintenance leading to longer machine life and good returns on our investment."

According to Julian, the two excavators are used extensively for trenching for services, excavations for platforms and box-cuts for road construction. The JCB CT260-120 Roller is delivering good compaction on newly constructed platforms and roads and the versatile 3DX Plus Backhoe Loaders are used to dig, load, stockpile and backfill, with housekeeping duties thrown in to keep construction sites tidy.



"We have a clear understanding of what constitutes heavy, medium, and light work for the machines, and how this impacts fuel consumption, which is factored into our contracts," Julian continues. "For example, it makes sense to rather run the JCB JS140 Excavator in certain situations rather than the heavier JS205, resulting in fuel savings."

All DP2 Construction's machine operators have daily checklists to complete before starting a shift and Julian is of the opinion that checking the machine ties in with onsite health and safety protocols too.

"We enjoyed the sales experience with André Jordaan and we found his vast product knowledge to be a real help," Julian says. "With so much middle-income housing being initiated in Cape Town, especially to the northwest in towns like Malmesbury and Moorreesburg, we're bound to consult André in the not-too-distant future about more yellow machines that bear the JCB logo."



Enterprising Eswatini women create opportunity with a Bell Slew Loader

Inhabitants of the Sigangeni community in the northwest of Eswatini traditionally grow their maize between October and May of the following year when it is harvested. The area lies adjacent the Mpumalanga Highveld of South Africa and has winters that are too cold for cash crops like cabbages that could bring in essential additional income, so a group of enterprising ladies devised an ambitious plan.

Phindile Mbuyisa explains: "We have always planted our maize in October, after the first rains, and harvested it in May, but we then had to wait for it to dry properly by August before selling the surplus that we could not consume ourselves. This created hardships amongst us, but through my work as a rural health motivator I heard from other motivators from the Northern Hhohho region that there was a shortage of cane loaders in the sugar industry."

By accessing the country's Regional Development Fund (RDF), the group sought to acquire a Bell UlTECO6 Cane Slew Loader.

The RDF is a funding programme initiated by King Mswati III to eradicate poverty in his country. It entails people forming a group and depositing funds into a collective account to save towards a 10% deposit of the purchase price of a piece of mechanised equipment, or any approved business that could be utilised by the group at their place of preference.

The Inkhundla system – Eswatini's traditional local government structure that plays a key role in community leadership and service delivery at grassroots level – then funds the balance of 90% and owns the equipment but allows the members of the group to earn an income from the equipment's use.

"During one of the workshops I attended, I had heard that everyone was buying trucks in this manner and that there were already too many trucks," Phindile continues. "What they did need, however, was loading equipment to load the sugar cane infield and I took this information back to the group we had loosely formed in our area."

The group created a formal structure under the banner of Sigangeni Vusumnotfo Multi-Purpose Cooperative, consisting of 12 women and two men who committed to the plan by having enough capital to spare, gleaned from their maize sales. It was not a given that their proposal would be successful, but they did some intensive research and drafted a viable business plan, with valuable help on how to start a business from Mr Vusi 'Futis' Dlamini, a local businessman.

Phindile was elected as chairperson of the group and was assisted by fellow board members, Thembie Thwala, and one of the only two men in the group, Sibusiso Dlamini. She continues: "We all started contributing to our fund in 2021 when we could sell our surplus maize to the Eswatini National Maize Corporation and to companies making animal feeds."

During this time the group discovered which companies sold sugar cane loading equipment. This brought them to Bell Equipment's door in Matsapha where they met Bell Swaziland Branch Manager, Charlie Boucher, and the local Bell Product Support Representative, Bruce Larkan.

"Both Charlie and Bruce patiently explained to us what they thought we needed, as they understood the concept. Bruce speaks fluent Siswati, which made the explanation so much clearer, allowing us to grasp the facts in our own language – something we really appreciated," Phindile says. "More importantly though is the fact that we were taken seriously and not viewed as a group of rural people with an impossible dream."

Board member, Thembie Thwala, adds that Bell Equipment's pricing on a Bell UlTECO6 Slew Cane Loader fitted their business plan and they told their group that they should be able to reach the required deposit by 2023.

Next, the group approached their local Siphocosini Inkhundla lead by Hon. Mduduzi Matsebula, the member of parliament, together with his team, the Indvuna yenkhundla Gcinuzi Mavimbela and Bucopho Thamie Shongwe, who then approached the RDF with their proposal, amongst others. The business plan, coupled with the fact that they had the required deposit, worked in their favour and the deal was settled between the RDF and Bell Equipment.

"There was much joy on the Inkhundla land when the Bell UlTECO6 Slew Cane Loader was delivered in April 2024," Phindile recalls. "We sourced four operators with some experience from outside and employed them after they had received training from Bruce Larkan. 25 April 2024 was a momentous day for our group when the Bell UlTECO6 Slew Cane Loader started earning an income for us."

As the machine would be owned by the government, it was stipulated in the tender that a Bell Care Package over 24 months should be included in the warranty of the same length. It also included a set of tools that would be needed to service and repair the machine.

"The income from the use of the machine gets paid into a bank account. After a mere five months we had enough money saved to put down a deposit on a van to service the UltECO6 with fuel, lubricants, and personnel, as we had appointed a supervisor and use additional manual labour to pick up bits of dropped sugar cane," Phindile continues. "The operators have a daily pre-start checklist and we're very strict on the daily maintenance of the machine to ensure its longevity."

The Sigangeni Vusumnotfo Multi-Purpose Cooperative's Bell UltECO6 Slew Cane Loader is used around the clock with two shifts and typically loads between 12 to 18 trucks in a 24-hour cycle. Most trucks carry 30 tonnes of cane and the UltECO6 loads

around 45 tonnes in an hour. In this way, it has already clocked more than 2 000 hours. Its diesel consumption of five litres an hour also fits the business plan of the group.

"We've enjoyed the support from Bell Equipment especially when it comes to servicing the machine," says board member, Sibusiso Dlamini. "We give Bell advance notice of about 50 hours, and they always arrive at the appointed time and with the correct service kits and lubricants, which gives us peace of mind."

While the cane harvesting season is relatively short, covering only 8,5 months of the year, the income the group has derived from this first cane loader cannot be underestimated. The pride in her manner is evident as Phindile explains that, looking forward to the next cutting season, the group is seriously considering acquiring a second UltECO6 Slew Cane Loader from Bell Equipment – this time financing and owning it themselves. Given their determination, we have no doubt that this will happen.



Sigangeni Vusumnotfo Multi-Purpose Cooperative's board members (from left): Phindile Mbuyisa, Sibusiso Dlamini and Thembie Thwala.



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Lesotho's Founda Construction loads up with new JCB 3CX Backhoes

Lesotho, the tiny yet independent landlocked country surrounded by South Africa, boasts an interesting and unique feature related to its geography. It is the only independent state in the world that lies entirely above one thousand metres in elevation with as much as eighty percent of the country being above one thousand eight hundred metres above sea-level.



Its capital, Maseru, is a busy place with several impressive buildings under construction. Further to the north in the Leribe and Buthe-Buthe districts, a large water distribution project is currently underway with many kilometres of piping being laid in trenches to provide water to the multitudes of villages that dot the hilly landscape and beyond towards the Maluti mountain range.

Founda Construction is a civil construction company established in Lesotho in 2019. The company's focus is on delivering infrastructure projects for the Government of Lesotho as well as subcontracting from larger construction companies engaged in mega-projects with strict qualification protocols determined by the likes of the World Bank and other international aid agencies.

The company currently employs around 500 people who are engaged in a wide variety of projects and Founda Construction believes in employing local people from the different districts that it works in. Skills training is given as a matter of course which leads to the company uplifting local communities and leaving a legacy. This also applies to machine operators who undergo strict skills testing before being employed.

Working mainly in water supply and reticulation as well as road and associated construction, Founda Construction has built a reputation as a company that delivers projects on time and on budget, which in turn is bringing it much repeat business in a country where the supply of this type of infrastructure is being prioritised.



"We have several 15-man teams working, with each team having its own backhoe loader to dig trenches and backfill them once the water pipes have been laid," says Alan Shi, Founda Construction's General Manager. "As we're working to strict deadlines and, at times, in difficult terrain, in challenging soil conditions and in between existing housing, schools, shops and roads, it's imperative to have the best digging and backfilling tool on the market that won't break down and delay the work. This we've found with our JCB Backhoe Loaders."

"We started buying JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loaders soon after our company was established in 2019 and we now have 18 in our fleet," he adds. "These versatile machines complement the other earthmoving equipment in our fleet, which consists of excavators, graders, rollers, front end loaders and tipper trucks."

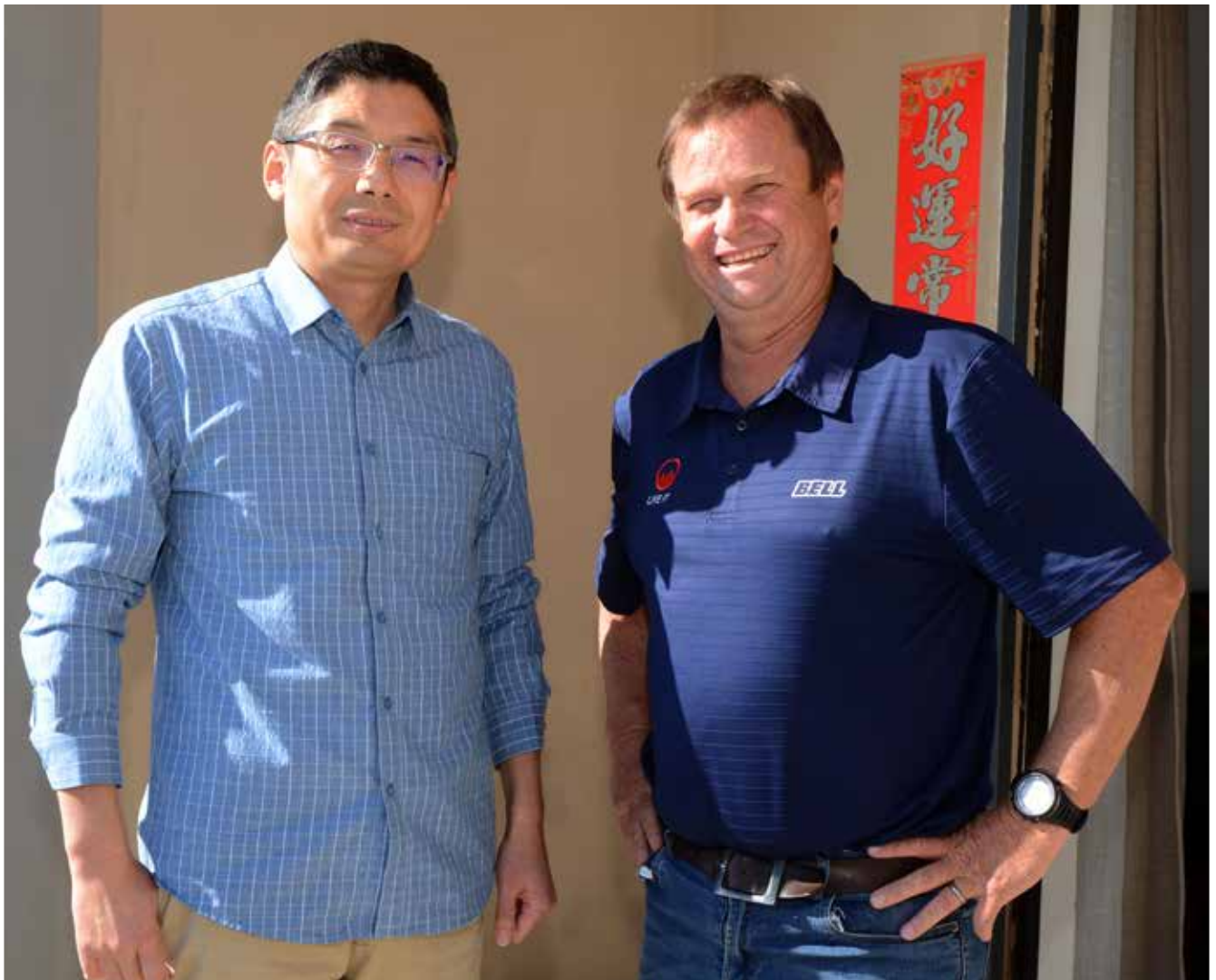
Of the 18 JCB Backhoe Loaders in Founda Construction's fleet, the most recent 13 models have been bought from Bell Equipment through the company's dealer for Lesotho, Live It Investments. Live It Investments is owned by Piet van Tonder and Selloane Leche and the company operates from premises with a large workshop and offices in Maseru.

Although a young company, Live It Investments is fast making a name for itself as the dealer of choice in earthmoving and agricultural equipment in Lesotho and representing strong brands like Bell Equipment and JCB with its own solid back up service.

"Alan and Founda Construction have been very loyal customers, and they put a lot of faith in the JCB Backhoe Loader brand," Piet van Tonder says. "We were particularly excited when, in early August 2024, they took delivery of three new JCB 3CX Backhoe Loaders, which Bell Equipment brought into Southern Africa as the new range of this legendary tough Backhoe Loader."

"The mechanics Founda Construction employs keep a close eye on all their machines and help the operators with their daily checks and preventative maintenance," Piet adds. "When they do need replacement parts, orders with part numbers are clear and this makes our job of getting the correct parts to them easier and so minimises downtime."

Alan explains their reasoning of constantly adding Backhoe Loaders to their existing fleet. "Many of our contracts, whether they are standalone or



Alan Shi, Founda Construction General Manager (left) with Piet van Tonder, owner of Live It Investments.

subcontracts, last a long time and we feel we therefore cannot remove machines from construction teams that rely on them so heavily to get the job done. The JCB 3DX and 3CX models are durable and reliable machines and incredibly versatile while being economical to run and easy to maintain, which makes them the ideal multi-purpose machine for our varied applications."

Founda Construction's JCB 3DX and 3CX Backhoe Loaders are all fitted with standard buckets at the front and rear and are used for a wide variety of tasks such as digging trenches, backfilling, levelling of the soil after backfilling, loading rubble and sand and general housekeeping to keep sites tidy.

"Our operators on the three new JCB 3CX Backhoe Loaders report that the machines are definitely more powerful than the previous models and we can ascribe this in part to the new variable displacement piston pumps that drive the machine's hydraulics," Alan says. "This also means that the engine speed is reduced, which in turn reduces fuel consumption. As we work mostly on wet rates, this is a positive item for us as it will reduce our fuel bill in the long run."

Alan goes on to say that with more infrastructure projects in the offing, Founda Construction will need more yellow equipment and given the efficiencies and versatility that new range of JCB 3CX Backhoe Loaders bring, we're confident that the company's already substantial fleet is going to grow even more.





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New JCB Excavators boost Vaal Central Water's service delivery

The assurance of quick turnaround times on repair and maintenance that yellow machine suppliers with large representative footprints bring, is one of the main criteria that one of the largest bulk water suppliers in terms of geographical area in South Africa sees as non-negotiable when choosing earthmoving equipment.



Eugene Wymers, Vaal Central Water Fleet Manager (left) with Ernest Moremedi, Bell Equipment Sales Representative.

These are the thoughts of Eugene Wymers, the Fleet Manager at Vaal Central Water with its headquarters in Bloemfontein. Vaal Central Water came about in August 2022 when Bloemwater and the operations of Sedibeng Water in the Northern Free State and Northern Cape, amalgamated to form one bulk water supply utility in the Free State and Northern Cape.

"We are a bulk water supplier and, as such, we must ensure that our clients in our areas of responsibility receive, as far as possible, an uninterrupted supply of purified water," Eugene says. "Our clients are mainly municipalities but also large industries such as the many gold, iron ore, and manganese mines in the Free State and Northern Cape."

He explains that being a bulk water supplier, it implies that its product will be delivered in larger than normal piping infrastructure that is mostly buried beneath the surface. This also includes no less than nine purification plants. To install, maintain and repair such infrastructure further implies that earthmoving machines will be used and Vaal Central Water has an existing fleet of suitable machines, although some of them have seen many years of service.

"We have a fleet comprising three excavators, 11 backhoe loaders and several tippers and flat-bed trucks, the latter which are all fitted with hydraulic cranes," Eugene says. "We also have two lowbed truck-trailer rigs for transporting the excavators and backhoe loaders to various sites."

"You'll appreciate that our yellow machines are generally deployed when needed – which means for regular scheduled maintenance and especially for urgent repairs. This translates in them not building high hours as quickly as you may see with an excavator working in mining production," Eugene adds. "This is why we're so intent on the longevity of our equipment as we may keep the equipment for many years while their working hours seem out of sync with their actual age."

"With this in mind, we have a JCB JS205 Excavator we bought in 2014, and its clock is currently showing only 1 861 hours. The important thing is that this machine, despite its 12 years of service, has been meticulously maintained and still operates at full capacity on demand even when fitted with a large JCB hydraulic hammer, as it is currently."

With the amalgamation of the two water utilities, Vaal Central Water inherited equipment from both parties, which now forms the fleet. Vaal Central Water makes use of their own equipment, of which some have now reached a stage where they need to be replaced.

"As we keep our earthmoving equipment for such a long time, our policy on machine replacement is built around the fact that should replacement parts for any machine prove difficult or impossible to find, then it will be replaced by first selling it on an open auction and then replacing it with a similar or improved model," Eugene explains. "Recently though we had a different reason for buying new equipment as our area of responsibility had grown substantially with the amalgamation. Staying true to our utility's mantra of "assuring sustainable and reliable quality of water services, for life", we realised that to do this, we would need two new excavators, and quickly to boot."



Fortunately, being a state entity, Vaal Central Water could leverage an RT57 contract agreement with Bell Equipment as suppliers of JCB equipment. Bell Equipment's Public Sector Sales Representative in the area, Ernest Moremedi, had been calling on the utility and an order for two JCB JS205 Excavators was placed through him in April 2024. The machines were delivered the following month.

"Our choice of JCB JS205 Excavators was an easy one, and the fact that Bell Equipment is now the distributor of these fine machines is a bonus," Eugene says. "With us having other equipment sold by Bell and some older JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loaders, we already have an established relationship with the company and know that we can rely on solid backup in areas such as the central and northern Free State, North West Province, and the Northern Cape due to Bell Equipment with its wide footprint, having trained technicians and fully stocked parts departments everywhere."





"While purchasing the equipment was pretty seamless, it's the aftersales experience with Bell Equipment that is equally impressive as shown by the company's product support representatives and technicians when caring for our equipment," Eugene continues. "Here I would like to mention Wagner Fourie, the Bell Bloemfontein CSC Manager, Sagrys Jacobs, the Bell Product Support Representative from Kimberly, and Corné Olivier, the Bell Product Support Representative from Wolmaransstad."

Vaal Central Water's JCB Excavators and Backhoe Loaders see extensive service in digging trenches with subsequent backfilling. The longer reach of the JCB JS205 Excavators means that the large diameter water pipes can be easily exposed where they are buried

deep down and additional and narrower trenching buckets make delicate digging between parallel piping possible.

"Having our own reliable earthmoving equipment is first prize for our operations as when there is a problem with a supply line at any time of the day or night, we can deploy serviceable equipment to the problem area immediately," Eugene concludes. "As all our earthmoving equipment works mainly in mud and water, one realises that equipment can be prone to hidden hazards, which can cause downtime for repair, but having reliable backup from a supplier, such as Bell Equipment, shortens that time and so the impact on our customers is lessened."

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Lanser Civils loads up on JCB Backhoes for infrastructure contracts

Since the devastating drought of 2017-2018 when the City of Cape Town came within days of reaching the dreaded 'Day Zero', both the City and the Western Cape Provincial Government are investing in water and other infrastructure projects to prevent that potentially catastrophic event occurring again.





And this well-planned and controlled spending is benefitting many reputable Cape Town-based civil construction companies of which Lanser Civils (Pty) Ltd is one.

"Lanser Civils was started in 1993 by Ian Lanser, a qualified civil engineer who had gained valuable experience of the workings of the industry while employed by other companies," says Eldon van der Merwe, the company's Commercial Manager. "Ian is a meticulous planner and started out conservatively undertaking small-scale roads and services contracts within the Cape Metro and he soon built a reputation as being a contractor who delivers on time and on budget."

During the last 20 years, Lanser Civils has seen a phenomenal growth in its order book and while most of its work is still confined by choice to the Cape Metro, the size of the projects have increased to now include bulk earthworks, bulk services and larger roads and retaining walls.

"We're currently busy with work on stormwater infrastructure and maintenance for the City of Cape Town as during the last five years additional funds have been made available to fine-tune water

infrastructure projects," Eldon continues. "During the company's early years, two or three small projects were comfortably undertaken at a time, but this has changed where more and larger projects are now the order of the day."

"Working in civil construction implies that yellow machines will be present but even here, Ian had started off conservatively when we had first bought a JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader and a small roller," Nici Schenck says. Nici is Lanser Civils' Fleet Manager and it's his responsibility to take care of a steadily growing fleet of yellow machines. Now entering its fourth decade, Lanser Civils boasts a yellow machine fleet consisting of excavators, graders, rollers, wheeled loaders, articulated dump trucks and backhoe loaders.

"All our yellow machines are important to the successful completion of the projects we undertake but the undoubted stars of our fleet are our JCB 3CX and 3DX Backhoe Loaders of which we have 14 in total," Nici adds. "These machines are so versatile and are used for a myriad of tasks from trenching and backfilling to loading and unloading material, the latter tasks with either their buckets or the forks that we take as standard accessories."



Eldon van der Merwe (Lanser Civils Commercial Manager), André Jordaan (Bell Equipment Sales Representative) and Nici Schenck (Lanser Civils Fleet Manager).

“

...these JCB Backhoe Loaders are so solidly designed and built that some have surprised us and delivered anything between 12 000 and 14 000 hours of sustained service before being sold.

”

Nici goes on to explain how their replacement policy, especially on JCB Backhoe Loaders, works as they have accumulated knowledge of when the optimum time arrives to replace the machine. “We’ve generally found that a machine at 10 000 hours sold out of hand still brings a decent return on investment as our machines are well maintained and sold with a full-service history,” he says. “But then too, these JCB Backhoe Loaders are so solidly designed and built that some have surprised us and delivered anything between 12 000 and 14 000 hours of sustained service before being sold.

“Then too, I should mention the great relationship we have with Bell Equipment as the distributors of our JCB Backhoe Loaders, Rollers and the JCB JS205 Excavator that we have, as well as the two older Bell B25D and B30D Articulated Dump Trucks. Parts are easy to source

from the company and using JCB LiveLink, JCB’s telematics, the technicians from Bell Equipment even know where our JCB equipment can be located.

“Bell Equipment’s parts holding is incredible, and should we ever have a problem, the fact that we can speak to either André Jordaan, our Bell Equipment Sales Representative, or Bell Equipment’s workshop manager, makes all the difference as they are accessible and we don’t have to rely on a call centre.”

It was the reliability of the machine and its support that saw Lanser Civils order three more JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loaders in late 2023 that were delivered in early 2024.

“Owning your own earthmoving equipment is still first prize for us due to the assurance of availability for specific projects and from a cost point of view over the longer term,” Eldon says. “There are times, when for a variety of reasons, we have to resort to hiring equipment but in the end it’s costly and chips away at one’s bottom line, so we really try and avoid it as much as is possible.”

Both Eldon and Nici agree that the earthmoving and haulage equipment sold and supported by Bell Equipment forms the backbone of Lanser Civils’ yellow machine fleet. The full list comprises eight JCB 3CX Backhoe Loaders, six JCB 3DX Backhoe Loaders, a JCB JS205 Excavator, two JCB VM115D Rollers, two JCB VMT260 Rollers and a Bell B25D and B30D ADT.



Kobelco Mini Excavators impress Hamilton Plant Hire with short tail swing

A mini excavator with short tail swing that gets most demolition jobs in tight corners done is what gets a Cape Town-based father-and-son team's pulses racing. And while demolition sounds like a negative act, it's quite the contrary as so much old building material is recycled to have new and profitable uses.



Lester Plasket is a mechanical engineer who had spent a large part of his life in the nuclear power generation environment. A wish to be self-employed saw him buying an existing plant hire business in Philippi on the Cape Flats. Hamilton Plant Hire had been founded by Gerry Hamilton and Lester bought the business from him in 2001.

"We started out targeting the residential plant hire market in Cape Town suburbs like Constantia, Bishopscourt and Hout Bay and we showed steady growth," Lester says. "In 2015, my son Ryan joined the business after a successful career playing professional rugby."

"When Ryan joined me in the business, we looked to expand our offering into other avenues as you may well imagine that the plant hire market in any large city is very overtraded. Ryan subsequently found a small crusher on the used equipment market in Johannesburg. With some tender loving care, we got it working with the aim of recycling building material from demolition sites where our equipment had been used."

Despite not actively pursuing plant hire any longer, Hamilton Plant Hire still boasts a substantial fleet of yellow machines comprising 20 excavators, seven wheeled loaders, three backhoe loaders, six skid steer loaders, 15 tipper trucks ranging in capacity from three to 26 tons, and five Bell B25D and E-model Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs). Four crushers, two screens and a mobile stacking conveyor along with a lowbed truck-trailer combination, complete the impressive fleet of machines.

"We're a bit more circumspect in our choices when buying new equipment and firmly believe in choosing the correct machine for the job at hand," Ryan Plasket says. "As an example, we prefer to buy a mini excavator like the Kobelco SK55SRX-6, which is super-compact, features short tail swing, yet is powerful enough to tear down brick walls, move the rubble with its blade, and then stockpile it with the bucket."

"We really enjoy these Kobelco Mini Excavators for the reasons mentioned and have six of them, four being the SK55SRX-6 models and two of the slightly heavier Kobelco SK75SR-3 machines. We bought two new



SK55SRX-6 models in 2023 and even the heavier SK75SR-3 machine has short tail swing, allowing it to turn through 360 degrees in a space of only 3,5 metres, making it ideal for our type of demolition work. The fact that an established dealer such as Bell Equipment distributes Kobelco Excavators has made it much easier for us. And Fiona Johnson, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, who calls on us regularly, has made it a pleasant experience to obtain finance for equipment purchases. Bell Equipment always has a tempting deal on finance and Fiona makes it easy to grasp the basics of such deals," Ryan says.

Having a complete crushing and screening circuit at its premises in Philippi, Hamilton Plant Hire supplies a variety of building materials to the civil and residential construction markets. Popular lines are sand for pipeline bedding and concrete use, and rocks for use in gabions, which is mostly extracted from building material from demolition sites.

"Another very handy piece of equipment we purchased from Bell Equipment is a Finlay TC-80 Mobile Conveyor, which we received in July 2023," Lester says. "We currently have it working with a client in Moorreesburg where it is used to stockpile crushed limestone. Its beauty is that it's cheaper than using a wheeled loader with the latter compacting the

stockpile as it drives onto it to dump the next load. The Finlay TC-80 Conveyor can stockpile 1 600 cubic metres of material in just over half a day and only uses around 3,5 litres of diesel an hour, which really makes it a winner for our clients."

Hamilton Plant Hire has a fully-fledged workshop with many artisans who are confident carrying out any manner of rebuilds and refurbishment of equipment. Despite this, both Lester and Ryan are full of praise for the advice and technical support they receive from Bell Equipment.

"People want to deal with people, and we can at any time pick up the phone and do just that when speaking to anyone at Bell Equipment. We've found Jan Ferreira to be very helpful and Bell Equipment's personnel know the equipment the company sells and are up to speed on most challenges that we face which is extremely reassuring," says Lester.

So, if you ever cross Suikerbossie during the Cape Town Cycle Tour or amble along Chapman's Peak Drive while running the Two Oceans Ultra-marathon, look around at the gabions that support these beautiful roads and know that the rocks in those wire baskets emanate from Hamilton Plant Hire.



Bell Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, flanked by her Hamilton Plant Hire customers, Ryan (left) and Lester Plasket (right).

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JCB and Kobelco fleet help Rise Construction rise to the top

The current construction boom in the Western Cape, particularly in Cape Town, is largely driven by an influx of people relocating from northern South Africa. Many are motivated by frustrations with infrastructure challenges and the desire for a different lifestyle, which are pushing them to the southern tip of the country.



Small to medium-sized building contractors are riding a wave and even when they act as subcontractors to larger construction companies, their cash flow remains positive. One such contracting company is aptly called Rise Construction and is the brainchild of its owner, Morné Jordaan.

A born and bred Capetonian, Morné graduated from the then Peninsula Technikon (Pentech) with a degree in Construction Management before heading to the United Kingdom. There he worked on some exciting building projects, the standout one being the first totally self-sufficient 'green' building in London.

"I had already registered my company, Rise Construction, in 2003 before I left for the UK. While abroad, I bought a truck in South Africa that I used for contract transport work by remote control, so to speak," Morné says. "On my return to South Africa in 2005, I started promoting Rise Construction and found

subcontracting work with smaller construction companies in the residential market."

Rise Construction's first piece of earthmoving equipment was a small skid steer loader Morné had bought in his first year of operation. By 2013, an ever-increasing order book meant he could justify buying two used JCB Backhoe Loaders, one a JCB 3CX Eco model and the other the JCB 3CX machine.

"These two JCB Backhoe Loaders did so well for us with new tasks being found for them each day and, in 2017, I bought my first new JCB 3DX Super, which was piped for a hydraulic hammer," he says. "One of the main motivations for buying JCB Backhoe Loaders is their excellent resale value, which brings an added bonus after such a decent return on investment given how much value they deliver during their working years."





“

...The JCB Backhoe Loaders are undoubtedly the jewels in our fleet for their versatility with bucket, backhoe, and forks on so many of our building sites.

”

Rise Construction has grown its mechanised fleet to impressive levels and has the use of 17 tipper trucks from 6- to 18-cubic metre capacities, 10 excavators, a skid steer loader, a mobile crusher for crushing building rubble, which is then resold as fill material, and five JCB Backhoe Loaders.

"The JCB Backhoe Loaders are undoubtedly the jewels in our fleet for their versatility with bucket, backhoe, and forks on so many of our building sites, and I bought two new JCB 3DX Plus machines in 2023 – one in April and the second in October," Morné says. "I used to replace these JCB Backhoe Loaders at around 5 000 hours, but in the recent past I've been keeping them a bit longer depending on their application, as they keep on delivering sustained production without needing major replacement parts or repairs."

In February 2024, Morné added another machine to his substantial excavator fleet when he bought a Kobelco SK55SRX-6 Excavator. "This is an amazing little machine with a big heart and no tail swing. It is priced just right, and it fits into tight working spaces, especially when working on some construction sites in the city centre where space can be really confined at times," Morné enthuses. "When it is comfortably fitted with a hydraulic hammer, we use it in tandem with a heavier excavator and the Kobelco SK55SRX-6 breaks out concrete or whatever needs to be demolished and

the larger excavator then loads the rubble – a perfect working combination."

Morné has high praise for Bell Equipment, which represents the JCB and the Kobelco brands besides the Bell OEM products. "On the purchasing experience with Bell Equipment, we've really enjoyed the favourable terms and assistance that Bell has with JCB and a major banking group, which has made it extremely difficult to ignore," he smiles. "Paying off a machine over 36 months works for us, as a much larger portion of the instalment goes towards paying off capital and less so to interest."

"We also enjoy working with Bell Equipment on the maintenance and servicing of our equipment. The mechanics working out of Bell Cape Town respond quickly and their parts and service kit holding is always spot on."

Morné has for many years bought equipment through Brendon Gird, who is part of Bell Equipment's sales team in Cape Town. "Brendon helped me with used equipment in our early days and since then we've become firm friends," Morné says. "Brendon's calling is never a sales call, but rather a friendly chat and he is the first to tell me if a certain piece of equipment doesn't suit an application – advice which is so appreciated."



Bell Sales Representative, Brendon Gird (left), with Morné Jordaan, owner of Rise Construction.

JCB Backhoe opens doors for Khabowd Projects

When Moses Malesa was a little boy in primary school, he accompanied his grandmother to the local taxi and bus ranks where they sold peanuts and eggs. Moses also sold sweets to his friends at school and grew up on the proceeds of these sales.



Esther Malesa (right) with her daughter Olesego (10).

Growing up he wanted to be a lawyer, but he developed a passion for sales and marketing, which saw him obtaining a Diploma in Marketing at tertiary level. This enabled him to first work in the hairdressing industry before moving to the liquor industry. But Moses was ambitious and driven to be self-employed and by 2009, he had started his own landscaping and maintenance company called Marole Nameng Trading.

Move this picture forward by just over three decades and Moses is now with his lovely wife Esther and their three daughters. Esther, who has a Diploma in Human Resource and Project Management at tertiary level, spent 14 years with the Bojanala District Municipality in the North West Province from 2002 to 2015.

In January 2016, she joined her husband Moses in the business, and he is now her mentor. "I left the District Municipality to start a travel agency, which I sadly had

to close when the full effects of the travel ban during the COVID pandemic hit us in March 2020," Esther says. "In 2021, we decided to enter the property market and bought some houses on auctions, which we renovated to rent out.

"We also had an opportunity to buy part of the Sundown Ranch where we renovated 75 dilapidated houses and 30 flats, which we are currently renting out. We had bought a Bell 315SL Backhoe Loader from Bell Equipment in Rustenburg in 2018, along with an agricultural tractor and these machines worked very well for us when we had to bush clear areas on the Sundown Ranch property."

Having renovated the houses, they could then rent them out and recoup their investments spent on the renovations with further rentals to generate good cash flow.

Khabowd Projects is a construction company which Esther owns, and it is responsible for all the properties and construction projects.

"While Moses was still renovating older houses, we were intent on adding the construction of new houses to our repertoire as with newly serviced stands being set out to attract would-be owners, there was lots of scope for our services," she says.

Having owned the Bell 315SK Backhoe Loader since 2018, and experiencing the value that such a versatile machine brings, they sought to find a similar machine from Bell Equipment for Khabowd Projects. They had been hiring earthmoving equipment from a mining contractor but felt that owning their own equipment would be more cost-effective in the long run.

"We were pleasantly surprised to find that Bell Equipment was now the distributor of JCB Backhoe Loaders as the brand is well-known and seemingly popular judging by how many JCB machines can be seen in our area," Esther says. "We subsequently, in 2022, bought a JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loader and financed it over 36 months, which has worked well for us."

The JCB 3CX has made construction much easier for Khabowd Projects as it is used for a wide variety of tasks, like digging trenches for foundations and

services, stockpiling rubble left over from demolitions, laying piping and levelling sites. But its presence also had unplanned profitable spin-offs as Esther explains:

"One day I overheard people talking about needing a backhoe loader for a variety of tasks on one of our local mines near Rustenburg and I promptly offered our machine, which is now fully occupied there and earning a competitive hourly rate for us. This opened our eyes to the possibility that mines may need other equipment on a contract basis and, upon further enquiry, we learnt that there was scope for the use of excavators in the 20-ton class for such tasks.

"This in turn, piqued our interest in a bigger machine and we went straight to Jan Barnard at Bell Equipment in Rustenburg, who told us many positive things about the Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator."

According to Esther, an excavator would work within the confines of the mining processing plant and would be used for material handling and loading.

"Mines are really looking to empower young and emerging female contractors like me and I am confident of being able to enter a new, yet challenging market with my husband by my side and a lot of mentorship support out there, not least from companies such as Bell Equipment, which not only sell high quality machines but who also offer support."



Moses Malesa, Esther's husband and mentor.

Four new B30E ADTs impress Kijima Construction in mining application

The impressive performance of a pre-owned Bell B30E Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) convinced the management team of a Mpumalanga-based civil construction and mining business to invest in four new models for a range of applications.

Dynamic entrepreneur Hannes van Heerden established his company Kijima Construction (Pty) Ltd in the small town of Morgenzon in 2002. The business later moved to Evander, an industrial hub close to Secunda in Mpumalanga where many businesses that service both the mining and agricultural industries are based.

"Our core business has always been civil construction, erecting structural steel and doing bulk earthworks," says Johannes Streicher, Kijima Construction's General Manager. "We have, over time, completed many successful turnkey construction projects for the coal and gold mines in our immediate area."



Working in civil construction, where bulk earthworks are often the precursor to erecting structures, Kijima Construction has built up a fleet of yellow machines, trucks and other equipment more than 200 strong.

"In 2020, the confidence we gained working in bulk earthworks saw us reaching out to more ambitious projects in mining on nearby coal mines," Johannes continues. "We used 40-ton ADTs and a 75-ton excavator, and we made our target each month.

"We freely admit that after four years in this aspect of mining, we're still quite 'green' and finding our feet, especially with haulage equipment. We bought a used Bell B30E ADT, and, despite its current 20 000 hours of service, it still performs admirably. More importantly, its 30-ton mass makes it a more versatile machine than one purely dedicated to mining, as one would find with larger ADTs."

When a new contract for topsoil stripping on a coal mine was awarded to Kijima Construction in 2024, Johannes and his colleagues decided that a fleet of four new Bell B30E ADTs would suit the task perfectly and be ideal for bulk earthworks and construction

applications once the present mining contract was completed. Their challenging task involves stripping 70 000 cubic metres of topsoil a month and with their 50-ton excavator as an ideal loading tool matched to the 30-ton haulage vehicles, their thinking was that a fleet of new Bell B30E ADTs would prove their mettle and get the job done.

Dealing with Bell Equipment's Middelburg Customer Service Centre and experienced Sales Representative, Johnny Smit, Kijima Construction ordered four new Bell B30E ADTs and, once their contract had been confirmed, took delivery in August 2024. The Bell B30E ADTs are fitted with 200mm greedy boards, which increase the heaped load to 15 cubic metres. Other extras were added to make the ADTs compliant to mining safety standards including reverse cameras, LED lights on the cabs, and fire extinguishers.

"I'm a practical person and enjoy doing business face-to-face, which made the sales experience with Johnny Smit at Bell Middelburg an enjoyable one," Johannes adds smiling. "We had arranged our own financing over 36 months which suits our business plan."





Bell Sales Representative, Johnny Smit (left) with Kijima Construction's General Manager, Johannes Streicher.



The mine in question uses 'roll-over' mining methods, which means that stockpiles of topsoil must be well managed for later use in ongoing rehabilitation methods. Kijima Construction's teams dig down one metre and then haul the topsoil, which has a high clay content and specific gravity (SG) of around 1,5, to a managed stockpile up to 3km away. They also maintain the haul roads and carry out dust suppression on the mine.

"We're pleased that we bought the Bell B30E ADTs as we're confident that their true value will be experienced long after this mining contract finishes, and we may have use of them on civil engineering projects as well."

Once Kijima Construction's new Bell B30E ADTs exit their 12-month warranty period, they will be cared for by any of the company's 12 mechanics, of which there is one with an assistant on each of the three shifts that they work in a day.

"This is turning out to be a good working combination for us mechanically and financially speaking as the 50-ton excavator as a loading tool is ideally matched to the Bell B30E ADTs and they in turn are ideally priced to give us a solid return on our investment," Johannes concludes.





Kobelco SK220XD-10 proves essential for large-scale vegetable farmer

Imagine enduring the relentless pressure of being a fresh vegetable supplier to several large retail groups and knowing that all your crops are merely kept upright by the sea sand that they grow in while you must literally supply everything the plant needs to secure your income and reputation.





(From left): Johann Terblanche with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, and his son, Stian Terblanche.

This challenge demands resilience and determination – and is not for the faint of heart. Add to that the responsibility of 500 permanent employees, whose extended families depend on their wages, and the fuel and lubricants needed for 63 agricultural tractors, and the task of cultivating vegetables on 400 hectares of land becomes truly mind-boggling. Yet, this is what an established family business in Ottery on the Cape Flats is achieving – and doing extremely well.

Johann Terblanche and his son, Stian, farm the land now known as Kleinensorgen but it wasn't always so, as Johann tells us: "My dad, Percy, had been working for Correctional Services when he bought a small patch of land and started a poultry business supplying eggs, an undertaking he ran successfully for 20 years. He wasn't keen on me farming as well, so I too joined Correctional Services until I retired from the service and returned to the farm."

Johann subsequently sold his house and used the proceeds to start cultivating vegetables. "We sold our first farm to the government under their land reform programme and that money was used to buy 15 hectares of land where we could start cultivating

vegetables on contract to another supplier who in turn supplied the retail groups we now have as clients."

When Johann's son, Stian, matriculated in 2007, initial thoughts of studying agriculture were pushed aside when he came to work on the farm fulltime, learning as he went along and making a valuable contribution from the outset. Stian's sister, Anne-Mari Rix, handles the administration of the business.

Kleinensorgen now produces a range of vegetables on 80 hectares of their own land and another 320 hectares, which they rent. Having three harvests a year means that they effectively prepare 1 200 hectares of land each year.

The farm produces lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, carrots, turnips, leeks, parsley, celery, coriander, radishes, cabbage, onions, table celery, and fancy lettuce. All the produce is sorted and packaged on the farm, from where it is distributed with a fleet of refrigerated trucks. Most of the vegetables are harvested in the morning, washed, sorted, and packaged and shipped out during the afternoon of the same day.

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He's very pleased with its power and smooth and responsive controls. We're also pleased with its fuel consumption.

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“The soil here is actually sea sand and not a good growth medium but rather just the means to keep the plant upright,” Stian says. “This means that we have to supply all the nutrients and water the plant needs and ensure that whatever fertilisers and nutrients reach the plant's root system, which you may well imagine is a mammoth undertaking given the scale on which we farm.”

This large scale of agricultural infrastructure saw the Terblanches buy a used 20-ton excavator in 2012 and a second one in 2016. The machines were used to clean drains and irrigation canals, dig trenches for irrigation pipes, clean dams and blend compost with both cattle manure and chicken litter added to the mix. A value-added use of the excavators, when they were not needed on the farm, was loading sand for a large construction material supplier at a neighbouring sand mine. The excavators were sold out of hand when they had reached 16 000 hours of service and, in late 2023, Kleinensorgen was due for a new 20-ton excavator.

“We had spoken to Franco Donadio of Donadio Plant Hire after he and his brother Nico had bought a Kobelco SK220XDLC-10 Excavator from Bell Equipment, a machine which really impressed them,” Stian explains. “We subsequently met Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, who, with her excellent product knowledge, advised us to look at the slightly more compact Kobelco SK220XD-10 machine fitted with a standard 1,1 cubic-metre bucket. With Bell Equipment's competitive pricing, she convinced us that a new machine would be a better buy than a used one.”

A visit to Bell Equipment's Cape Town branch, with its large workshop facilities and comprehensive spares holding, convinced the Terblanches that their Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator would be in the best hands especially with an extended warranty to 36 months or 5 000 hours.

“It was quite amusing as we took along our excavator operator of many years, Moos Fortuin, on the pretext of showing him something else when we introduced him to the new Kobelco Excavator he would be operating. His almighty surprise and visible excitement were priceless,” Stian says smiling. “This new Kobelco Excavator has made an immediate difference to our



Moos Fortuin behind the controls of the Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator.

infrastructure with no downtime and is earning us additional income loading sand at the sand mine nearby.”

“While we realise that it's still new, this machine just purrs along, and Moos is in his element operating it. He's very pleased with its power and smooth and responsive controls. We're also pleased with its fuel consumption, which fits our business plan even when it's loading sand.”

Kleinensorgen's Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator sees average utilisation of 190 hours a month, which translates to about 2 200 hours per year, and is seen as an essential part of the mechanised fleet on the farm comprising 63 agricultural tractors and associated implements.

Skogger and Kobelco provide ideal forestry solutions for Dendotron



When considering the volumes that a contract timber harvester working in pine thinnings in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg area must produce, he is adamant that two Bell Skoggers would be more productive and cost effective than two larger and more powerful skidders.

Christopher le Roux and Andrew Flavell are business partners in the contract timber harvesting company, Dendotron Contracting (Pty) Ltd. The seeds for Christopher's career in forestry and timber were almost literally sown by his father, Bruce, when the latter worked in silviculture for a multi-national wood processing group while his son was still at school.

"I learnt a lot from my dad, for which I'm grateful. I started off in silviculture in the Greytown area in 2009 and when a silviculture contract ended, I was approached to do contract timber harvesting, which seemed almost like a natural progression," he says. "I started off conservatively, working with one Bell 225A Logger and an agricultural tractor and trailer combination, which hauled cut timber from a gum clear-felling operation to roadside depots."

Through hard work and dedication, Christopher added two more Bell Loggers to his fleet along with more agricultural tractor-trailer combinations. Meeting and exceeding his production targets soon got noticed and the awarding of a thinnings contract in the Giant's Castle area near the Drakensberg, in 2020, led to a partnership with the name of Dendotron Contracting (Pty) Ltd.

"The naming of our company Dendotron happened through us buying a shelf-company of that name and the irony is that 'Dendo', in Latin, pertains to an evergreen tree of the Ebony family," Christopher tells us. "The thinnings contract in the Giant's Castle area is done on a motor-manual basis with felling and crosscutting by hand and extraction, stacking and loading done mechanically."

"From the outset, we put our trust in Bell 225A Loggers as the industry-standard for this type of timber-handling machine. Not only are they durable with their simple design and quality in build, but they, almost equally importantly, hold their value for a very long time and fetch good prices when sold on."

Being energetic and ambitious by nature, Christopher and Andrew cast their contract harvesting net beyond South Africa's borders and landed a thinnings contract in 2024 for the largest timber processing company in neighbouring Eswatini. This contract evolved into a clear-felling contract with the thinnings contract being fully mechanised and the clear-felling contract, motor-manual.



Bell Sales Representative, Keith Milne (left), with Christopher le Roux, partner in Dendotron Contracting (Pty) Ltd.

"We had, by this stage, expanded our fleet of mechanised equipment to include excavators with harvesting heads, grapple skidders, forwarders and newer Bell 225F Loggers, although we're actually using our original Bell 225A Loggers at the thinning contracts in Eswatini," Christopher says.

"This left us somewhat depleted mechanically at the Giant's Castle operation, but an efficient solution was soon found." Working with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Keith Milne, from the company's

Customer Service Centre in Pietermaritzburg, Christopher and Andrew enquired about the Bell Skogger as a viable solution to Dendotron's extraction challenges in their local thinnings operation.

"With Keith's extensive product knowledge and talking to other Skogger owners, we knew that this was the machine best suited for extraction and indexing at our thinnings operation in KwaZulu-Natal, and we took delivery of such a machine in September 2024," Christopher recalls.



"Our present Skogger operator comes with skidder experience, and he took to the Bell Skogger smoothly. He is further aided by the client's harvesting manager, who hails from Mbombela, where he learnt first-hand how to achieve best production figures with this innovative machine.

"The Bell Skogger is super-efficient and easily bunches small, felled trees that it then extracts effortlessly. When you consider that purpose-built forestry equipment is

traditionally very expensive, especially when small volumes of such machines are sold, the Skogger, at less than half the price of a traditional skidder, certainly breaks this mould. The same goes for its fuel consumption at between eight and nine litres an hour and services, which are far more reasonably priced. With all these positives considered, a second Bell Skogger would really see us moving swiftly ahead."





At Dendotron Contracting's two operations in Eswatini, the combination of thinnings and clear-felling helps the company to fulfil its production targets. When we visited the clear-felling operation, the need for more mechanisation was soon evident by the sheer volume of gum timber that had been felled and needed to be indexed, stacked and loaded into trucks for transport to the mill.

"We soon realised that we needed a larger and more efficient loading and stacking tool at the Eswatini clear-felling operation and here we approached Bell

Swaziland, which is so ably led by Charlie Boucher and his team," he explains. "Again, we relied on Bell Equipment's excellent product knowledge and experience, with Charlie recommending a Kobelco SK220XD Excavator carrier with the Bell forestry conversion and a Bell MT601 grab, which offers 0,6 square metres of capacity in the 20-ton class."

Since its delivery in early January 2025, the Kobelco SK220XD-based timber machine works on the landing where it lays timber, stacks, and indexes it, and then loads it onto trucks. It has proved itself to be the only



machine that can effectively work in the wet and, with the long reach its boom offers when slewing, it rarely has to move on its tracks, making for stable and safe operation.

"This machine is so new we haven't yet calculated its precise fuel consumption, but all indications show that it fits the business plan perfectly with room to spare," Christopher says. "We're also putting in extra effort in getting local Eswatini operators trained so that we fulfil our company's undertaking of upliftment through skills transfer to leave a lasting legacy.

"We've enjoyed the sales experience when acquiring new machines from Bell Equipment in both South Africa and Eswatini and the service we receive from the company's maintenance teams in both these places is probably the best in the industry.

"Looking ahead we see full mechanisation as the way to go as we can be really competitive both in price and performance. When doing that, Bell Equipment is sure to be our first port of call."

MCB Excavations drives growth with Bell products and backup

The Cape Winelands is typically viewed as that relatively flat piece of land surrounded by towering mountains and bordered by wine and fruit farms in between Paarl, Stellenbosch and Franschhoek. In this area, a few plant hire companies are showing solid growth as developers build beautiful homes in new well-run estates that discerning buyers are demanding.



Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Brendon Gird (left), with Marco Bosman, owner of MCB Excavations.

One such plant hire company is MCB Excavations, named after its owner, Marco Coenraad Bosman. "My father, Coenie, was a farmer who did plant hire in the agricultural space, and I worked for him for 10 years, learning the rudiments of the business," he tells us. "I then started out on my own in 2018 working only with two small five-ton excavators and concentrating on bulk earthworks from our premises in Wellington, to the north of Paarl."

Marco had seemingly learnt the lessons from his father well and had developed good business acumen as his fledgling company has shown remarkable growth in a relatively short space of time. In just a few years, he has grown his fleet of plant to impressive proportions and can now list six tipper trucks in six- and 10-cubic metre varieties, a low-bed truck-trailer combination for heavy loads, and two water bowsers amongst the trucks he owns. Added to it are 15 backhoe loaders, 11 excavators, a grader, two rollers, tri-wheel loaders, a mobile screener, and a telehandler to round off his growing fleet.

"With 15 backhoe loaders in my fleet you would be correct in thinking that this versatile machine forms the backbone of our machines for hire," he says when we meet on the site of a new luxury lifestyle housing estate to the south east of Paarl where bulk earthworks are progressing well.

"I bought our first JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader as a used machine that had already done 8 000 hours from another contractor in 2019. I was confident in doing so as it had a complete service history. My dad had run the same JCB 3CX Backhoe Loaders on the farm, which meant that I was very familiar with this model's quality and performance."

Marco ran this first machine for another 3 000 productive hours before selling it and receiving a good resale price to boot. Of the nine JCB 3CX and six JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader machines in his fleet, the majority have been bought on the used market while still promising high mechanical availability.

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The JCB Backhoe Loaders are by far our most popular machines in plant hire, and some we fit with hydraulic hammers, making them ideal tools for demolition purposes too.

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"As I mentioned before, we're confident buying used JCB Backhoe Loaders when we know where they come from and how they've been maintained," he says. "We also keep a comprehensive range of genuine JCB parts, pins, bushes, cylinders, wheel rims and front and rear buckets, and we even have a spare backhoe boom."

The older machines are normally sold on between 10 000 and 11 000 hours and, according to Marco, farmers are especially keen on his older machines as MCB Excavations has built a reputation in the Western Cape for maintaining any machine it owns in tip-top condition.

MCB Excavations' first new JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader arrived at the company's Wellington yard in April 2023 with another similar machine following in October the same year. "We're fortunate to have a great South African company with a wide footprint like Bell Equipment supporting JCB across the country and I

happen to have known the sales representative who calls on us, Brendon Gird, for many years as he lives in Paarl, where I do too," Marco adds. "The arrangement that Bell Equipment and JCB have with a leading banking group works well for us as a financing model as we happily paid a 30% deposit with the balance financed over 36 months, which also means that very few of our machines have money owing on them.

"The JCB Backhoe Loaders are by far our most popular machines in plant hire, and some we fit with hydraulic hammers, making them ideal tools for demolition purposes too," he says. "To run a complete plant hire business in this environment, you need to be a solutions-driven one-stop-shop, and I think we've achieved that with the range of reliable and well-maintained equipment that we offer."

MCB Excavations runs a range of excavators from 20-tons to three-tons with the latter having rubber tracks. Marco in 2023 bought a Kobelco SK55SRX-6



Excavator with a mass of 5,5 tons and it has proved to be very popular for work in narrow spaces with it having zero tail swing, and on farms where it is used extensively to repair flood damage and maintain irrigation infrastructure. Another machine that has proved its worth is the Finlay 683 Screener that often sees action screening sand as well as stone in various sizes for use in gabions.

MCB Excavations also owns a JCB 535-140 Telehandler that, with its proven stability and 14-metre long boom, is extremely popular with clients in construction where, for example, roof plates or awkward loads must be safely placed on high places where mobile or tower cranes aren't always present.

Marco says although fuel consumption is important to him and his clients, most machines are hired out on dry rates and with MCB Excavations' excellent maintenance record on all their equipment, fuel consumption remains within normal ranges.

"Downtime though is our big enemy as any client wants the machine that he is renting, to run at its maximum uptime, which is a reasonable expectation," he says. "That is another reason why we're slowly converting our fleet to new machines to guarantee maximum uptime and we're positive that Bell Equipment with its fine products and legendary backup service, will remain part of that journey."

Fairways, friendships and fantastic customers

Our annual Bell Golf Days, held at Serengeti Golf & Wildlife Estate in Johannesburg in August and Cotswold Downs in KwaZulu-Natal in September, were a highlight on our BESSA calendar in 2025. We appreciate the support of our customers and stakeholders at these events – your support is what 'drives' us forward and we value the partnerships we share both on and off the course.





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STEEL CAP

BELL CASUAL LEATHER SLIP-ON SHOE

BROWN



INCL. VAT

R1 000⁰⁰

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TAN



INCL. VAT

R1 500⁰⁰

NO STEEL CAP

BELL VELDSKOEN

YELLOW
SIZE: 6-13



INCL. VAT

R1 000⁰⁰

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BELL VELDSKOEN

TAN
SIZE: 6-13



INCL. VAT

R1 000⁰⁰

NO STEEL CAP

BELL

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12-15 MAY 2026



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