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Joest Optimises Plant Performance By Combining Condition Monitoring With Testing And Measurement

In an extremely tough economic climate, condition monitoring is gaining momentum in the mining industry as a cost saving option that enables plant operators to monitor equipment output, pre-empt failures and capture valuable long term data on plant performance. While conventional condition monitoring tracks a specific parameter of condition to identify a change indicative of a developing fault, vibrating equipment specialist Joest adds advanced testing and measuring technology to the mix, helping customers achieve a continuous supply of quality production tonnage, while protecting company assets and reducing the total cost of ownership.

"Our activities in this area are focused on mitigating the risks associated with each unique customer plant," Theresa Walton, general manager service at Joest, says. "We differentiate ourselves in the marketplace not only through the quality of our products, but also by the high level of service we offer and by the advanced testing and measurement technology we've developed. Joest has never shied away from investing in technology and this capability allows us to enhance our offering to customers, enabling the early identification of conditions that would shorten the equipment's lifespan — before they develop into a major failure. The longer we can extend the life of our equipment on site, the better value the customer will extract from this investment."

Walton predicts that the role of condition monitoring/testing and measurement in the future is likely to increase in order to counter a growing trend in the mining industry worldwide to specify lighter screens and associated support structures when a plant is first designed, in an effort to contain costs. Joest tailors its test and measurement technology to suit each customer's specific needs, taking into account skills levels at the plant, as well as production and quality requirements, and linking these factors to existing systems. Based on this customised approach, the company is in the process of installing sensors on its equipment at several customer plants.

"However, installing dozens of sensors doesn't take away from the need to maintain the equipment to operate within its specifications and to refurbish it within appropriate cycles," she comments. "There is also an important role for human observation of equipment and performance. All these factors combine to extend the life of the plant."

Kenny Mayhew-Ridgers, Joest's general manager engineering, adds that in the absence of a standard commercial solution available on the market to offer high end condition monitoring on vibrating equipment, this South African-owned OEM conducts in-house research and development to arrive at the right approach for each application, in collaboration with its customers.

"We find that the condition monitoring vibration sensors associated with SCADA systems, which were originally designed for applications in rotating equipment, cannot provide the required measurement range for our vibrating equipment, because we far exceed its maximum levels," he says. "This is why we include 'test and measurement technology' into our approach when advanced condition monitoring is required. Every site has different demands and it's extremely important to listen to these needs and understand the level of skills and capabilities at a given plant. We believe that by working with the OEM, who has an absolute understanding of the equipment's characteristics, plant operators can be assured of the ideal monitoring technology."

Before its screens are despatched to customer sites, Joest tests each unit to record the baseline measurements, and once installed, further tests are conducted to establish the influence of the plant structure and full load conditions on the unit and determine the tolerable variances. These measurements are proving invaluable in flagging deviations and achieving long term optimisation of equipment performance.

Joest provides a full spectrum of service capabilities, from periodic on-site service calls, to full on-site maintenance for the life of the equipment. It is one of the largest South African owned and operated OEMs supplying custom designed vibratory equipment solutions for a broad spectrum of duties to Africa's bulk materials handing market. Joest's specialist capabilities are reflected in its track record of longstanding installations operating efficiently year after year in the continent's most arduous conditions.

CONDITION MONITORING PIC 01 : Joest optimises plant performance by combining condition monitoring with testing and measurement.

CONDITION MONITORING PIC 02 : Vibrating equipment specialist Joest uses advanced testing and measuring technology to help customers achieve a continuous supply of quality production tonnage.

CONDITION MONITORING PIC 03 : Joest predicts that the role of condition monitoring/testing and measurement in the future is likely to increase in order to counter a growing trend in the mining industry worldwide to specify lighter screens.

ENDS ... JULY 2014

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