

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vital To Retain Winder Engineering Skills In SA – Parnis

Once a powerhouse of engineering skills to support the local mining industry, South Africa must now work harder to ensure that it retains and passes on this technical capability – especially in fields like mine winder manufacture and refurbishment.

Parnis Manufacturing works manager Brian Berry says it is a major concern – especially among mining companies and the medium to heavy engineering sector – that there is now a severe lack of skills in certain key engineering fields. In fact, a number of respected engineering companies that serviced the mining and associated industries no longer exist in South Africa.

“Over many decades, South Africa developed a depth of skills in the manufacture, repair and refurbishing of mine winders. In fact, the majority of the winders used on mines on the continent were produced in this country,” says Berry. “Even the design and engineering staff used to come from the workshop floor, so they had an in-depth understanding of what was required.”

With the application of computers to the world of engineering design, this is no longer the case, he notes, adding that this lack of shop floor expertise often needs to be mitigated, so that a supplied design can actually be functionally fabricated.

“The shift away from ‘old-line’ manufacturing and toward more advanced, computer-assisted manufacturing has changed the industry significantly,” he says. “The ongoing incorporation of information technology and automation into our manufacturing processes, for instance, has increased productivity and enhanced quality; but it is still critical that engineering expertise is available.”

He emphasises, however, that the shortage of skills should not be seen just as a problem. It is also an opportunity to leverage the country’s population of skilled artisans to pass on this important knowledge base, so that engineering and manufacturing operations in this discipline can be sustained.

“At Parnis Manufacturing, we regard our depth of experience as a major differentiator, and one which earns us the respect and support of various sectors such as mining and energy,” says Berry. “With our 43 years in business, we are one of the remaining few players providing these solutions, and are using our proud legacy to help ensure the sustainability of this sector and the retention of skills in the country.”

He highlights Parnis Manufacturing’s manufacturing design facility, giving the company the ability to offer skills from concept through to final detailing and manufacture.

“This gives us a huge advantage in our sector, especially as our services are backed up by decades of specialised experience,” he says. “This capability represents a valuable service for the customer, who appreciates its important impact on the quality of the final product.”

Parnis Manufacturing’s extensive 18,000 square metre facility in Tulisa Park, south of Johannesburg, includes over 8,000 square metres of workshop space. The company is able to deploy its enviable skills base through its range of fit-for-purpose fabrication and machining equipment, including vertical boring machines, horizontal boring machines and CNC milling machines, as well as ancillary drilling and welding machinery.

Vertical boring capacity at the facility extends to a table size of 4,5 metres, a turning diameter of 5,3 metres and a turning height of 3,2 metres, with a maximum load of up to 50 tonnes. Its horizontal borers boast a capacity of up to 5,5 metres longitudinal travel by 2,5 metres high.

“Our large vertical boring machine puts us at an advantage to most of our competitors, and allows us to tackle a wide range of engineering projects,” he says. “Other equipment includes milling machines with 4,5 metre longitudinal travel and a 1,8 metres height and an overhead crane lifting capacity of 50 tonnes (tandem).”

The company has decades of experience in manufacturing and refurbishing a range of medium to heavy equipment; a few of these are mine winders and their components, boiler components, fans, fan casings, mill heads and sheave wheels.

MINE PIC 01 : Trunion machining underway at Parnis Manufacturing.

MINE PIC 02 : A mine hoist and drag drums refurbished by Parnis Manufacturing ready for dispatch to the customer.

MINE PIC 03 : A double drum winder being transported to site.

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