

PRESS RELEASE

Milwaukee Power Tools plays a key role in revolutionising sensitive blasting-and-drilling

29 May 2019: Blasting and drilling is one of the most hazardous operations undertaken at mines and quarries. In a bid to make this safer, faster, and more efficient, Nxco Mining Technologies has entered into a partnership with leading supplier Upat to introduce a revolutionary new technology based on its Nonex™ RockPoppers and the Milwaukee M18 CHM drilling and breaking hammer.

“Our aim is essentially to replace pneumatic drilling-and-blasting systems,” Nxco Mining Technologies Operations Director **Gert Barnard** comments. Here the Milwaukee M18 CHM drilling and breaking hammer is used to drill the blastholes required for its proprietary Nonex™ RockPoppers.

The RockPoppers consist of 13mm cartridges with net explosives quantities of 5 and 10g each, and is ideal for breaking up boulders of up to 1m³. Traditionally, these were broken up manually using hammers and high explosives, which is inefficient and dangerous, Barnard points out.

“This new approach to drilling-and-blasting is highly flexible and effective in reducing inadvertent rock piles to a more manageable size, without endangering any mine workers.” One of the biggest advantages of using RockPoppers underground is the added safety in terms of noxious gases. The noxious gases measured gives 14ppm CO per blast – which implies the RockPoppers can be used in-shift.

The rest of the range available from Nxco Mining Technologies consist of 28, 34, 42 and 60mm cartridges ideal for both large-scale rock blasting. Up to 42mm cartridges can be used with the Milwaukee M18 CHM drilling and breaking hammer.

Upat Technical Specialist for Mining & Utilities **Clayton Dry** reveals that the Milwaukee M18 CHM is a world-first 18 V 5 kg SDS-Max hammer for maximum versatility and portability, with performance comparative to ac tools. The brushless POWERSTATE™ motor in particular provides for corded drilling performance.

In addition, the REDLINK PLUS™ intelligence system allows for advanced digital overload protection for both the tool and battery, with tool performance enhanced under load for extra performance. The high-demand 9.0 Ah REDLITHIUM-ION™ battery pack delivers up to five times more run time, up to 35% more power, and up to two times more battery life.

The system is currently being trialled at one of the largest gold-mining groups in the Free State. Barnard highlights that a key growth opportunity is small-scale artisanal mining, which has traditionally used hammers and pre-historic rock breaking methods.

A major problem has been finding a drilling and breaking hammer up to the task, with competitor products not proving to be a match for the Milwaukee M18 CHM, which remained in pristine condition after 32 blastholes in one test, Barnard stresses.

“The drill bits are superb. Another demonstration involved carrying the Milwaukee M18 CHM 2.7km underground to the development face, where it worked on-and-off underground for a month. The fact that it is cordless is a major advantage, with a rate of five to eight blastholes per battery,” Barnard elaborates.

For the RockPopper technology to work optimally, drilling discipline is very important. A bad drill will result in a bad blast. It is equally important to place the cartridges at the bottom of the hole and to

stem efficiently. The Milwaukee M18 makes smooth work of drilling these blast holes, ensuring quality and speed of work.

Nxco Mining Technologies was established in 2001 to develop and commercialise propellant-based rock-breaking technology for use in mining and civil applications globally. Its production facility in Pelindaba, Pretoria manufactures and assembles the propellant-based cartridges.

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Notes to the Editor

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About Upat

Upat SA (Pty) Ltd. is a 100% South African owned business that began trading in 1983. From the outset, Upat has been committed to the building industry, supplying not only a range of anchor bolts, but also rotary hammer drilling machines, tungsten-tipped masonry drill bits, powder actuated tools, and allied building and construction products. Upat's ability to supply a range of top-quality products at market-related prices has resulted in it becoming a market leader in Southern Africa. Upat is proudly the sole Southern African distributor of the fischer range of construction fasteners, the Milwaukee power-tool brand, the AEG power-tool brand and the Stabila range of measuring tools.

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