

Local pump suppliers explore expo's African linkages

South Africa's stagnant mining sector is driving local pump manufacturers and distributors to launch aggressive export growth strategies beyond the country's borders. A number of them are planning to use the upcoming Pumps Valves & Pipes Africa Expo to position themselves in the global mining sector and pursue new business opportunities.

"The South African mining sector has suffered a serious drop in production of between 4-5% over the past year due to various local and international factors," says John Thomson, managing director of Exhibition Management Services, organisers of the Pumps, Valves & Pipes Africa Expo (PVPA).

"The ailing mining sector is affecting all its ancillary suppliers, including local pump manufacturers and suppliers," says Thomson. "They are consequently moving into mining-friendly African countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Senegal, Ghana and Burkina Faso, in search of more lucrative new markets. A number of our exhibitors have indicated that they are using this year's show specifically to grow this sector of their market."

PVPA is one of 10 component shows in the SA Industrial and Technology Fair taking place at Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg from 14-16 May 2013.

Gavin Doran, vice chairman and EXCO member of the South African Pumps Manufacturers' Association (SAPMA) says the current mining climate has made investors more wary of spending on South African mining, which has made the local pumps industry highly vulnerable.

"Most of our members are now chasing markets in Africa where many new mines are opening up," adds Doran. "They are supplying pumps to mines in Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo some are supplying the Middle East and making inroads into international markets."

PVPA's role in promoting pump industry

Doran believes that the Pumps Valves & Pipes Africa Expo plays a key role in establishing and growing the association's links to new international markets, particularly in Africa, and is crucial to keeping the local pumps industry going.

"PVPA 2013 provides a huge opportunity to network, grow our markets, develop new strategies to promote our industry and products, and keep in contact with our current partners - that's why the association is supporting the event and exhibiting again this year."

Africa's surging GDP attract interest

Long-standing PVPA exhibitor Performa Pumps is exhibiting again this year. The Benoni-based company specialises in pumps for the mining and agricultural sectors and has been a loyal exhibitor at PVPA from its inception.

Johann Malherbe, managing director of Performa Pumps, says current challenges have not stopped the pumps industry from growing in other areas. "We are expanding into Africa where continental GDP is

growing by more than 5% a year - this opens up many opportunities for us," says Malherbe.

Performa Pumps is the sole supplier for Kenflo pumps and now supplies to Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and Mozambique, and is also considering Middle East markets.

Commenting on the company's decision to participate in this year's expo, Malherbe says: "I have been to similar industry events, but none have been as successful for my business as Pumps Valves and Pipes Africa," he says. "We appreciate the opportunity to be part of a specialised trade fair that promotes our industry, our business and our products."

Africa has huge resources and is a major producer of more than 60 of the world's most important metal and mineral products, including gold, diamonds, uranium, manganese, chromium, nickel, bauxite, cobalt and platinum group metals. Although some parts of Africa are still untapped, the continent still holds about 30% of the planet's mineral reserves, including 40% of its gold, 60% of its cobalt and 90% of the world's platinum group metals reserves.

"Businesses around the globe are now looking at Africa as a continent of massive business opportunities," continues Malherbe. "New mines and industries are starting up, and that is creating new markets for other businesses like the pumps industry outside of South Africa," he says.

Industry rides INDUTEC Business Surge

Another pumps company looking forward to leveraging opportunities at PVPA is Letaba Pumps, who provide dewatering pumps to a number of mines in South Africa.

"PVPA is our ticket to move into the African market and to advertise ourselves," enthuses Ian Duke, a director at Letaba Pumps. "We will be showcasing our new Neptune pump, a specialised chemicals dosing pump along with the WILDEN Stallion range of double diaphragm dewatering pumps and precision timing. Neptune's major applications are associated within power generation, petrochemicals, irrigation and mining markets.

"The opportunities for doing business in Africa have never been greater," says Thomson. "Last year we had exhibitors from over 20 countries and including visitors from Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, England, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, USA, United Arab Emirates, Zambia and Zimbabwe."

Now in its eighth year, PVPA offers pump manufacturers and suppliers an unrivalled platform to network with mining countries and forge strong business relationships, all under one roof. The show is targeted at suppliers to the following sectors: mining; water utilities; national and local government; industrial and civil engineering; manufacturing, food, beverage, dairy, brewing, agriculture and horticulture; petrochemicals; pulp and paper.

For more, go to www.exhibitionsafrica.com/pvpvisitorreg.html.