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AFRISAM WHERE THE CUSTOMER IS

Being close to its customers is a key differentiator for AfriSam. And in line with this strategy AfriSam Mpumalanga identified the need to provide an enhanced level of service in the Witbank coalfields region.

“It was critical that we had a readymix plant capable of supplying projects in the coal region and Ogies was identified as the ideal location because of both current and upcoming projects,” Russell Wearne, AfriSam Mpumalanga branch manager, says.

The AfriSam Ogies Readymix Plant started supplying customers in the area in August 2007, and demand was such that a second batch plant has been added to meet the increasing customer needs. The output of Plant A is 33 m³ per hour while Plant B is 60 m³ per hour.

The storage silos at Plant A have 50 ton cement and 50 ton fly ash capacities and the Plant B silos can store up to 100 tons of cement and 60 tons of fly ash. “This storage capacity is due to be increased to 120 ton for both cement and fly ash respectively on each plant,” Wearne says.”

“We carefully researched the actual plant location and finally settled on a site directly across the road from the Phola Project,” Wearne explains. “This has enabled us to provide the customer with significantly enhanced service levels.”

Setting up a readymix plant in a remote area involves a number of logistical challenges apart from ensuring the necessary infrastructure. Factors which are a given for any such facility are water and electricity supply.

“Another logistical factor was the environmental aspects, but this is something that AfriSam has never taken lightly,” Wearne says. Various dust suppression systems including water sprayers and the dust suppression filters were fitted to the silos. Wearne says that dust monitoring is a continuous process at the plant to ensure that the operation stays well within the necessary legal requirements.

Wearne says that the water table in Ogies is very high so steps were taken to ensure that run off water is channelled for recycling on the plant itself instead of re-entering the ground water system.

Aggregates are trucked to the AfriSam readymix plant in Ogies from the company’s Zeekoewater Quarry in Witbank, a distance of some 40 km.

Cement is trucked in from the AfriSam cement depot at Brakpan, while fly ash is also delivered by road from Kendal Power Station.

“This means we use normal on-highway vehicles including tippers and cement tankers which need to be accommodated on an already constricted site,” Wearne says. “This is exacerbated as the current output demand means vehicles do daily deliveries,” he adds.

“We currently have ten AfriSam Readymix trucks based permanently on the site so traffic volumes on and off the site are very high,” Wearne says.

“As a result of this, traffic control is very important and we have implemented a number of measures to assist such as direction flow signage and driver induction,” Wearne adds.

“While the plant is generally in operation 12 hours a day, on occasion such as during a concrete pour with sliding formwork or shaft sinking operations, we willingly accommodate our customers by working longer hours. This forms part of our ongoing drive to provide our customers with a quality supply and after-sales service,” Wearne concludes.

CAPTION FOR OGIES: AfriSam’s Ogies Readymix Plant.

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