Asset management drives growth

Is trenchless technology becoming more accepted in South Africa?
Richard Jansen van Vuuren speaks to Neil van Rooyen from TT Innovations about the local market and the latest developments within it.

Are South African clients more accepting of trenchless technology techniques after initially having been very opposed to them?
Yes, although we haven’t really experienced too much opposition that related to the process itself. Most of the reluctance to use trenchless technologies was due to the perceived expense that often exceeded cheaper open-cut options.

However, if one takes into account the environmental impact, construction inconvenience and efficiency, trenchless technology is far superior to conventional construction.

The awareness of these factors has increased over the years and has consequently led to a steady increase in trenchless projects.

What were the initial concerns/misconceptions regarding trenchless technologies and how were clients assured that these could be overcome?
The main concerns regarding trenchless technology are:
• Would it be suitable for African conditions (is the equipment robust enough)?
• Many clients were reluctant to implement ‘new’ and untested technology, even though project successes were well documented overseas.
• Many contractors/investors in trenchless technology initially included a larger portion of the capital recovery into their

RIGHT View of compact pipe reel used for the pipeline renovation project in Durban
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Trenchless technology has proven highly effective and applicable to South African conditions. The continuous marketing drives to publicise these successes have resulted in client acceptance. This has also documented its successful track record, with it no longer being seen as a ‘new’ technology but a viable construction alternative.

As trenchless technology was implemented, contractors had access to more projects, which consequently resulted in a more competitive market, ultimately benefitting both end users and contractors.

Have you seen an increase in business over the medium to long term?

A slight increase in enquiries has been seen. The recent economic crisis has severely affected the entire construction industry, including trenchless technology. Hopefully the positive trend will continue as clients seek to derive more value for their rand, which trenchless technology is ideally suited to doing.
What projects are you currently providing products and/or services to?

Pipeline renovation using compact pipe (close-fit pipe). This project has recently been completed for eThekwini. TT Innovations was the specialist sub-contractor used for this installation (approximately 4 000 m of compact pipe installed for the renovation of the water main infrastructure).

Horizontal directional drilling: New pipeline installations are being undertaken for various private clients, mostly for duct installations. The last series of notable pipeline installations was in 2008, namely the Berg River pipeline crossing (4 x 160 mm duct installed under the Berg River, with a crossing length of 168 m). In 2009, the installation of a 315 mm diameter HDPE bulk water main under the Diep River (with the installation length measuring 200 m) was undertaken. In 2010, two 800 mm diameter sleeves were installed under roadways in Mossel Bay for the desalination plant. The crossings measured 46 m and 50 m respectively.

Pipe bursting: This is done for the City of Cape Town as part of its annual initiative to replace deteriorated pipeline infrastructure.

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