

Assmang chooses Immersive Technologies AE Simulator

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For Immediate Release

An African mining group has chosen advanced equipment simulator training technology from an Australian company, Immersive Technologies, to assist efforts to improve mine productivity and efficiency through enhanced skills transfer and development.

The decision by the ZAR4 billion (\$US660 million) Assmang Ltd, a leading South African manganese, iron ore and chrome producer, to purchase Immersive Technologies Advanced Equipment (AE) Simulators and support packages followed detailed appraisal of simulator training options in the market.

Ramp-up of Assmang's Northern Cape iron ore production and exports via development of the new Bruce, King and Mokaning (BKM) mine, which will eventually replace the company's 40-year-old Beeshoek mine near Postmasburg, is expected to see its iron ore sales grow to 10 million tonnes per annum from about 6Mtpa by 2010.

First production from the \$US517 million BKM operation is expected in the first half of 2008. A planned \$US291 million second-phase expansion at BKM would take annual production past 15Mt.

Assmang engineering manager, Pierre Becker, said the Immersive Technologies AE Simulator would play a series of critical roles in the expansion drive. It would be used to assess the aptitude of new operators; train existing operators of 90t-payload Caterpillar 777 dump trucks to drive much bigger, 190t-payload Caterpillar 789 trucks, safely and productively; and it would be employed to teach operators how to work at a high level with a range of machines.

"We have some of the new equipment on site at Beeshoek now, and more ordered. It will be moved within 14 months to the new mine location," Becker said.

"We will eventually run up to 25 Caterpillar 789 trucks at BKM.

"The operators are not familiar with the new machines. We need to start the training now so when the trucks move over to the new mine they will be effective and productive and we can move smoothly toward our production targets.

"As well as the (new) trucks and seven (Caterpillar 994) wheel loaders, we also have auxiliary equipment such as D10 dozers and wheel dozers, and excavators, and we see the simulator being able to help us in cross-training our drivers so they can drive more than one vehicle."

Becker said about 50 truck drivers would initially be trained using the AE Simulator (with 789C Conversion Kit™). As production built up at BKM and the truck fleet grew, and people were trained to drive various machines, more than 160 operators would be put through simulator training.

"It is the quality of the training, and the flexibility of the simulator, that give us such important advantages," Becker said.

“We can use it to improve safety by simulating situations and conditions you would not be able to expose trainees to with actual mining equipment. You can simulate the actual production environment, which normally is not all that practical in the physical mining environment, and you can perform training off-site in a sort of classroom environment.

“You can pre-screen potential (truck) drivers without risking damage to your equipment, or the trainees.”

About Immersive Technologies

Established in 1993, Immersive Technologies is the leading global provider of operator training simulators to the mining and earthmoving industries.

With more than 70 AE simulators deployed in 16 countries around the world, the company’s simulators are integral to the operations of many world-leading mining companies who use the technology to improve operational safety and efficiency while driving down maintenance costs.

Immersive Technologies’ exclusive alliances with several leading original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) ensures its extensive range of AE Simulators achieve a superior level of realism and accuracy through the use of exclusively licensed proprietary data and machine technical information from the OEM.

Immersive Technologies managing director Peter Salfinger said the company was committed to providing equipment simulator training products that increased the safety and profitability of customers.

The company’s expanding customer support base includes offices in Australia and the USA.

For more information about Immersive Technologies, visit www.ImmersiveTechnologies.com