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R104 ROAD REHABILITATION PROJECT BETWEEN PRETORIA AND BRONKHORSTSPRUIT ON SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION NEXT MAY DESPITE COUNTRYWIDE SHORTAGES OF BITUMEN

The rehabilitation of the R104 road from the Simon Vermooten intersection in Pretoria to Bronkhorstspruit, an alternative route to the N4 tollroad, will be completed by the project deadline of next May, says Jay Juganan, contracts director of Concor Roads & Earthworks, a subsidiary of Murray & Roberts Construction.

The R104 runs parallel to the N4 between Pretoria and Bronkhorstspruit and was originally constructed about 60 years ago using a water bound macadam with 150 mm rock inserts along the edges on both sides of the 42 km long road.

The contract, awarded to Concor Roads & Earthworks by the SA National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL), runs for 18 months through to 1 May next year and comprises the reconstruction of a single carriageway of 13.4 metres wide – including the shoulder and road reserve, turning lanes at 19 intersections, and upgrading of a number of culverts.

“The widening of 4 bridges is included in the contract but the work is dependent on the granting of water utilisation licences by the Department of Water Affairs,” Juganan says.

“The existing road is being recycled as sub base in half widths and a new G2, bitumen stabilised layer is being placed on top of the sub base. We are faced with the generic issue of securing consistent supplies of bitumen but I’m confident that we will complete the project by the deadline date,” he says.

Turning to safety, Juganan says that the stringent application of the Murray & Roberts Stop.Think safety programme is yielding positive results on the project.

“This approach to safety is working extremely well and is emphasised every morning in toolbox talks with all the employees. Our biggest safety challenge arose during the course of constructing the first 4 km section through Mamelodi as a result of taxis jumping the stop/go single lane sections. We held
discussions with local councillors and with taxi associations but were not able to fully resolve the issue.”

Concor Roads & Earthworks site manager, Mabandla Dlamini, indicates that a total of 140 people are employed on the project, including sub contractors. Members of the local community have been employed to build drainage and curbs along the 42 km route and are also appointed to do the road marking. In addition, Concor Roads & Earthworks has entered into an undertaking to train sub contractors at local level, using the services of Seta-approved training suppliers.

“We are identifying promising sub contractors to undergo generic training as well as training to develop entrepreneurial and engineering skills,” says Dlamini.

Liezl Beukes, Concor Roads & Earthworks’ environmental officer on the R104 road rehabilitation project, is ensuring strict compliance with the environmental management plan. The road rehabilitation project passes through 21 wetlands and crosses four rivers - Pienaars, Honde, Forfar and Bronkhorstspruit River.

“The wetlands, rivers and catchment areas have been impacted negatively by anthropogenic (human) development and there have been a number of river diversions in the past during bridge building. Concor Roads & Earthworks’ approach during bridge widening will be to demarcate sensitive zones. Workers will undergo environmental sensitisation induction training. The bridges will be widened from the existing piers and therefore no work will be carried out in the river beds,” Beukes says.

She says that in terms of the environmental management plan, all trees being removed from the widened road reserve are being processed through a chipping machine and the mulch dispersed in the vegetation alongside the route. In addition, all alien plants are being removed and, in rehabilitating the road shoulders, top soil is being replaced and dressed with indigenous grass and forbs.

During the course of the 18 month contract Concor Roads & Earthworks will use 17 thousand tons of asphalt, 9 million litres of bitumen emulsion, 1.2 million litres of 80/100 pen bitumen, 85 000 m³ of local G2 aggregate, 45 000 m³ of local G5 aggregate, 8 000 m³ of seal stone, 3 thousand tons cement
for stabilisation and 8 thousand kilolitres of water from a commercial source for construction purposes.

SIMON VERMOOTEN PIC 01 : The overbuild along a new half width section of the R104 road between Pretoria and Bronkhorstspruit, currently being rehabilitated by Concor Roads & Earthworks, is graded prior to traffic being diverted onto the new section ahead of work starting on the existing half width section of the 60 year old road visible in the foreground.

SIMON VERMOOTEN PIC 02 : Concor Roads & Earthworks contracts director, Jay Juggenan indicates the 6 inch rocks lining both sides of the 40 km stretch of R104 that need to be removed in order to prevent damage to costly recycling equipment used in the rehabilitation of the alternative route between Pretoria and Bronkhorstspruit.

SIMON VERMOOTEN PIC 03 : Liezl Beukes, Concor Roads & Earthworks’ environmental officer on the R104 road rehabilitation project, holds a sample of the mulch made from trees removed from the widened road reserve and dispersed in the vegetation alongside the alternative route as part of the environmental management plan.

SIMON VERMOOTEN PIC 04 : A Concor Roads & Earthworks recycling train processing the existing surface of the R104 road between Pretoria and Bronkhorstspruit with the recycled material being used as sub base overlaid at a later stage by a bitumen stabilised layer.

SIMON VERMOOTEN PIC 05 : The laying of asphalt by Concor Roads & Earthworks is proceeding apace on section B of the 42 km stretch of the R104 road between the Simon Vermooten intersection in Pretoria and Bronkhorstspruit.

ENDS … JULY 2012

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