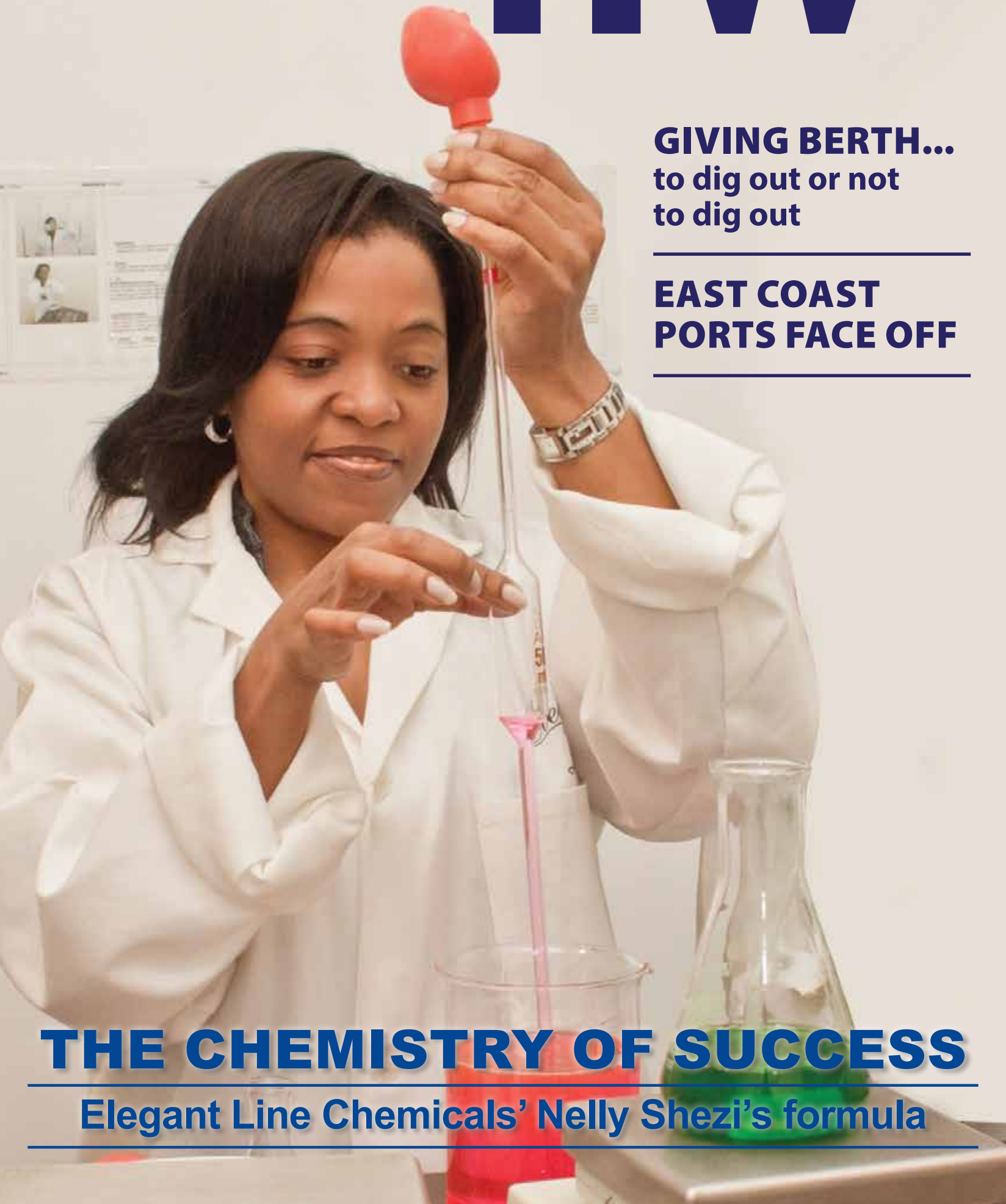


June 2014

**DURBAN/
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FREIGHT & TRADING WEEKLY

ftw



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The chemistry of success

Elegant Line Chemicals targets Africa growth

Liesl Venter

It was Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female president, who said if your dreams do not scare you, then they are simply not big enough.

Speak to Durban businesswoman Nelly Shezi and she will tell you about scary dreams that take you places. In just seven years she has not only realised her dream of running her own business, but she has managed to expand the footprint of the company to such an extent that she is exporting across Africa. And just as importantly, she is sharing that dream with hopeful young men and women through several skills transfer programmes.

"It was not easy. Not by a long shot," she says when asked about her decision to start Elegant Line Chemicals which manufactures and distributes a variety of chemical products, from domestic and industrial commodity chemicals to lubricants, personal care products and water treatment solutions.

Born and bred in Durban, with a chemical background, she had been working for several years when she decided to take the plunge in 2007 and venture out on her own. "It was just time. I needed to do something for myself and I wanted to see if I could make a go of it."

With just herself, her dreams and a receptionist, Elegant Line Chemicals was born. With the head office, factory and laboratory



“

We are not going out to conquer the world. We want to export from our Durban base, where we manufacture most of our products, to Africa.

– NELLY SHEZI

in Durban, the company also has branches in Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Angola and Zimbabwe.

"It has taken a lot of hard work and determination. Starting a small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) is

difficult enough, making a success of it even more so," says Shezi. And she did it during a recession no less.

Having been awarded the 2013 Africa SMME Award and more recently the Frost & Sullivan's South African Entrepreneurial Company of the Year Award in the commodity chemicals space, the business has also been recognised as one of the country's top

emerging exporters. There is no stopping Shezi who has proven one does not have to be based in the economic hub that is Johannesburg to be successful.

In fact, she believes there are some major advantages for manufacturers and shippers to be situated close to the ports. "The cost of logistics in Africa is high enough without adding extra cost to transportation by increasing a leg to the port. For me it makes sense to be based in my home town of Durban," she says.

But being Durban-based is just part of the secret to her success. She has rapidly grown Elegant Line Chemicals both within and outside South Africa on the strength of a robust business model that focuses on high product quality with innovative solutions, excellent customer service and imparting training to an industry with an acute skills shortage.

"I import skills from Europe and America as much as I can and impart that to young people. We have to improve our skills base in Africa if we are going to increase our manufacturing sector – the lack of skills remains a major impediment."

With her first export shipment having arrived in Mozambique in 2010, she has gradually been growing her market and currently



Hand sanitiser is one of the many products manufactured and distributed in Africa by Elegant Line Chemicals.

exports to some eight other countries including the DRC, Angola and the islands of Reunion.

"We have been very clear in the strategy we have set out. We are not going out to conquer the world. We want to export from our Durban base where we manufacture most of our products to Africa. Next on the cards is Nigeria," she said.

But in true Shezi style it is not being rushed. She says it is important to have a very clear understanding of the market you are operating in.

"We tailor-make solutions and have systematically expanded our footprint in southern Africa by partnering with local companies on the ground to benefit from their expertise, but also to make sure we get to understand the heart of the market."

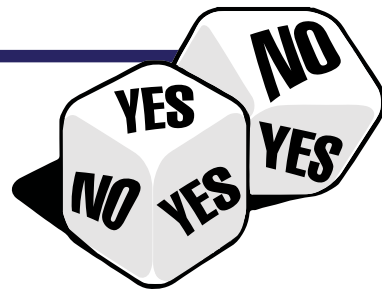
She has also made sure that her business does not become the target of the big players in the chemical industry. "We cannot take on the big companies and therefore we have marketed our product directly to end-users and have developed a network of local distributors within the markets we serve."

Research and development are important aspects of the business. "As an entrepreneur one has to remain innovative and continuously work at extending one's product line, keeping it viable and making sure it is meeting the needs of the market. At the same time we have kept it very simple – we don't do fancy packaging and we use suppliers that are able to move our goods efficiently and effectively adhering to the strict ISO guidelines."



Product is loaded ahead of export at the premises of Elegant Line Chemicals in Durban.

To dig out or not to dig out ...



Liesl Venter

To build or not to build seems to be the big question in Durban. As Transnet forges ahead with plans to dig out a R100-billion port at the site of the old Durban International Airport, industry continues to question how necessary this really is.

Kevin Martin, chairman of the Durban Harbour Carriers' Association (DHCA), believes a more viable solution is the development of the PX Block some 2km from the current port.

"We need to take a very close look at terminal operations at present to see where we are heading," he told FTW.

"The average shipment size has increased from around 3000 TEUs in and out to about 4400. In order to accommodate the increased volumes we have been stacking higher in the terminal, which has had the drawback of slowing down the dispatch of imports as more stack moves are required."

Martins said in addition, due to the manner in which containers

are discharged at one tower, they often have a situation that is dependent on stack timing. "What this means in layman's terms is that 50% of the road volumes for the terminal run to one tower while others are being under-utilised in a 24-hour period."

If this were to be projected into the future where bigger vessels are docking with shipment sizes of around 8000 TEUs (4000 in and 4000 out), it practically means that three vessels will equal 24 000 TEUs. "So three vessels berth and you are at optimum. What do you then say? Sorry I'm constipated?"

Martins maintains that the problem that has to be solved is reducing road congestion while increasing container throughput in the most cost-effective manner to the logistics chain.

"Due to higher stacking, trucks are doing 50% less loads per truck, per cycle than 10 years ago. This means we now have double the fleets on the road causing added congestion at double the price," he told FTW.

Transnet's suggestions to the challenge – that of building a new port about 20 km from the existing port as well as the development of a dry port at Cato Ridge some 60km inland – is questionable, he says.

Martins and other industry role-players maintain that a big picture approach is needed when it comes to Durban.

"The fact is only exports need to remain close to the water. If we move all imports and transshipments out immediately, leaving only the exports, we are effectively doubling capacity without building new berths."

Martins' suggestion of developing the 507 ha of the PX Block has its own fair share of challenges.

"But it's cheaper than building a whole new port," he said. "If successfully implemented it will reduce road traffic by splitting imports and exports as collection will be at different areas and on different routes, while there will be increased capacity and terminal efficiency in a far more cost-effective way."

According to Carl Webb, an

abnormal cargo specialist and representative of the South African Association of Freight Forwarders (Saaff), the time will come when extra capacity will be needed. "But it is not just about having more capacity. We



have to improve operational efficiency as well. We have seen major investments into the Durban port in the past few years and it has not improved efficiency.

That is just as

important an element." At the same time, he said, there has to be more discussion between Transnet and industry around the various options available to improve capacity and efficiency at the port.

Saaff's Mike Walwyn agrees saying the investment into a new port is not necessarily negative, but there must be certainty that it is the most sustainable solution for the country in the long run.

"No one is denying that additional capacity is needed or that the current port is under immense pressure, but there are still question marks over whether the planned dig-out port is the right solution in the current environment."



It is not just about having more capacity. We have to improve operational efficiency as well.

– CARL WEBB



Investment into a new port is not necessarily negative, but there must be certainty that it is the most sustainable solution for the country in the long run.

– MIKE WALWYN



The site of the proposed new dig out port.

East coast ports face off

Is Maputo port a threat to Durban's hub status?

The Port of Durban

Adele Mackenzie

With the port of Maputo's ambitious plans to handle 40 million tons of cargo by the end of 2020 – projections by the Maputo Port Development Company are that it will reach 20 million tons by 2014 – how big a threat is it to Durban's status as a key import/export hub for southern Africa?

Industry sources told FTW it had always been a potential threat – as is Walvis Bay to Cape Town on the west coast – and they believe the threat level has become far more real, particularly with the new infrastructure upgrade plans for 2014. These include dredging of the access channel to -14 metres (from the current -11 metres), which will allow access by larger vessels, quayside strengthening, warehouses and road upgrades.

The port has also invested in upgrading the Grindrod Maputo Car Terminal, with major car manufacturers such as BMW and Nissan switching some of its import operations to the Mozambican port.

"Infrastructure developments around access to the port of Maputo by neighbouring countries, and from Gauteng, now present a very real threat to the ports of Durban and Richards Bay," said Paul Lawrence, chief operations officer for Ziegler South Africa. He noted that that should the costs of import and export via Maputo be equivalent to, or less than, either Durban or Richards Bay then business would

"definitely" be reduced in Durban. "And with that, the opportunities for growth and business retention will be minimised," said Lawrence.

A logistics service provider who wished to remain anonymous questioned whether the relevant authorities at the KwaZulu Natal ports were taking this threat seriously. "Service delivery levels by Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) and Transnet National

Ports Authority (TNPA) remain questionable at the best of times at Durban and Richards Bay ports," he said.

The Maputo port developments are certainly a threat said Miguel Vieira, Compu-Clearing's customer relations representative in Durban, as logistically both Maputo and Durban are only six hours away from Johannesburg. "Key players in the industry are taking their cargo through Mozambique instead of Durban to save both costs and time," he said, adding that Mozambique's gross domestic product (GDP) growth had exceeded South Africa's over the past four years. "If not enough is done to address the threat, then we could see Durban slip out of the top 50 busiest ports worldwide," said Vieira.

Easyclear GM Michael Henning however believes that the new projects to expand Durban's port will go some way in addressing the issue of competition, "although there are groups resistant to change that indicate that the dig-out port is a long way from even getting off the ground."



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Liesl Venter

Port productivity – it's a team effort

Fears over the impact of the massive refurbishment project at the Port of Durban have been allayed as contingency plans are proving to be successful.

According to Roy Ramdiyal, regional manager for Safmarine in KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland and Botswana, there were serious concerns over the loss of quay space at container terminals 1 and 2 where deepening and strengthening had to take place and what the impact would be on operations.

"The plans put in place during the upgrades so far have been working very well and the effect of the renovations has not been as bad as was expected," he said.

"No doubt the lower container volumes over the first quarter of the year played a role in this, but the introduction of additional equipment, new straddle carriers and increased labour resourcing has assisted in improving productivity."

Efficiency at the Port of Durban, however, remains one of the greatest challenges.

Due to its configuration and location, Pier 1 is a particularly high focus area.

"It is the most susceptible to

wind delays and congestion," said Ramdiyal. "Regular meetings are held with the port management to understand the constraints and assist wherever possible to mitigate

delays and congestion. An example of this is the recent discussions between the port, shipping line and the Citrus Growers' Association regarding the improved productivity

for export reefer containers that has resulted in the port deploying reach stackers to handle reefer containers at Pier 1."

Ramdiyal said it was essential that stakeholders in the port worked together to ensure productivity remained high as it was not only the responsibility of terminal and port operators.

"Shipping lines also play an important role in keeping port congestion and delays to a minimum by ensuring they meet their berthing windows and



provide the port with as accurate as possible time of arrivals and operational information to assist in planning."

He said in this regard Safmarine had deployed staff alongside its vessels, matching the port shifts, to assist and monitor

the productivity for improved turn-times of their vessels.

"Our customers can also assist in improving the port's performance through better utilisation of the import free time and export stacking period ie, by also using the 1st and 2nd free stack days and accepting or delivering outside the usual office hours."

“
Our customers can also assist in improving the port's performance through better utilisation of the import free time and export stacking period.
– ROY RAMDIYAL



Improving turnaround time ... Safmarine has deployed staff alongside its vessels, matching the port shifts, to assist and monitor the productivity.

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FTW5937

French line expands service offering

Despite a decline in the throughput at the Port of Durban's container terminal during the first quarter of the year, industry remains hopeful for a turnaround in the next few months.

According to Esteve Servajeán, managing director of CMA CGM South Africa, several factors have contributed to the decrease in container volumes.

"It has mainly been due to a lack of customer confidence, which is not unexpected in the face of the interest rate hikes and the increase in the fuel price. The impact of the low rand has also played a role," he told



FTW. "In terms of exports the citrus season has got off to a very slow start because of bad weather in January in many of the growing areas, which has also impacted volumes."

But, said Servajeán, with the country's general election now something of the past, getting down to business will be high on the agenda – and that will create a stable environment that will impact positively on confidence levels.

"We are very confident about the second and third quarters and anticipate a recovery, with volumes increasing," he said.

Delays at the port remain problematic, says Servajeán, as vessels are held up. "With port refurbishment ongoing – as has been the case at berths 108 and 109 – we have

had some concerns at times, but we realise this is necessary. If one looks at the plans set out by Transnet, one can only be optimistic about the future."

“

We are soon going to be launching the Khulu Express linking to the USA.

– ESTEVE SERVAJEÁN

Over the past few months the line has started several new services, says Servajeán, such as the Rhino Express that covers five ports from Durban to Mozambique.

"We are soon going to be launching the Khulu Express linking to the USA."

At the same time, said Servajeán, bigger vessels have been deployed on the services linking South Africa with the Middle East as well as the Shaka Service that links the country to the Far East region.

"Ultimately bigger vessels allow for bigger allocation offerings to customers," he said. "This will impact positively on the Durban Port and the South African economy in the long run."

– Liesl Venter

ZacPak puts local transport on agenda

ZacPak Durban, CFR Freight's container freight station, has identified several growth opportunities.

"Governmental department stopped containers are one example," said MD Clive Nel. "These have been a focus for the company as they fit perfectly into our model as a licensed container depot," he said. "Also, more and more shipping lines are taking on our service in directing their stopped containers to ZacPak as our ZacPak Degrouping Operating System (ZDOS) is proving to be highly popular for its tracking and traceability of containers at any stage of the process."

"Next on the agenda is local transport," he said. "We are exploring this opportunity as we want to offer delivery and collection in the not too distant future. This will give our clients, the clearing and forwarding companies, an additional benefit, as they can trust their neutral service provider to handle all their "non core" business on their behalf."



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Liesl Venter

ZacPak Durban has continued to record growth despite decreased volumes in an increasingly competitive business environment.

According to Clive Nel, managing director ZacPak Durban, the year kicked off at a slower pace than was expected with a decrease in import volumes.

“Business has since stabilised and we have managed to increase volumes to such an extent that the initial forecast for the year is now being realised. It seems that the groupage market is very much affected by

world trends, holidays and seasons, but at the same time the service commitments have to be kept to the LCL importer to guarantee the supply of their goods,” Nel told FTW. “In terms of FCL unpacks it has been positive from the get go and we see a

Record growth for container freight station

further increase from 2013 to 2014 – a clear indication that our business is expanding.”



“

It seems that more freight forwarders are using reliable service providers for cross-docking cargo in Durban to save the Johannesburg empty turn in.

– CLIVE NEL

Zacpak Durban – CFR Freight’s container freight station – has continued to extend its capacity to address the ongoing growth. It has expanded from an 8000-sqm warehouse and 14000-sqm

yard to the current 12500-sqm warehouse and yard of 20 000 sqm.

According to Nel, the growth has been on par with forecasts for the business.

“It seems that more freight forwarders are using reliable service

providers for cross-docking cargo in Durban to save the Johannesburg empty turn in and are finding that it works to their advantage. Ultimately the service to clients is more effective while the final delivery timeframe to consignees is reduced,” explained Nel. He said the ongoing delays in the

movement of containers at the Port of Durban remained a concern. “ZacPak itself, during 2013, experienced down time in the region of 60 days due to terminal handling delays. What is more worrying is that there are not many improvements or solutions expected soon.”



An aerial view of ZacPak's Durban premises



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Adding marketing muscle

Information technology (IT) company Easyclear has appointed new sales and marketing staff in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) to serve the needs of its growing customer base in the province, as well as identify new business.

“Through continued product development in web and cloud-

based technology for the freight and logistics industry, we are able to offer more varied alternatives as part of our solutions offering – and we have identified

a number of KZN clients who will benefit from our expanded products,” said general manager Michael Henning.

He told FTW that the KZN region had long been a strategic hub for global and regional trade as many large corporates have branch offices in Durban and Richards Bay to facilitate their outbound

and inbound freight. “The growth of the automotive industry and the emergence of Richards Bay as a strategic port player have contributed to the province’s positioning as a key trade player and provided expansion opportunities for Easyclear,” said Henning.

He conceded that the province had its fair share of challenges which needed to be addressed to facilitate trade, including political issues between local authorities.

“Port operations need to become

more efficient and can be addressed through direct dialogue and industry collaboration,” Henning said, using the recent example of the close collaboration between the freight industry and the South African Revenue Service (Sars) during customs modernisation implementation.

– Adele Mackenzie

“

We are able to offer more varied alternatives as part of our solutions offering.

– MICHAEL HENNING



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RB coal terminal expansion makes headway

Grindrod has raised R2.4 billion of the planned R3 billion it needs to acquire in capital for new projects in the pipeline, which include the expansion of the Richards Bay coal terminal in the KwaZulu Natal port city.

“Aside from the Richards Bay terminal, these projects include the expansion of the Matola coal terminal in Mozambique and the oil tanking facilities and will take advantage of the enormous opportunity in our rail division,” said a Grindrod spokesperson.

The issue and placement of 96 million shares to qualifying investors at R25 each was concluded in May, raising the R2.4 billion. Further to this book build, Grindrod has acquired the current Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) interests in certain Grindrod subsidiaries and entered into a new BEE transaction at the Grindrod Limited level.

Looking specifically at the

expansion of RBT Grindrod Terminals in Richards Bay, RBT Resources and Grindrod entered into an agreement last year to expand and develop the existing Navitrade operation and adjoining RBT land into a fully mechanised coal export terminal.

Bongani Biyela, chief executive at RBT-Grindrod Terminals, said that the existing facility, Navitrade, was already in operation and was an ideal terminal for junior miners. Its current throughput capacity is 3 million tons per annum and will increase gradually over three phases: 5 million tons in the next six months and then 8 million tons, 10 million tons and eventually 20 million tons’ annual throughput capacity.

Biyela noted that an inland terminal would be developed when the annual throughput capacity reached approximately 8 million tons. “This will allow junior miners to consolidate greater volumes so that those

with low production volumes have access to export markets and can exploit economies of scale as a collective. The terminal could then accommodate different grades of coal, spot loading and

beneficiation,” he said.

The intention is to allocate 50% of the terminal capacity to emerging black miners, and 50% to mature BEE mining companies who will be the anchor tenants, said Biyela.



An aerial view of the Richards Bay coal terminal. Photo: Grindrod

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Investing heavily in the cloud

CompuClearing has invested heavily in cloud-based technology over the past few years, with the company's premier software product, CompuSolutions Diamond, having gone live two months ago.

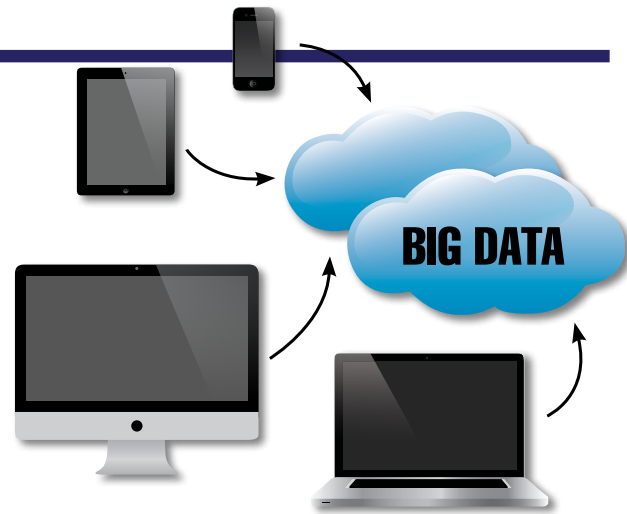
"This product, which we believe is the latest word in cloud technology and software development, gives our clients secure access to their data on the system from any device – PC, laptop, smartphone or tablet," says Miguel Viera, CompuClearing's

customer relations representative in Durban.

Other cloud-based technology, such as the company's eTariff online tariff book and its submission of customs documentation programme has been in use for years, said Viera,

He believes that having a presence in Durban is strategic for CompuClearing as Durban has regularly ranked in the top 50 busiest ports worldwide. "We have a strong customer base in the city and we have key account representatives to

service that base," said Viera. He added that the company also provided on-the-ground training in Durban as well as Johannesburg and Cape Town on all its software solutions, including CompuSolutions Diamond and CargoWise One.



“



With volumes off to a slow start this year it has been important to think out of the box.

– LIZA ALLAN

CFR launches overnight Durban-Jo'burg service

freight industry makes it difficult to maintain "true rates", according to branch manager of independent groupage operator CFR Freight, Liza Allan.

"With volumes off to a slow start this year it has been important to think out of the box," she said. She is however optimistic about growth over the next six months.

She said a number of overseas agents were expected to visit the company's Durban branch to touch

base with clients and promote new services on offer.

And while Allan has seen a trend of more and more clients packing their own FCL and groupage containers, she believes this is a good thing.

"We are still able to assist our clients with overflow and packing locally and internationally thanks to a great agency network, The WorldWideAlliance. At the same time we are also able to sell

additional services now that we have our ZacPak CFS and transport divisions."

She said CFR Freight Durban and Johannesburg had also launched an overnight transport service with a 24-hour turnaround time to its clients.

"Durban is the only branch currently handling over-border cargo to Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland, Malawi and Botswana."

– Liesl Venter

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Open communication tops Durban port users' wish list

Diminished freight volumes have provided some breathing space for the Port of Durban during current upgrades. FTW's Liesl Venter spoke to some industry role-players for their take on the current state of play.

FTW: Delays at the Port of Durban have been a concern in the past. Have they been a challenge since the start of upgrades?

Kevin Martin, chairman of the Durban Harbour Carriers' Association (DHCA):

There have not been that many delays in recent weeks. In fact the loss of quay space at container terminals 1 and 2 has not been the train smash that was initially predicted - but that is not because of any smart planning by the port's terminal operators. Simply put, we haven't experienced any delays because the volumes are down.

Fanie Pretorius, chief operating officer of the South African Shippers' Council

(SASC):

There are no current delays due to the low volumes being experienced and possibly improved performance at the Durban Container Terminal (DCT). So far the closure of berths 108 and 109 seems not to have had a serious impact and it should be finished in the next few weeks or so. The weekly statistics from Transnet, however, do not always reflect what's happening on the operational front.

Carl Webb, managing

director of Project Logistics Management (PLM):

There are good days and there are bad days. Too often, however, things just don't run smoothly enough and it remains a problem. Last week a truck arrived at Point at 11am and it only loaded the next day at 2pm. That is a long wait.

FTW: What is your biggest

gripe/concern/problem with the Durban port?

KM:

Efficiency. With all the money being spent and all the work happening we have yet to improve

efficiency. The upgrades are a necessary pain that we are just going to have to take on the chin, but ultimately it has to bring about better

efficiency. So far it has been very challenging to say the least and the improvements are not being felt. We are lucky we are not pumping volumes at present.

FP: The biggest issue facing the port is the single road access to the terminals and Cutler Complex - Bayhead Road. It is simply not fit for purpose; there needs to be serious attention to this access in one way or another. The efficiencies of the operations are not consistent and the frequent stoppages of operations by TNPA are not acceptable. Recently, for example, all operations stopped for TNPA road show meetings.

CW: Inefficiency and the lack of communication.

FTW: What would you like to see happen at the Port of Durban?

KM: The development of the PX Block some 2km from the port. We could be the Rotterdam of the southern hemisphere if



With all the money being spent and all the work happening we have yet to improve efficiency.

– KEVIN MARTIN





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The Port of Durban... 'It could be the Rotterdam of the southern hemisphere.'

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

we were just willing to think differently. It is all good and well to want to go and dig out a whole new port, but maybe there are other simpler and more affordable solutions available. If we develop the PX Block we can discharge vessels and move the entire shipment to this facility, leaving only exports to be accepted at terminals for stacking. The local imports

could be collected via Edwin Swales Drive. Immediately one would be splitting the road traffic in two, reducing the congestion and creating more stacking areas at both facilities.

FP: I would like to see the Salisbury Island development go ahead so as to increase capacity by approximately 800k TEUS at Pier 1, linked to the critical improvement to the port. This

would either be Transnet's thinking of a road over the marshalling yard linking to Edwin Swales or EThekweni's thinking of widening of Bayhead with a link to a widened South Coast Road linking to the N7. It would also be good if Transnet realised that building a new port at a cost of some R120 billion, which the country cannot afford, is not the only way of dealing

with the increased containers. They should first address the efficiencies and sort out port property not properly utilised for port activities.

CW: Open communication lines where we can be honest with each other. It is really very simple. They have problems which can be addressed, we have problems that can be addressed, and collectively we can do it.

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'Port's intransigence hampers regional trade'

Adele Mackenzie

Global logistics and multi-modal transport group, Ziegler, has seen "extremely successful" growth in its projects division over the past few years and is optimistic about growth in this sector going forward.

"Although we are fortunate to be part of a larger global organisation, local management is able to make snap decisions without awaiting approval from parties who may not understand current local operating constraints or opportunities. So we can be as innovative as we need to be depending on a client's needs or circumstances – which bodes

well for project work," said Paul Lawrence, chief operations officer for Ziegler South Africa.

Projects and Durban-based manager for Ziegler, Cindy Luyt, said that regardless of delays Durban still remained the port of choice for cargo destined for Johannesburg and beyond South Africa's borders – both from a cost and time perspective.



“Our port authorities need to keep the customer foremost in their minds and ensure good service delivery.

– **CINDY LUYT**

"It remains one of Africa's busiest ports and is extremely important as the gateway in and out of South Africa, providing several trade opportunities that Ziegler hopes to take advantage of," she said.

Luyt however concedes that challenges remain. "Port constraints, as well as the absence



Traffic congestion and a backlog of trucks to and from the Durban port continue to challenge the logistics industry.

of a "real willingness" on the part the port authorities to be flexible and innovative, do hamper trade facilitation to the region. "Our port authorities need to keep the customer foremost in their minds and ensure good service delivery at competitive pricing or South Africa will lose business to its neighbours," she said.

Lawrence added that traffic

congestion and subsequent backlog of trucks entering and exiting the port of Durban, exacerbated by current port upgrades, as well as the berthing problems at the port, continued to be a source of annoyance. "When, and if, the new dig-out port happens, this will bring its share of challenges and opportunities as well," said Lawrence.

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FTW6279

Gearing up for airfreight growth

Independent consolidator CFR Freight has strengthened its Durban airfreight team as it embarks on a growth strategy in this market.

According to Stephen Bishop, the company's general manager for airfreight, the outlook for the Durban market for the rest of the year is extremely positive.

"We believe we have seen the back of the quiet period and we are gearing up for growth in our operations and

within our Durban airfreight team," he said.

Bishop says volumes have softened in Durban over the past 18 months but they did not expect any slowdowns and growing the business made sense.

"For both imports and exports there are limited options out of Durban in terms of international carriers which places a greater emphasis on trucking and routing cargo via Johannesburg," he explained. "This is an avenue on

which CFR is looking to capitalise in order to reduce the cost of trucking on exports where carriers are not common-rating origin hubs."

He said in light of the ever-increasing strength of the overall CFR and ZacPak infrastructure across South Africa, they were confident they could meet the goals set for growing the airfreight division.

— Liesl Venter



Stephen Bishop

'Depots should open 24/7'

Improved port operations, better quality roads on the main transport corridors and increased investment in infrastructure will reduce costs and facilitate trade, helping Durban and Richards Bay operators to realise their full growth potential, says Sue Moodley, managing director of Durban-based Transport.com.

But while Richards Bay and

Durban are close to South Africa's key emerging markets, such as India and China, as well as the increasingly strategic port of Maputo in Mozambique which gives the KwaZulu Natal region a competitive advantage in terms of global and regional trade, challenges impacting industry growth have to be addressed, she said.



“Challenges impacting industry growth have to be addressed.”

— SUE MOODLEY

trade, challenges impacting industry growth have to be addressed, she said.

Depots, for example, should be open on a 24-hour, seven days a week basis, she said. "The ports and transporters operate on this basis, but those truckers and shipping lines that do not have their own storage or depot facilities are at a strategic disadvantage," noted Moodley.

Existing landside conditions at ports also cause major congestion and huge delays. "For example, Durban Container Terminal (DCT) Pier 1 operates the rubber tyred gantry cranes (RTG) which holds trucks back from entering the pier until the cranes have stacked all the

containers, which is far from ideal when we as transporters have a tight delivery schedule," said Moodley.

Ongoing maintenance and upgrades of main roads will reduce travel times, lower fuel consumption and result in less wear and tear on truck fleets, reducing transport costs and improving supply chain operations, commented Moodley.

She told FTW that Transport.com was working with industry bodies to address these challenges by participating in industry forums and lobbying on behalf of the logistics industry.

— Adele Mackenzie

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FTW6290

Lyse Comins

Durban likely to outstrip national economic growth

Fuelled by exports, Durban's economic growth is likely to continue to slightly outstrip national growth in 2014, but negative factors such as low business confidence levels and capacity constraints are hampering any real upswing.

This is the view of KZN Treasury economist Clive Coetzee who said he expected the city and province's GDP to average around 2% for 2014 driven by the high demand for exports moving through the country's largest port.

Coetzee said KZN had grown at a rate of 2.06% in 2013, slightly above the national GDP of 1.9%, a trend he believes will continue.

"Growing at 2% there can only be hope for growth, and the good news is that we are at the bottom," Coetzee said.

"The Durban economy is

linked to what has happened nationally and internationally, and the good news is that things are definitely starting to get better. We are starting to see pre-financial growth rates in traditional economies of America, Germany, the UK, France and Canada. Those economies are all at pre-financial crisis levels or close," Coetzee said.

He said high demand for services like warehousing, transport and logistics was driven by

international exports, although the province itself had low export levels.

"When the international economy performs well, Durban

performs well," Coetzee said.

However, domestic factors such as electricity costs, municipal inefficiencies, insufficient infrastructure, labour disputes, and low business confidence were "bottlenecks" to provincial growth, he added.

"The bottom line is the whole economy should be focused around the facilitation of exports for KZN – our harbours, roads, warehouse facilities and import and export clearing facilities need to grow and they are not growing at a fast enough rate. Supply is running much faster than demand," Coetzee said.

He expects Durban to grow by 2% for the next two to three years.

According to the latest KZN business barometer compiled by economist Mike Schüssler, the

transport and communication sector has grown by 7.3%, although arrivals at King Shaka International Airport were down 2.2% year-on-year in February. Mortgages showed growth of 1.9%, pointing to hope for the property sector, while construction grew 1.3% and manufacturing declined 1%. Vehicle sales were up 8.5%.

The KwaZulu-Natal trade index grew 4.4% supported by a small increase in retail sales, but the big boost came from the 7.1% increase in wholesale, which showed wholesalers were building inventory to hedge against inflation, the report said.

Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Andrew Layman said Durban's growth was parallel to provincial growth, which revealed that

2%
Expected GDP growth for 2014

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FTW6244



Domestic courier service looks to expand

CargoCare will focus on expanding its Durban domestic courier department and extending its services throughout South Africa, says Durban company director, Krish Yenketas.

He told FTW that the Domestic and International Couriers department was established in March last year, and on the back of the successful launch the company planned to provide an advanced network of services to and from the Durban/Richards Bay areas.

He sees plenty of room for domestic growth with Nadine Saunders and her team providing domestic freight and distribution services to complement the company's international airfreight and ocean freight offerings.

He said Durban's increased efforts to improve its offering in the "race toward

globalisation" had expanded business prospects. "The areas of trade as well as new business interaction are growing exponentially as the Durban and Richards Bay areas increasingly move towards urbanisation," said Yenketas, adding that the company had consistently seen trade and

business development at the Durban branch.

Offering a domestic courier service provides diversity and stability, which means that even as the company experiences the constant rise and fall of the economy, it can weather the fluctuations better, he said.

– Adele Mackenzie

manufacturing was not faring well, while agriculture had shown the best improvement.

"The political stability reflected by the recent election will put minds at rest although there will be concern among business and investors about the EFF's strong showing," Layman said.



Krish Yenketas (second from right) with the CargoCare Durban team.

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FTW5699

Oil and gas sector expected to generate jobs

Liesl Venter

Recruitment got off to a good start in Durban in 2014, especially on the operational side, with many companies in hiring mood thanks to the improved business environment, according to Durban-based director of Lee Botti and Associates, Jill Morris. Skills shortages, however, continue to plague the freight and logistics industry, said Morris. "And not just in the Durban market but nationally. Our clients are often looking for very specific skills sets, with little room for training offered." And finding the skills required

is not always easy. According to Morris, there is a particular need for experienced clearing and forwarding sales people to increase the Durban market share of the business, which is generally renowned as being a tough market in which to sell. "Most companies, however, are recruiting on skills, as there is not enough time and resources to train staff, and a great deal of focus is being put on achieving results," explained Morris. "In this regard it has been busier than was the case in 2013, with operational staff highly sought after." But that's on condition, said Morris, that staff are skilled and

able to walk in and do the job required. Despite the upturn in recruitment, it has not been all good news. One or two specific sectors within the industry have hit harder times and there have been instances where companies have been forced to downsize departments or re-strategise their business. "We have seen some job losses," said Morris. "But the outlook overall in Durban is very positive – especially in light of the major growth into Africa that we are seeing. Developments in areas such as the oil and gas sector will impact positively in the long run." Morris said they were seeing



Most companies are recruiting on skills as there is not enough time and resources to train staff, and a great deal of focus is being put on achieving results.

– JILL MORRIS

a great deal of focus put into development within the ports on the continent in terms of infrastructure, petrol pipelines as well as expansion into rail cargo. "These developments are expected to have a positive effect overall, but especially within the freight and logistics industry. We expect that this will lead to new job opportunities and growth of the industry overall in the long run."

Maydon Wharf refurbishment 'critical'

The refurbishment programme at the Port of Durban's Maydon Wharf cannot come soon enough as the industry voices serious concerns over the state of the quay. According to Dave Watts, maritime director for the South African Association of Freight Forwarders, it should have

happened a long time ago. "We have left it to the last minute and from what we understand it is essential that it is rehabilitated as it poses a very real safety threat," he said. Watts said while the massive refurbishment programme at the port was disruptive at times for business operations, a pragmatic

approach was needed. He said it was generally accepted that the upgrades would ensure a more efficient port that would benefit all. "While there are still challenges that have to be overcome and questions raised over some of the decisions being taken by Transnet at the port, there are also some

exciting developments such as those planned for Salisbury Island – even though the go-ahead is yet to be given." Watts said it was encouraging to hear debates like the one between the Durban City Council and port authorities around the challenges and solutions for Bayhead Road. – Liesl Venter



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'Industry in desperate need of highly skilled staff'

The rates war is putting huge pressure on sales people in the freight industry, according to Natalie Barrass and Jackie Roberts of Bertlie Recruitment.

"There is a demand for clearing and forwarding agents who are able to offer the most affordable

rates. The feedback we are getting from clients is that there is a huge challenge in reducing costs for customers – and although service is still high on the agenda, this is proving to be an ongoing struggle for business and clearing and forwarding companies alike."

According to Barrass, industry is in desperate need of highly skilled staff. "Clients are seeking the skills and expertise of strong sales executives in Durban, and finding skills can be challenging in light of the skills shortages which the industry faces."

With cargo volumes up and the export market increasing due to the favourable exchange rate, Roberts said they had also noticed a few international companies reaching out to the SA market. She said branches were being opened in Durban in particular, which is good news for the future of the industry.

"Companies are increasingly seeing the benefit of expanding their business into Africa and we've seen more and more of them developing their footprint in this market," she said. "Durban is definitely a focus area."

– Liesl Venter

Durban business confidence 'ambivalent'

Business confidence in Durban has been "ambivalent" for some time, according to Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Andrew Layman.

"Times are quite hard from a business point of view. Money is tight," Layman said.

He added that government exercises in frugality had limited spend including curtailment of functions and the appointment of consultants.

Layman said there was also some hiatus regarding several major developments in the city.

"Logistics and port-related matters are very important for Durban's growth. There are some infrastructural bottlenecks such as the Umgeni interchange but also some hiatus in respect of the dig-out port and the back of port plan, the Dube Trade Port and the Point development," Layman said.

– Lyse Comins



Natalie Barrass and Jackie Roberts.



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FTW5457



Big growth in LCL shipments

Adele Mackenzie

Shipping & General has introduced four superlinks, five days a week, which are dedicated specifically to the transport of less than container load (LCL) shipments.

“The transport of LCL shipments out of Durban unpack depots has seen massive growth over the past two years and we have increasingly seen that clients are clearing their groupage consol containers and electing to transport their Johannesburg destined consignments by road, on the premise of a strict overnight door-to-door delivery,” MD Regan Moodley told FTW. A comprehensive range of local feeder vehicles and staff are on standby from sunrise daily to load these shipments and deliver them to importers, he said.

Moodley is upbeat about growth on the Durban-Gauteng route, with ‘favourable’ volumes over the past year. The company moves in excess of 1 200 TEUs per month on the N3 highway, he told

FTW. “We have also secured our own rail account with Transnet Freight Rail, enabling us to offer a merchant road haulage service out of the City Deep terminal for all containers being railed to the Johannesburg-based terminal,” he said. “With shipping lines increasingly citing local cartage as non-core, we are quickly filling this void.”

He said that this was different from the somewhat controversial trend to unpack full, cleared

containers in Durban and the subsequent road haulage of containers as breakbulk freight to Johannesburg. “Clearing and forwarding agents often opt for

this in an effort to save the empty redirection costs imposed by shipping lines,” said Moodley, adding that if one calculated the costs of cross-haulage in Durban, as well as

the costs to unpack,

it was not cost-effective.

“The Durban unpack concept is really only viable when clients consolidate their payloads from multiple containers and then maximise the payloads by using fewer trucks to transport the shipment,” he said.

“

Currently moving in excess of 1 200 TEUs per month on the N3 highway.

– REGAN MOODLEY

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