The South African National Roads Agency Limited (Sanral) has awarded seven contracts worth R11,5-billion for the upgrade of 125,5 km of road in the first phase of the Gauteng freeway improvement project (GFIP).

Umso Construction, Group 5, Power Construction, Liviero, and Bophelong Construction together formed the 

Siyavaya Consortium.

This consortium will be participating in the upgrade of the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project that started in June 2008.

The upgrades will take 36 months and would be mostly completed for the 2010 world cup with a temporary suspension period between 28 May 2010 and 14 July 2010 to minimize effects on traffic during the world cup.

Siyavaya Joint Venture will upgrade the N12 highway between the Diepkloof Interchange and the Golden Highway and 14th Avenue.

"The project will involve provision of additional lanes, interchange improvements and intelligent transport management systems, including cameras, ramp metering and electronic signage."

"To promote the use of public transport, the roads will include high occupancy vehicle lanes which can be integrated with bus rapid transport systems, taxi, bus and train routes."

"SANRAL urges the public to drive carefully through construction sites, which will be policed, keeping strictly to the temporary speed limits, and not slowing down to look at construction activities," Watson said. - Sapa

"The project will also upgrade the N3 highway between the Old Barn (Heidelberg) and Geldenhuy's (M2) interchanges and the N1 highway between the Golden Highway and 14th Avenue."

"SANRAL urges the public to drive carefully through construction sites, which will be policed, keeping strictly to the temporary speed limits, and not slowing down to look at construction activities," Watson said. - Sapa
Expanding Service Area

The Financial year is speedily heading towards the end and we maintained our momentum and commitment to deliver positive results.

The year does not only seem profitable but further encouraging that Siyavaya Consortium, which Umso is part of has secured a R 3.356 billion project in the Gauteng Province. This will allow us to retain our Gauteng based team, perhaps even consider additional resources.

The East London based estimating team has also been hard at work and we have secured a R 83.4 million project in Coega IDZ (Port Elizabeth) that should be completed in 2 years time. We believe that our roadworks teams have enjoyed a particularly fulfilling and rewarding year, whilst our infrastructure teams have seen a decline in capital expenditure by government and this has put pressure on the market profitability.

We remain positive that our projected results will not change, even though we have to brace ourselves to complete some of the ailing projects successfully. It is paramount to complete projects timeously and our terms should remain focused the target.

The general construction market remains positive and we believe we are in a better position to partake at a larger scale than ever before whilst committed to our clients to deliver projects successfully.
The acute skills shortage that is prevalent in many sectors of local industry is, arguably, the most severe in the economy’s booming building and construction sector, says JSE-listed civil engineering company Protech Khutele CEO Gerald Chapman.

Chapman says that investors in the building sector are consulting companies that are listed on the JSE, in order to identify the organizations which have been efficient in mitigating or coping with the challenges facing the industry. “Since the construction boom is only two-years old, and was preceded by 15 years of depression, companies that have thrived in times of bust, and boom must surely have learned the ropes,” states Chapman. He says that the demand for professional construction industry skills was muted until two years ago, and before the current boom in the industry, tertiary students would have been advised to pursue a career in a more sought-after field, with information technology being the most popular at the time. “One must acknowledge that there has been a brain drain that has denuded a certain percentage of every profession, a drain, that I believe, in the case of our profession, stemmed from the depression in the construction industry. The current skills shortage created by such conditions was exacerbated by the fact that during the depression years there wasn’t the money to develop skills,” states Chapman.

He says that, as a result of the depressed climate of the construction industry, civil engineering was certainly not an attractive career, and the number of students studying civil engineering, building science and related fields declined steadily. “This meant that there was a lag of engineering skills at all levels,” explains Chapman. In the current boom conditions, high school students are now being advised to pursue a career in the engineering field, and engineering faculties are well attended at present, says Chapman. “There has been a noticeable trend in skills development and investment within many organizations because the opportunities prevalent in the construction industry and there is reason to believe that a lot of organizations are following suit,” comments Chapman.

He says, however, that these skills will can only be tapped into after five years, and there are certainly not enough skilled people to deal with the current boom. An organization’s ability to adapt proactively and anticipate change strongly implies that it is well positioned to mitigate its risks, says Chapman.

“A team of battle-hardened executives is critical in coping with the challenges facing the industry. Anyone can stand on the soapbox when they are riding the wave, but true colors are revealed when the chips are down, and when your back is against the wall,” states Chapman.

New organizations in the construction industry are springing up in numbers as a result of the buoyant conditions, which is a predictable phenomenon. The reality is that history repeats itself and the only test is whether you’ve managed in the downturn, adds Chapman. “If a business, at its core, is fundamentally healthy, and that revolves around the core of its management, it will survive and grow,” he says.

Chapman forecasts the current construction boom to continue through to at least 2012, by which time the industry will be replenished with skills.

By: Sylvester Haskins
- Information sourced from www.thetimes.co.za
Social responsibility is another important aspect of our business in Umso Construction. The company broke away from its tradition by not giving out Christmas gifts to various charities, but rather waited for the beginning of the year to do so.

Our chairman D.D Sipeliti came up with the novel idea of giving something that would really make a difference in an area that is at times overlooked.

Early this year, stationery and school uniforms we handed to the following charities:

Masizakhe childrens Home; Isaiah 58 childrens village and East London childrens home.

We hope that these much needed necessities brought joy and happiness to their recipients.

Representatives from Masizakhe, Isaiah 58, East London children’s homes and Umso staff members.

DD in Ugie handing over chairs, tables and carpets at a local crèche.
UIF Benefits

More and more of our employees are claiming back their UIF funds from the Department of Labour for various reasons. We decided to highlight a few important issues that will make your trip to the Labour Dept a little easier and also help speed up the processing of your application.

Firstly UIF stands for Unemployment Insurance Fund, which means you must not be working in order to claim your funds. The most common reasons for claiming UIF are: Maternity, retrenchment and being medically unfit to work.

You should expect to provide certain documents as requested by the labour official but the following will be needed:

- 6 months payslips ; ID Book ; A letter from a medical doctor / clinic confirming pregnancy or medical condition.; A letter form your employer informing you that you are retrenched.

When filling out the forms at the Dept, please do so accurately as the company can not rectify the mistakes.

As soon as you are done with the forms please forward them to our HR Dept as soon as possible so that we can confirm your particulars as required by the department of labour.

When it comes to maternity benefits, you need to submit your application on the last day of work. Please note: You cannot claim UIF when you have resigned.

We hope that this will alleviate the burden that many of us face when claiming back our funds.

Site Report

It has been noted previously that there is a tendency for a lack of upkeep in plant. Various measures were introduced and now we have reached a stage where we evaluate and report back on progress on problems that the sites encounter.

There are still a few areas that need to be ironed out and the company has noted that. It has been suggested that the problems be addressed from all site levels as to let staff voice out their concerns and table what they think will be the forward.

The workshop has been under a lot of strain regarding turn around times with breakdowns and the staff on site occasionally feel that they are being let down. What the workshop highlighted was that they were not willing to substitute quality workmanship and try to do quick jobs that do not last.

After the series of the site visits, a lot was noted and the road ahead seems a lot easier due to the fact that all those that participated not only highlighted problems but gave solutions as well. As we head towards our bosberaad, we hope that this is the attitude that we will carry forward.

WORK DONE IN HUMANSDORP includes regraveling of farmers roads (98 km), crushing of material using a single stage crusher, laying of stormwater pipes, inlet and outlet structures of the pipes.
South Africa has made significant strides in the area of its judiciary. Each person has the right that their dignity should be respected. If we bring this closer to our working environment, we know that we, as the working population of the country are also guaranteed working conditions that do not infringe on our personal rights.

The Basic Conditions of the Employment Act seek to protect the employees and the employer in various scenarios resulting from day to day working environments.

This is achieved by having prescribed regulations on how an employee must be treated by an employer while they are in their employ and also how an employee should carry themselves while being employed.

If we had to go into details about each condition, we would take a bit of time but what we want to highlight what we think affects the average working person.

- If people voice out their opinions, concerns or grievances constructively, be it with a company or fellow employee they should not fear victimization resulting such action.

- Employees are required to follow provisions of the company’s policy with regards to time-off entitlement including sick leave, resignations etc.

- Employees should at all times follow the right channels when reporting or encounter problems in their working environments.

We will continue to highlight the different parts of the Employment Act in our coming issues as this will inform and educate our people.

Also awarded is the following:

- Re-gravelling of District Road DR21841 in the Sakhisizwe Municipality that falls Under Chris Hani District Municipality to the value of R 8.3 million. Peter Jung is the contracts director and Vuyiswa Monelo is the site manager for the above contract.

- Coega IDZ (Port Elizabeth) Ring Road Phase 1 & 2 and Dedisa access road to the value of R 83.4 million. The contracts director for this job will be Tollo Nkosi and the site manager will be Macford Sibozo assisted by Thabo Dihaba.

Kindly be informed that Umso Construction is part of the SIYAVAYA JOINT VENTURE, which has been awarded a portion of the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project to the value of R 3.356 billion.

Ravi Moodley will be representing the interests of Umso Construction in the Joint Venture.
We are half way through the year and it seems like only yesterday that we were reporting back for duty after the shutdown. Since then we are proud to say that more people have become part of us and we would like to introduce them to you:

**NEW APPOINTMENTS**

Thabo Dihaba (Site Manager); Evans Gumbu (Site Technician); Dunns Maseko (Foreman); Mojalefa Mohlamme (Site Manager); Peter Moyoyo (Foreman); Devan Glyn Naude (Tyre Technician); Qaqamba Poswa (Ass. Estimator); Macford Sibozo (Site Manager); James Swanepoel (Storeman); Mziwonke Tiya (Foreman); Zinikele Tyandela (Mechanic); and Danile Velem (Foreman).

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**Staff Updates**

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We bid farewell to the following people: Ayanda Ndlovu, Anesh Ramnarain, Thobile Mbadamana; Hope Fumanisa and Justice Jafta who have been with the company for a while and have now moved on in their careers.

We wish them all success in their new careers.

Till we meet again.

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**The Scuttlebutt**

When babies are born, they bring new hopes and horizons. They give to our hearts the promise of pure and new love, one that dwells in the land of innocence, childhood dreams and wishes come true.

Congratulations to the following people: Mary & Lindele; Janine & Sol Carelse and The Louw family (Amanda) for the birth of their new babies.

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Guess who left!!

We bid farewell to the following people: Ayanda Ndlovu, Anesh Ramnarain, Thobile Mbadamana; Hope Fumanisa and Justice Jafta who have been with the company for a while and have now moved on in their careers.

We wish them all success in their new careers.

Till we meet again.

---

**Congratulations**

Nomphelo Mapuma

Thatohatsi Mondliwa

Jean Hempel

Caleb Kieran Cairo Carelse

Frington Nkosi

Evans Gumbu

Qaqamba Poswa

Thabo Dihaba

Thatohatsi Mondliwa

Give the world the best you have and the best will come back to you.

The world is waiting for you, Graduate. You have so much to offer.

Congratulations Nomphelo Mapuma.

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Thabo Dihaba

Qaqamba Poswa

Frington Nkosi

Evans Gumbu
My Kinda Site .......... Sibusiso Monde Magadla

Where are you from?

I was born, bred and fed in Mthatha but currently residing in East London.

Any advice for people who want to pursue a career in your field?

It is not a lot more people oriented than they tell you at school, so you need to be quite versatile in that regard because you interact with people from all walks of life.

Any highlights of your career or people you’ve come across?

I once had a job interview at the East London Airport while the gentleman was waiting to board a flight and I had another one on the roadside in a car at 7am on the N2 between Butterworth and Idutywa. On both occasions I clinched the jobs and I really needed them at the time. Those jobs have been stepping stones for my career.

What 3 things are needed for survival on site?

Humility, excellent people skills and lots of water.

Who is your pillar of strength?

God Almighty, my girlfriend and our 4 years old son.

What is one thing you know about life?

If you have the mental attitude you’ll realize that life is beautiful and is meant to be enjoyed and you can create it the way you want it to be.