



*Dr Willem Sprong received the Young Engineer of the Year award from Consulting Engineers South Africa on August 18. He is joined by Richard Vries (CEO of Arcus GIBB) and Denis Foster (Arcus GIBB).*

HEIDELBERG - Dr Willem Sprong, a proud resident of Heidelberg, was recently chosen as Young Engineer of the Year by Consulting Engineers South Africa.

Consulting Engineers South Africa's (CESA) prestigious CESA Glenrand MIB Engineering Excellence Awards were held on August 18 at the Vodacom in Midrand. These awards are a celebration of innovation, quality, outstanding workmanship and professionalism in the industry.

In order to promote the Consulting Engineering industry to young professionals, CESA recognises the contribution young engineers

make to the industry and to the future of the profession. The winner had to be able to receive the award and attend the International Federation of Consulting Engineers convention which takes place in New Delhi, India in September. Judges look for outstanding performance in areas including technical achievement, educational achievement, recognition such as awards received, contributions to sustainable development - such as environmental initiatives, social responsibilities and community involvement.

Dr Sprong is the director of electrical engineering at GIBB, one of Africa's largest

multi-disciplinary engineering and science consulting companies.

He boasts a professional, social and personal history that speaks volumes about the man he is. Dr Sprong has been registered as a professional engineer with the Engineering Council of South Africa since 2002. He is also a member of the South African Institute for Electrical Engineers and is a member and chair of the Lowveld Subsection of the Permanent Way Institute of South Africa. Dr Sprong's dissertation, presented in December 2001 to fulfil the requirements for his masters degree in engineering, focused on improving the reliability of 3kv DC traction substations.

Later, as part of his doctoral thesis, he developed a technical computer programme designed to detect maintenance requirements of infrastructural systems pre-emptively. This groundbreaking work on predictive reliability-centred maintainance is set to revolutionise both water and railway infrastructure systems. Through a system of alarms and sensors, engineers are timeously alerted to any critical problems relating to the

infrastructure, are able to conduct visual inspections of these critical areas and develop maintenance strategies to circumnavigate any anticipated failures in the infrastructure system.

Dr Sprong was also the project leader of the GIBB team appointed as the consulting engineers by the Ekurhuleni Municipality to handle the R40 million Winnie Mandela Park Project, which involved the electrification design and project management of 5 100 houses in Tembisa. GIBB's scope of involvement included the upgrade of a substation to feed the area, which was upgraded from 30 to 60 MVA to cope with the power demands in the area and provide bulk electrification supply to a nearby shopping centre. Sprong insisted that all five subcontractors involved were sourced from the local community and, as far as possible, as skills transfer measures were implemented to equip these subcontractors with the sustainable skills necessary to enable them to qualify for larger projects going forward.

With a heart as big as his professional ambition is high, Dr Sprong delights in empowering

