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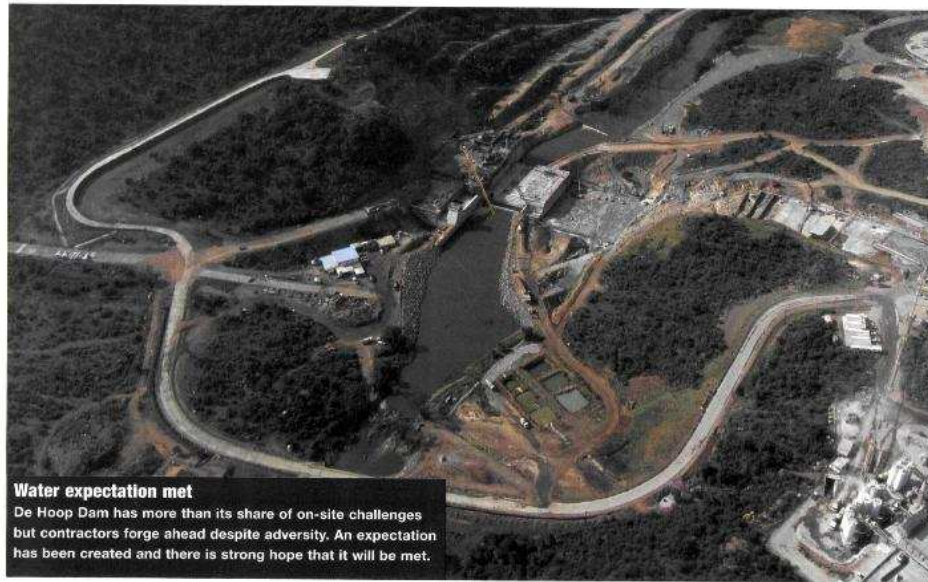
■ Urban planning highlighted

Gibb has welcomed APS PlanAfrica to the Gibb group of companies. "The APS team, now part of the Human Settlements service sector, is led by Nico Kriek (former director of APS), and brings complementary expertise in the areas of urban and rural planning to Gibb," says Richard Vries, group CEO of Gibb. "In line with Gibbs's go-to-market strategy, Kriek stepped into the role of technical leader for urban and rural planning." The team has worked with Gibb on projects such as Port Harcourt Urban City Master Plan, the Gautrain Rapid Rail Link Project, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa Rhodesfield Station, Wemmer Pan Precinct Plan, the Kei Rail Project and the Gauteng BRTs – to name a few. The amalgamation of Gibb and APS is, therefore, natural – it is an extension of existing relationships. "The new urban and rural planning division within Gibb aims to provide innovative and creative solutions for the spatial development problems and opportunities in society in order to achieve effective growth and progressive development," says Vries.



De Hoop - there is hope

There is hope for the contractors tackling the massive De Hoop Dam project with its array of on-site challenges, writes *Dudley Garner*.



Water expectation met

De Hoop Dam has more than its share of on-site challenges but contractors forge ahead despite adversity. An expectation has been created and there is strong hope that it will be met.

Despite many setbacks, construction at De Hoop Dam is making steady progress. With a pronounced upswing in production in recent months, the dam is living up to its name with the expectation of even better progress in future. De Hoop Dam, on the Steelpoort River, has its roots in 2003 when government announced its decision to construct another dam in the Olifants River system. This was considered necessary in order to supply domestic water to the poorly serviced rural communities of the Sekhukhune area and to unlock work opportunities related to the rich mineral deposits of Limpopo. Two sites were investigated – one on the Olifants River at Rooipoort and the other at De Hoop on the Steelpoort River, which is a tributary of the Olifants, with the nod eventually going to the latter.

Looking up

Construction commenced in June 2007 but, as so often in life, before you can do what you set out to do, you have to do

something else first. In this instance, it concerned the relocation of approximately 20 km of provincial road P169-1 – also known as the R555 – which would become inundated once the dam started filling but, more pertinently from a critical-path point of view, skirted a local koppie, Mampurukop, at the point where the dam wall is to be anchored.

Relocation of the road, designed by the Vela VKE/MMA JV and constructed by HLE JV, with Hillary Construction as leading party, went well and was completed in May 2009 as featured in the July 2008 edition of *Civil Engineering Contractor*. While road construction was ongoing, work on the excavations for the foundations of the dam wall also commenced so little time was lost. However, founding conditions were not as good as expected from the preceding drilling investigation with friable rock encountered in places to greater depths than anticipated. This resulted in the dam's approved professional person (APP), Frans Druyts, requiring further excavation to competent rock levels.

