

Reutech Mining plans to expand product range

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Mining technology and geotechnical slope-stability-monitoring radar systems supplier Reutech Mining plans to expand its product range in 2019, says executive manager **Jan de Beer**.

The company provides equipment that can assist in real-time monitoring of the mine walls in opencast mines to provide early warning before slope failures occur. The product range includes the Reutech Mining Movement and Surveying Radar (MSR), the Multi Purpose Platform, the Slope Vision georeferenced camera system and the MSR Connect software suite.

The third-generation, slope-stability MSR is used on six continents and in 27 countries. This flagship product is the fastest scanning real aperture radar capable of detecting submillimetre movement up to 4 000 m away from the rock face.

With data being available in near real time, the MSR can detect small and large areas moving on the mine slope,

We fight to great disadvantage when we fight with those who have nothing to lose.

subsequently allowing for the timeous evacuation of equipment and personnel from potential fall-of-ground risk areas.

The software suite and slope vision system were introduced at the Slope Stability 2018 symposium and exhibition held in Seville, Spain, in April.

Reutech Mining will add another product to its opencast slope-stability monitoring suite of products in 2019, De Beer highlights.

The company showcased its latest products at Electra Mining Africa, which took place at the Nasrec Expo Centre, in Johannesburg, from September 10 to 14. He advances that several new potential clients expressed interest in these solutions. Reutech Mining's slope-stability monitoring suite of products is currently being used at diamond, gold and coal mines in Africa.

He comments that the Slope Vision system was developed to user demand and it enables users to remotely steer the camera system to view specific coordinates, capture still images or create video recording. Once the MSR detects movement on the slope, the Slope Vision



QUICK SCAN

The Reutech Mining Movement and Surveying Radar is the fastest scanning real aperture radar capable of detecting submillimetre movement of up to 4 000 m away from the rock face

system can be commanded to explore the area of movement without compromising the radar scanning. This provides real-time visual inspection of dangerous slopes.

De Beer states that most of the role-players in the industry agree that it is essential for mining to become safer – but it is also clear that productivity and profitability must increase. He believes that it is achievable to increase both, while creating a zero-harm environment, and that the increased implementation of modern technology can contribute to this drive.

“Using the right technology to assist mine personnel in focusing on their main

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duties enables them not only to work more effectively but also to manage complex situations on the mine,” he explains.

For example, a geotechnical engineer should focus on the design and monitoring of the slope and should have all the required tools at his/her disposal to effectively perform these duties. When slope movement occurs, it is not always required to evacuate the working area, as the problem could be effectively managed using the correct real-time information, thereby evacuating production personnel only when necessary.

“This increases production while managing the safety risk,” De Beer points out.

He notes that cost is sometimes an obstacle mines face when adopting new technology. However, Reutech Mining provides rental equipment to enable users to first experience the potential cost saving before committing large amounts of capital.

The company offers various maintenance and support options customised for each individual mine, De Beer concludes. ■■

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– JAN DE BEER

Rio Tinto and partners to invest \$1.5bn in Pilbara

Diversified mining company Rio Tinto and its Pilbara joint venture (JV) partners Japanese group Mitsui and steel producer Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal have approved a \$1.55-billion investment to sustain production capacity at two iron-ore projects that form part of the Robe River JV, in Western Australia.

Rio Tinto’s 53% share of expenditure will amount to \$820-million. The company’s Pilbara operations include an integrated network of 16 iron-ore mines, four independent port terminals, a 1 700 km rail network and related infrastructure.

Earlier this month, the miner reported that the JV partners will invest a combined \$967-million, with Rio Tinto’s share \$513-million, to develop the Mesa B, C and H deposits at Robe Valley, and \$579-million, with Rio Tinto contributing \$307-million, in developing Deposits C and D at the existing West Angelas opencast iron-ore operation.

Subject to government and environmental approvals, construction of both projects is expected to start in 2019 with an estimated 1 200 jobs created during this phase. First ore is currently anticipated from 2021. These investments will also provide significant opportunities for local businesses as part of Rio Tinto’s commitment to local procurement and supporting Western Australian businesses.

Once operational, both projects will feature the latest technology with 24 existing haul trucks to be retrofitted with autonomous haulage system technology, delivering safety



Source: Bloomberg

WEST ANGELAS

Rio Tinto is investing \$307-million in developing Deposits C and D at the existing West Angelas opencast iron-ore operation

and productivity gains to the business.

“The development at West Angelas will help sustain production of the Pilbara Blend, the industry’s benchmark premium iron-ore product, while the additional Robe Valley deposits will enable us to continue to provide a highly-valued product to our long-term customers across Asia,” says Rio Tinto iron-ore CEO **Chris Salisbury**.

He notes that the approval of these two projects highlights the strong pipeline of development options within its portfolio as it remains focused on its value-over-volume strategy.

Rio’s funding commitment for both projects forms part of the company’s existing replacement capital guidance of about \$2.7-billion from 2018 to 2020. ■■

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