

Is steel production safe?

Rebar production has been restored in South Africa but the lull in the local construction industry has had a negative impact on the market. ArcelorMittal South Africa has suffered a worse loss in its shares than expected so its capital expenditure is expected to drop by about R200-million (about US\$26-million).

Building-control professionals required

While other skills shortages in the construction industry are being addressed, training of more building-control officers is believed to have fallen by the wayside. Aubrey Philander, building-control officer with the Cederberg Municipality, is concerned that the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) is ignoring this important aspect of the industry. In response, the Department of Trade & Industry states that the NRCS is working on a curriculum which will set the standard for education in building control and related professions.

Government underspend highlighted

An announcement that government has budgeted for an underspend of R12,4-billion (about US\$2-billion) on municipal construction projects has appalled built-environment professionals. The South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors and Consulting Engineers South Africa believe that government's strategies towards a new growth path should be set in motion as soon as possible to create jobs and mitigate radical downsizing of the South African built-environment sector.

Material businesses for sale

Discussions about the sale of construction-material businesses are under way with several companies. The proposed sale includes Group Five's aggregates, ready-mix concrete, cement-extender and mobile-crushing services which presented a combined loss of R68-million (about US\$9-million) for the group last year.

ERRATUM

In the February 2012 edition of Building Africa, Graham Pirie was inadvertently designated as an "outgoing" president/chief executive officer (CEO). Pirie is most certainly still the CEO of Consulting Engineers South Africa.