

SRK Consulting PMB celebrates 25 years

EDWARD WEST

THE Pietermaritzburg SRK Consulting office started as a “one-man show” in 1993 and has grown to the point where it could easily expand if it found the right people.

The Pietermaritzburg office of engineers and scientists has served its region and beyond with projects as diverse as drought relief, water reticulation, stormwater infrastructure, tailings dams, waste management and cemetery planning and developments.

Rob McNeill — now a corporate consultant and principal geotechnical civil engineering technologist at SRK — first ran the office.

“Although Durban was the commercial hub, it was important to have a presence in Pietermaritzburg, as its status as capital meant many organisations — who were clients or potential clients — had their regional headquarters there,” said McNeill.

“We already had some contacts in Pietermaritzburg, and began with designing road upgrades, water supply and stormwater systems for municipalities — as well as a project for Umgeni Water that included river boardwalks and a temporary dam at the agricultural showgrounds,” he said.

Angus Bracken, managing partner for the Pietermaritzburg office, who was interviewed at the company’s 25th-year celebration event on Friday, said their 24 staff now offer a range of civil engineering and geotechnical services to multiple industries, mainly in the earth sciences.

Some current clients include Umgeni Water, district and local municipalities, the Department of Water and Sanitation, Department of Environmental Services, waste and landfill companies and private developers.

The company also joint ventures with other consulting firms on various



SRK Consulting Pietermaritzburg’s corporate consultant Rob McNeill and managing partner Angus Bracken drink a toast to the firm’s 25 years of service to the city and region. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

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projects.

“Although our staff numbers have fluctuated over the years, we could expand even further if we could find the appropriate staff,” he said. These would include civil engineers, geo-technical engineers, water engineers and geologists.

“One of our most memorable achievements was a labour-intensive

pipeline project — long before the Expanded Public Works Programmes.

“About 90% of a 350km pipeline was installed by hand — enabling as much project expenditure as possible to be pushed towards the communities where the services were being delivered,” said McNeill.

A storm on Christmas Day in 1995 heralded a surge of work for stormwater solutions — something that occupied the office’s focus for years to come.

One of the largest projects was to map the entire stormwater system of Edendale.

SRK’s Pietermaritzburg office also leveraged its geotechnical capability into the mining industry.

In KZN, it worked on tailings dams’ requirements for heavy minerals projects, and continues to do mining-related work in other parts of the country and outside South Africa.