

## **MINE REHABILITATION**

### **DMR makes R90m available to rehabilitate old asbestos sites**

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JOHANNESBURG (miningweekly.com) – The Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) has invested a further R30-million into its asbestos rehabilitation programme, taking its total grant to R90-million over three years.

Minerals and metallurgical specialist Mintek, whose contract with the DMR to rehabilitate abandoned asbestos mines was recently renewed for a further three years, said on Friday that the DMR had identified a further five projects for 2011.

The DMR has established a ten-year medium-term plan to rehabilitate all the derelict and ownerless mines. However, it is expected that it will take up to 2038 to rehabilitate the derelict and ownerless mines at a cost of R1,4-billion, *Mining Weekly Online* previously reported.

Programme project manager **Herman Cornelissen** said that, as part of the R30-million programme for derelict and ownerless mines, Mintek successfully and recently completed the construction of a wall to enclose a rehabilitated old asbestos mining site in the Northern Cape.

The construction of the brick and palisade wall was the final step in the rehabilitation of the Old Mill site, at Prieska, where asbestos was mined from as early as the 1890s. The Old Mill site was in operation from the early 1970s until it was closed down in 1986.

“All tasks as agreed to in the tender have been finalised to the satisfaction of both Mintek and the Siyathemba Municipality. The completion of this work allows the Siyathemba Municipality to safely develop the site of the Old asbestos mill in the town as a memorial park to victims of asbestosis,” explains Cornelissen.

Mintek started working on the project in 2010, following R30-million funding from the DMR to rehabilitate the site, as well as four other sites at Penge, Osizweni, Heuningvlei and Lusikisiki.

The World Health Organisation states that about 125-million people across the world are exposed to asbestos in the workplace, with an estimated 107 000 dying each year from asbestos-related lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis.

Some experts believe that, by 2030, asbestos will have claimed as many as ten-million lives around the world.

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