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Green construction: critical to a green environment

The South African built industry is increasingly recognizing that green construction is imperative if we are to reduce carbon emissions and leave a world that will be habitable for future generations. The move to green is therefore rapidly gaining momentum here, in line with the global focus on ensuring a green, sustainable environment, and the international commitment to reducing energy consumption.

"The worldwide focus on sustainability, rising electricity prices and triple bottom line reporting are forcing companies to become increasingly aware of their carbon footprint," states Jaco Cronje, a Director at EES, an ISO 9001 professional engineering and management company, and a leader in project managing the provision of information technology (IT) solutions to the built environment.

Essential to the construction of a green building is integration of IT and multiple system intelligent infrastructure, and in overseeing this integration EES proactively assists its clients to reduce their carbon footprint and wherever possible curtail any practices which negatively impact on the environment.

"A strong information and communication technology (ICT) platform is essential to ensure the delicate balance between being environmentally responsible and growing a company's African and global presence," continues Cronje.

Bradley Hemphill, Managing Director of EES, stresses that integral to being environmentally responsible is energy efficiency. "Intelligent infrastructure integrates energy efficient lighting and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) temperature control systems. Through further integration of CCTV security and access control, fire control and digital signage it contributes to the efficiency of the overall building.

"A growth-area within the technology realm is the Data Centre. Here the intelligent network within the building connects and forms the nerve centre of the network. Data Centres are growing in size and power thus increasingly becoming more power hungry

through air conditioning and servers. EES pays particular focus in Data Centre design on the Power Utilisation Efficiency of Data Centres – reducing the ratio of total power consumption to IT equipment consumption."

These efficient resources and systems of course contribute to the well-being of owner/occupiers and tenants of the building.

Hemphill continues: "While there are initial costs involved in the construction of green buildings, which may be prohibitive to some companies, the long-term cost benefits far exceed the initial costs, and ultimately lower operating costs going forward. With the advancements in technology, we are seeing pay-back periods reducing on a continuous basis."

He adds that the most efficient and cost-effective method of green construction is to incorporate green methodologies and energy efficiency principles right from the design phase, as opposed to retrofitting.

Hemphill concludes: "We at EES are proud to be able to contribute to the environmental sustainability initiatives of our clients, to help the built industry reduce its carbon footprint, and to play a role in shaping South Africa's green future."

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For further information please contact:

Annabel Eaton
Corporate Communication Services (CCS)
tel: +27 (0) 21 702 3550 (CT, South Africa)
cell: 082 8984878
e-mail: eatona@netactive.co.za

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EES company profile:

EES is an ISO 9000 professional engineering management company. It provides engineering solutions to infrastructure, industrial and built environment applications, and specialises in the integration of multiple system infrastructure. This is achieved by means of data centre and smart connected real estate design in the global environment.

Its investment in technology allows it to work remotely irrespective of locality and in collaboration with its clients, contractors and technology providers.

The nerve centre of the modern built environment is the data centre. EES invests in training and development, and currently has four Certified Data Professionals on its staff, including an Uptime Institute Accredited Tier Designer.

It is committed to proactively assisting its clients to reduce their carbon footprint and facilitates the development of a 'green' commercial environment. Integral to this is an intrinsic awareness in the design process to ensure its clients save energy and improve their bottom line.

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