

Calgro M3 to launch SA's first off-grid company

In a first for South Africa, Calgro M3 is soon to launch a subsidiary that will operate completely off the national electricity grid, by generating its own renewable energy to run all aspects of the business, including that subsidiary's administration office.

"We believe that in this era of tight electricity supply, any move to generate one's own power, to be independent of Eskom, is an important element of sustainability," explains Wikus Lategan from Calgro M3. "It has been estimated that a lack of power has cost this country 10% of GDP and businesses need to take action now to limit the negative impact on their bottom line." This initiative will assist the Metro's within which they operate, by alleviating pressure on an already stretched electricity supply grid.

This comes at a time when the Minister of Public Enterprises, Lynne Brown, has recently warned South Africa of Eskom's continuing supply vulnerability and to expect load shedding for at least the next two years as it battles to deal with the power shortfall.

Calgro M3's new venture, Calgro M3 Memorial Parks, focuses on the development of private memorial parks, with the Nasrec Private Memorial Park set to be launched in May 2015. Apart from the beautiful, park-like environment being created at the memorial site, these parks will enable people to purchase burial sites for themselves and for family members prior to anyone's passing, which state cemeteries are currently unable to offer. Calgro M3 is working on various finance options to make this affordable to a wide spectrum of the community.

Located just off the Nasrec off-ramp on the Western Bypass, the first in a suite of parks will initially be able to accommodate 25,000 grave sites, with future expansion of a further 14,500 sites available.

Exquisitely landscaped to create a tranquil and dignified environment, the park exudes peace and calm. Indigenous plants

and trees sweep across the undulating grass and gently rolling hills, creating visual and ecological serenity for an ultimate resting place and a meditative environment for those left behind. From the upper lake, a stream winds its way through the park to the lower lake, while water fowl complete the picture.

A memorial wall with its everlasting flame lies at the heart of the park, allowing for memorial plaques to be erected in memory of those who are not able to be buried at the park. On-site chapels of various capacities complete the facilities while Calgro M3 Memorial Parks will ensure ongoing maintenance and professional management of the facilities in perpetuity. This will be facilitated by the establishment of an independently managed trust fund, that Calgro M3 will capitalise from revenue, over the sales period of each memorial park. A cemetery will no longer be a place where graves lie abandoned and untended.

“Our intention is to show respect for those resting here,” notes Lategan. “The parks will be well appointed and well maintained while security will form an important aspect of them, with access control, roaming guards 24/7, high-tech security beams and CCTV surveillance. Our investment to date tops R75 million, indicating our level of commitment to achieving a gracious and serene environment for lasting peace.”

To meet the needs of specific communities, Calgro M3 Memorial Parks aims to create appropriate memorial space, sensitive to the traditions and requirements of each such defined group. The aim throughout would be to cater to the individual requirements of families and endeavour to make the funeral process as simple, easy and as personal as required.

Calgro M3 Memorial Parks will have headquarters at the Nasrec site. “The offices have been designed to operate independently of South Africa’s electricity grid, using various forms of renewable energy with generator backup,” states Lategan. “All of the memorial parks and all the facilities associated with this company will be entirely self-sufficient in power generation. We believe that

this will be the first entirely off-the-grid company of size in the country.”

Calgro M3 boasts a successful track record of delivery in property development and successful housing initiatives across South Africa, which will be the foundation of this new initiative. “Lessons learned in this field of alternative energy will be applied to the group’s integrated developments once teething problems have been resolved,” comments Lategan.

By taking its new subsidiary off the grid, Calgro M3 is not only securing its own long term viability, but it is also contributing to a healthier South African economy through not drawing on the limited available electricity resources.