

## Media Release

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### **GIBB ELECTRICITY EXPERT WILLEM SPRONG PRESENTS AT AFRICA RAIL 2015**

The annual Africa Rail Convention at the Sandton Convention Centre, from 30 June to 1 July, heralded as Africa's largest and longest running transport event attracts over 5 000 attendees from the transportation industry country-wide. This year, the conference has a cast of 600 delegates and 300 speakers, and is comprised of innovators and industry leaders at the forefront of development on the continent, sharing insights to facilitate interaction and knowledge transfer with the aim of driving progress and development in Africa.

South Africa's leading black-owned engineering and consulting firm GIBB, had its own esteemed Technical Executive Electrical Engineer, Dr Willem Sprong presenting a paper on his team's design of the new containerised traction substation. With a focus and theme of reliability in the industry, Sprong reinforced innovative solutions into the sector aimed at displaying and educating attendees on the new technology that addresses the resource and skills shortage across the country.

"Being innovative refers to an action that causes one to create something that is not the norm. Innovation is usually met with reluctance, mostly because of our fear of the unknown. We tend to trust in the old technology because we think it has been proven but that is just an excuse not to take a risk," states Sprong.

Engineers become creative with their thoughts when faced with unique conditions that do not allow for traditional approaches. "The containerised traction substation displays an innovation that has created a unique solution to problems in the traction substation design. The substation is essentially a portable unit that provides power through its simple plug and play design. This new innovation will reduce operational costs, time, constructability and maintainability issues that were previously experienced," shares Sprong.

The unique containerised traction substation design is not only much less costly to install than the traditional big building type substations, but it is also much more reliable. The technology used inside the substation is the latest and test results prove that switching capability will drastically increase with this new equipment. The containerised traction substation is also better secured against theft and vandalism and this innovation will enable railway operators to reduce the down time caused by substation failure.

“New technology was implemented to compliment the traditional approach in traction substation design. The result was a containerised substation that can be assembled and tested in the factory and shipped to site where it is commissioned resulting in a more reliable system at a fraction of the cost,” comments Sprong.

With over 95 free educational seminars, this year’s Africa Rail conference aims to inspire attendees, enable vast networking opportunities and educate those in the transport industry on current challenges and solutions with the accompanying exhibition, showcasing hundreds of the latest solutions in Rail.

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**About GIBB:**

GIBB is South Africa’s leading black-owned engineering consulting firm, with an impressive track record of excellence spanning over 55 years in the following sectors: Airports and Aviation, Architecture, Dams, Hydropower and Underground Work, Environmental Services, Integrated Infrastructure, Power and Energy, Railway Engineering, Roads and Highways and Traffic and Transportation. We have national offices in South Africa and various offices across the continent.

GIBB is uniquely positioned to support the public and private sectors in delivering on the future infrastructure needs of South Africa. We have proven expertise and a strong team of locally grown, world-class talent which allows us to confidently and consistently deliver excellence. More than this, GIBB is uniquely geared to work in Africa. We deeply understand the infrastructure challenges on our continent and are structured to deliver on these needs with local teams and local knowledge. We understand Africa, because we are from Africa. We are committed to the powerful future of our continent, which we believe is defined through engineering and related services. We believe that this is the future of Africa defined.

Visit us at [www.gibb.co.za](http://www.gibb.co.za)

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