

Upington Truck Stop adds to Engen's growing footprint

Engen Petroleum, a leading producer and marketer of fuels, lubricants and oil-based products has recognised Upington as a welcome refuelling and refreshment stopover on the routes of long haulage companies and their drivers.

Whether traveling from Kimberly to Namibia, or via Springbok down the West Coast, Engen has been aware of demand by their loyal customers to fill this gap in their Truck Stop footprint for some years. Until recently, the number of Engen Truck Stops stood at 13, complementing Engen's retail service station network of 1 047 sites in South Africa.

Paul Westcott, Engen Regional Sales Manager for Commercial Fuels vividly recalls the first site meeting he had on 25 May 2011.

"Standing in the scrub and bush in the countryside about five kilometres outside Upington, we were speaking with representatives of the Griqualand West Ko-op (GWK) and the developer, Kobus Duvenhage. We all shared the vision for a big facility, one catering for 80 – 100 trucks; capable of dispensing petrol, diesel and gas: with all the facilities that truckers and the growing local community would need and value."

Almost five years later, having covered rezoning applications and processes, not to mention the actual building and fitting of tanks and pumps, this dream has become a reality: and it owes – according to Westcott – both to the commitment of the three parties in the venture and to the replication of the Truck Stop template that has worked so successfully for Engen elsewhere.

"It's beautiful," Westcott enthuses, "it looks like an Engen 1-Stop in its size, and features facilities and services that will add real value to our transport customers and the local community."

"The spacious truck port can comfortably cater for 100 overnight stopovers. Along with a restroom and showers, we offer a laundry, an ATM - so folk don't have to ride all the way into Upington – a Take-Away, Biltong shop and an OK Express Supermarket, packed

with grocery and convenience items. It sets a standard that we'd like to see replicated in the future."

Recognising the need for convenient, safe and comfortable truck stops, Engen plans to keep growing its network where there is sufficient demand, says Mike Stead, Engen Commercial Fuels Manager.

Although the Engen Uppington Truck Stop began operating in December, 6 April has been hallmarked for its official 'grand' opening. Westcott will join fellow senior colleagues from Engen at the opening.

"Engen's 14th Truck Stop is perfectly placed, well timed and brilliantly equipped to impact the lives of drivers and the local community for the better; as well as to fill a large gap in Engen customers' route plans and stop-over schedules," adds Joe Mahlo, Engen's general manager of sales and marketing.

Equally proud will be Kobus Duvenhage, the site owner and developer. After all, whilst it's been a long time coming, the Engen Uppington Truck Stop has been well worth waiting for.

As part of the launch of Uppington Truck Stop, Engen will also be holding a one day Engen Driver Wellness event, offering free health screenings for drivers.

Driver Wellness is a mobile health awareness initiative which educates truck drivers about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle whilst on the road. Truck operators work long hours, frequently leading to imbalanced lifestyles and unhealthy choices. Education helps to remind the drivers why their health is important and how life choices impact on their well-being. This ultimately increases their health, safety and productivity.

Five years since its inception, the health awareness initiative aligned to Trucking Wellness, is an initiative by the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry, which is a primary healthcare delivery programme dedicated to the wellness of those employed in the Road Freight and Logistics

Industry.