

Engen joins forces with SAVTEC to give first engines a second life

Engen's long heritage within the Agricultural sector is built upon a tradition of quality that has seen the company consistently recognised as the preferred fuels and lubricants brand for farmers in South Africa.

Combining this decades long association with its drive to develop the technical skills of the country's youth, Engen partnered with the South African Federation of Vintage Tractor and Engine Clubs (SAVTEC), for the Engen Engine Restoration Challenge 2016. The winners of the event were announced on Saturday, September 24th marking Heritage Day.

The winners were announced at the Bloemfontein Family Tractor and Food Festival at the Ferreira Museum, Kwaggafontein, Bloemfontein.

In the junior class for scholars, first place and a R20 000 prize went to Liezel Gouws from Klerksdorp. Liezel recently competed in the Para-Olympics in Rio running the Class T37 100m and 400m, making the finals of both events. Gerick Muller from Mossel Bay was second and Rudolf Gouws from Klerksdorp third. They pocketed R15 000 and R10 000 respectively.

In the senior class, Torsten Löwe from Pretoria walked away with the R50 000 first prize, followed by Johann Rust from Kuilsrivier (R20k) and Francois van Rooyen from Brackenfell (R15k).

"We have been very excited to be involved in this initiative," says Paul Leask, Engen Lubricants National Sales Manager. "Engen's association with vintage tractors and our support for youth skills development makes it a natural fit for us. "Engen, along with SAVTEC have embraced this heritage project and in doing so, have discovered that – beyond the mechanical aspects – the challenge has brought people together, assisted in building relationships and provided a reminder that hope and new life happen when love and care come together," adds Leask.

While all entrants received a fantastic hamper of Engen products, the top two regional entries in the Senior and Junior categories were eligible to go on to the finals, which were judged at the Central Free State Club.

The fact that these events have proven successful in drawing large crowds and significant interest provided the impetus in 2014 for SAVTEC to approach Engen with a request to sponsor a national competition to encourage veterans and newcomers to become involved in the restoration of old engines.

Key to the spirit of the competition is the highlighting of the development of technology via the restoration of vintage machinery and the transfer of knowledge to the youth, with youth skills development essential to the future sustainability of SAVTEC and the country at large. Engen agreed to put up R250 000 in prizes and to assist with the marketing of the competition which was launched at Agri Megaweek in September 2015.

Christo Pieterse, Chairman of SAVTEC's Central Free State Club believes that the competition has been hugely successful. "The low cost of approximately R2

500 to buy an old engine and R3 000 to restore it, has made the competition very attractive, commanding huge interest, with 27 seniors and 14 juniors competing," he says. "Entrants have come mainly from SAVTEC's member clubs along with Agricultural and Technical schools, Technical Training Colleges and many from the broader community."

All competitors were required to complete a workbook with pictures and documentation of their processes, along with their engines which were exhibited and judged on a regional level in the semi-finals.

Pieterse was thrilled with the standard of entries, as well as the impact that the competition had on a human level. He recounts the following: "I spoke at length with the father of a disabled son who told me just how the two of them have valued their time together breathing new life into an old Wolsely engine. Although the two scooped a third place, they are sadly unable to attend the finals. Another youngster who suffers from severe dyslexia called me with an offer to rebuild an engine for me if I were to complete his workbook! Last, but not least, one entrant's father passed away in the week leading up to the semi-finals and he spoke of how he was able to continue his work on the engine in loving memory of his father."

John Kennedy, Engen's Lubricants Business Manager, says that while Engen is constantly focused on the shifting landscape of modern, increasingly mechanised agriculture, an initiative that has also proven highly successful is the Engen Museum at Nampo where the company has hosted demonstrations of the start-ups of old engines and the driving of vintage tractors.

"This competition has clearly demonstrated that giving first engines a second life is a compelling, absorbing and highly rewarding undertaking, requiring painstaking research, concentrated detective work in tracking down parts and the hands of a surgeon in assembling and starting the engines," adds Kennedy.