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Weba Expands Into Russia With Somex

South Africa-based original equipment supplier Weba Chute Systems has further extended its footprint into the northern hemisphere with the recent appointment of a licensee in Russia. Managing director of Weba Chute Systems, Mark Baller says the selection of Somex as its partner in Russia is in line with the company's long term goal of a sustainable international business model.

"We have always been very selective about the markets which we enter," Baller says. "We obviously seek those markets that offer the greatest potential, partnering with companies that have the best possible fit to ensure a sustainable future there."

This approach has proved very successful for the business and Weba Chute Systems already has extensive representation across the globe with licensees and agents in the USA, Canada, South America, Turkey and Australia, as well as throughout Africa. Significantly, Weba Chute Systems has an established reputation as an OEM with more than 4500 of its custom engineered chute systems installed all over the world.

"When we identified Russia as a prospective market for us, Somex was a partner that fulfilled our demanding requirements," he says. "Somex operates 20 offices across the Russian territory and has an extensive range of products and services which have synergy with our custom engineered chute and transfer systems."

Baller highlights that Somex also has a solid engineering capability with manufacturing facilities that produce quality products, as well as an extensive sales network across a spectrum of industries where bulk materials need to be transferred.

"Russia is important because it is one of the largest producers of raw materials globally, with a relatively untapped market where Weba Chute Systems would be of immediate benefit to many operations," he says. "Many of the plants that we visited in Russia are state-of-the-art facilities with high tech equipment and best practice efficiencies. However, on the materials handling side, there is a huge need for improvement and we can bring the skills and technical knowledge to optimise these operations."

Weather conditions in the northern hemisphere place vastly different demands on materials handling operations, but Baller notes that this is a learning curve which the company has already undergone.

“In Russia, there are extremes in weather conditions from hot, humid summers to freezing winters which means equipment has to accommodate the way this affects the material being handled,” he says. “If moist material freezes in a barge, for instance, the particles being unloaded could become larger chunks of 20 to 30 times the specified lump size.”

He notes that a range of other factors must also be considered during the design phase, including the lack of accessibility to many mines during certain times of the year. This requires that maintenance and servicing must be carefully planned well in advance of product delivery, to ensure optimal uptime and continuous, cost-effective operation.

“We are excited by the signing of this new licensee agreement with Somex and look forward to adding our expertise in chute systems to assist mines and other materials handling plants in Russia to lower their overall cost of ownership,” Baller concludes.

EXPANDS PIC 01 : Mark Baller, managing director of Weba Chute Systems, says the selection of Somex as its partner in Russia is in line with the company’s long term goal of a sustainable international business model.

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