



CHANGING TRENDS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Bidvest Tank Terminals' David Leisegang tells *Tank Storage Magazine* about the company's LPG storage facility

> LIQUEFIED petroleum gas, or LPG, is a clean-burning hydrocarbon, usually propane or butane, or both, used as a heating and cooking fuel. It emits much less CO₂ per unit of energy than coal or diesel when burned and releases fewer particulates. Demand for LPG is growing around the world as countries seek to move away from more polluting fossil fuels both to improve the health of their populations and as part of climate change efforts.

South Africa is one such country, and has plans to double the use of LPG within the next five years to more than 820,000 tpa. In 2020, the Economic Transformation Committee of the country's African National Congress (ANC) government produced an advisory paper calling for the significant growth of LPG in South Africa's energy mix. The paper, amongst other things, suggested that LPG and gas should be integrated into new housing developments, which would help to meet the government's LPG targets and reduce peak power demand.

Someone has to supply the LPG to meet the already growing demand in South Africa, and one company that has stepped up is Bidvest Tank Terminals (BTT). *Tank Storage Magazine* spoke to Bidvest Tank Terminals MD David Leisegang to find out more.

BIDVEST TANK TERMINALS

BTT was first established in 1953 and has grown to become the foremost independent bulk liquid and gas storage operator in South Africa. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bidvest Group, a company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

'We handle over 3 billion L of our customers' product every year. This includes chemicals, liquefied gases, fats and oils, base oils, lube oil additives and petroleum products,' says Leisegang. 'With over 70 customers, we handle more than 150 types of product, stored in over 560 tanks at our Port of Durban, Port

of Richards Bay, and Isando sites. This gives us an impressive storage capacity of approximately 868,000 m³.'

Nine of BTT's 11 sites are in the Port of Durban. The Durban terminals, built on land leased from the Transnet National Ports Authority, handle chemicals, fats and oils, base oils, lube oil additives and waxes.



They have a total capacity of 439,000 m³, five berths, and more than 50 berth lines. A smaller, 33,000 m³ site handling the same products, is located at Isando near Johannesburg on land owned by Bidvest.

RICHARDS BAY

The Richards Bay terminal on South Africa's east coast has a total capacity of 384,000 m³. It has two berths and stores chemicals, liquefied gases and petroleum products. BTT first announced construction of an LPG facility at the site in 2017.

'The Richards Bay site was chosen as a suitable site to develop an LPG facility because Richards Bay is the closest industrial port to the main market in Gauteng, BTT has a long lease tenure with the Port of Richards Bay and had available land to develop,' says Leisegang.

Built at a cost of ZAR 1 billion (€52.9 million), the Mounded LPG storage was commissioned in October 2020, with a delivery of LPG arriving on a Petredec gas carrier from the Gulf of Mexico. It is the largest pressurised LPG import terminal in the region. Not only that, but its four LPG tanks, which have a diameter of 16 m and are 60 m long, are the largest in the world. The facility also has 24-hour road and rail loading facilities.

'The new LPG terminal was needed to

satisfy the demand for LPG in South Africa. The facility has removed the largest obstacle to the unrestricted supply of LPG to the region, thereby ushering in a new era of cost-effective, reliable, safe energy for southern Africa,' says Leisegang.

The LPG terminal is also equipped with a solar energy system as a power back-up for South Africa's frequent power outages. BTT is looking to apply the technology at other sites.

CHANGING TRENDS

Leisegang says that the biggest trend that Bidvest is seeing at the moment is the move towards cleaner energy.

'We see growing demand for storage and handling of cleaner energy sources. We identified LPG as one of these sources in 2012 and therefore positioned ourselves to meet this growing demand,' says Leisegang.

If demand for LPG keeps rising in southern Africa, BTT may consider expansion work to meet that demand, using the latest technology.

PEOPLE AND SERVICE FIRST

Leisegang says that BTT prides itself on being an excellent steward and handler of bulk liquid and liquefied gas products,

but it is not only infrastructure that BTT invests in. The company wants to ensure that it delivers 'excellent' levels of customer service, and is keen to invest in the workforce.

'Bidvest Tank Terminals, with its investment in LPG, has initiated an Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) which seeks to help and support small to medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly woman and youth to participate in the LPG value chain,' Leisegang says.

BTT ensures that it promotes diversity and inclusion in its workforce by providing equal opportunities, particularly for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

'BTT stands out because of its quality of services rendered to customers, unique assets, financing capability for big projects and its highly skilled and experienced management team and workforce,' says Leisegang.

For more information:

www.bidtanks.com

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