

Top loading testing company changes name and grows offerings

Founded by the Graham family in 1979, Spectrum Engineering, trading as Water Weights Natal, is a stalwart in the lifting industry. Appointed as the sub-Saharan Africa representative for Water Weights, the company is credited with pioneering the use of water-filled bags and writing many of the current load testing specifications in the industry.

When the Water Weights group took a global decision to sell its interests to the Unique Group in late 2018, the Graham family strategically chose to reposition and rebrand itself as World Wide Load Testing Services.

Kyle Graham, grandson of the company's founder John and son of the current Technical Director Norman, explains that the company has retained all of its staff and is moving to new, bespoke premises in Cornubia in early July. "Our staff of 37, who have been with us for a minimum of six years and up to 22 years, are thrilled that we will have our workshop and offices in one ultra-modern 600 m² facility. The new facilities will allow us to achieve our goal of expanding our product and service offering and complements our branches in Johannesburg, Swaziland and Mozambique (Tete and Maputo)."

He says that there are two primary goals that form the foundation of the company's business philosophy: engendering absolute safety on site for lifting operations and ensuring that clients benefit through cost saving efficiencies. "By reducing the liability for our clients we are able to provide them with the ability to budget for proactive maintenance on their lifting equipment, thereby reducing the costs incurred by unplanned maintenance and breakdowns."

Norman Graham, who is a founding member of LEEASA, says that he believes in a hands-on approach and as such is regularly seen participating in load testing at the clients' sites. "We have all the necessary local and international certifications and our knowledge of the various brands has led to a number of referrals from the major OEMs. We also have an extensive range of water testing capacities, amounting to over 1 000 tons of water bags, with a further 340 tons recently purchased and a further 120 tons being brought from Angola to South Africa. In addition, we have 70 tons of solid weights in Mozambique, 76 tons in Johannesburg and 30 tons in Durban."

The company boasts 10 LMIs and six LTIs on its payroll. "Bless Msweli was in fact the first Black LMI in South Africa. Like all of our staff, he was encouraged to improve his skills and knowledge base and as a result of encouragement and mentoring from management, has excelled in his chosen career path," says Kyle.

Increased service offering

World Wide Load Testing Services, for many years a leader in the load testing arena under the Water Weights banner, is intent on increasing its service and product offering to enhance customer service.

"While we specialise in ship to shore load testing, we are geared up to do load testing on any lifting equipment with capacities of over 100 tons. Quality equipment is a critical criteria for us and a good example of this is the fact that our water bags, which we source from Water Marine in the UK, are drop test certified in Scotland to the highest British Testing Authority standards. By owning our own rigging, air lift bags, loadcells, pumps bags, loose tackle and other necessary equipment, we are able to reduce the cost to clients. When coupled with the broad experience and skill of our LMIs, this allows us to offer an unrivalled service," says Kyle.

The company offers a maximum 24-hour turnaround and offers a wide range of services, aligned with OEM standards, that include testing on:

- Beams
- Gantries ('A'-frames)
- Harbour cranes
- Industrial lift trucks (forklifts)
- Jib cranes
- Jibs (free standing & mounted)
- Life line structures
- Lifting platforms.
- Mobile cranes
- Mobile elevated working platforms (MEWP) truck-mounted manlift (cherry picker)
- Overhead travelling cranes
- Portal / semi-portal cranes
- Truck mounted cranes
- Vehicle hoists.

In each instance, a comprehensive report is produced to allow clients to reference areas of possible weakness and to schedule preventative maintenance timeously.

In addition to providing these services, the company has also introduced leased equipment, which is available to companies that employ a certified LMI, and who wish to undertake their own load testing using WWLTS' water bags, loadcells and solid weights.

Both Norman and Kyle agree that one of the biggest challenges they face is educating site personnel on the importance of retaining the services of only those companies registered as LMEs. "It is critical, for the safety of all concerned, that companies using lifting equipment insist on seeing the legislated LME and LMI certification of their service providers. Furthermore, we advise other LMEs to take a cautious approach to certifying any maintenance work they may feel tempted to undertake. For safety's sake we outsource all required maintenance work on lifting equipment and stick to our core business of load testing," says Kyle.

The team at World Wide Load Testing Services invite enquiries for load testing services through sub-Saharan Africa.