

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
1 September 2000
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 26th Annual general Meeting of the Corrosion Institute of Southern Africa. A very special welcome to our visitors, to those members who have joined in the last year and also to those members who have travelled a long way to be here this evening.

For the past few years the eagerly awaited upturn in the economy has been very slow in coming to fruition. The construction industry [and the corrosion industry] has been severely depressed with very little work and with resultant down sizing and closing of numerous undertakings. The steel fabrication and protective coating industry has been particularly hard hit with many of the anticipated local projects being postponed or put on hold. Similarly the ever declining gold price has had a negative impact on the corrosion protection industry in that the gold mines were not investing in new mines or spending on the maintenance of existing plants.

The past few months have however, shown a significant up-turn with several local projects and some very exciting export projects where clearly South Africa is becoming a global player.

This past year has also been a difficult time for the Institute in that we have been experiencing, what appears to be an increasing lack of interest on the part of our members, as reflected primarily by the attendance at our Technical Meetings. The Council has discussed this problem at great length. Numerous reasons, which vary from the venue, the time, the topic, increased pressure of work, security issues etc, were put forward. We were however, not getting any closer to the root cause or, consequently, the solution. It was suggested that perhaps we, the Council, were providing the members with what we thought they wanted and not actually what they wanted. We need to encourage more younger members in order to ensure the continued growth of the Institute and to avoid the "old boy" syndrome. We also need to attract more members from the previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa so that the Institute can become more representative of our industry as a whole.

The decision was thus taken to employ a Market Research Company to carry out a survey on our behalf. When completed, the survey, which will be carried out on a random sample of our membership, will be analysed using statistical analysis techniques. This analysis is based on importance/performance criteria and will enable us to see where we have been focusing and where we should be focusing our attentions to provide our members with the service they expect. We look forward to these results which will allow us to better plan the activities for the forthcoming year.

I will now report on the activities for the past year.

Technical Programme

In Gauteng, the programme committee under the chairmanship of Mr Mike Anderson did a sterling job providing a varied and interesting technical programme for the year with subjects as varied as waste management and skills development. The average attendance was 22 but with some particularly poor attendance as low as 11. In Kwa Zulu Natal, Bruce Eagleton's efforts maintained their high attendance with an average of 26 with 7 presentations and technical discussions during the year. The Western Cape branch held three technical meetings during the year with reasonable attendance.

Education

Colin Alvey has retained the portfolio as chairman of the education committee. For the greater part of the past year he has been trying to ascertain what we as the Institute need to do to obtain recognition for our courses in terms of the new Skills Development Act. This has not been an easy task and we are most grateful for the time and effort Colin has dedicated to unravelling the mysteries associated with this. I would now like to read a report Colin has compiled.

In addition, in Gauteng we ran an SAQCC Level 2 Paint Inspectors Course with 9 candidates. It is gratifying to note that the large asset owners are now starting to stipulate that only qualified SAQCC inspectors be used for coating applications on their installations. This bodes well for the corrosion protection industry as painting application standards can only improve. Kwa Zulu Natal ran the Corrosion Engineering Course for 6 candidates.

Pipeline and Coatings Committees

These Committees that were previously known as Interest Groups have consolidated their activities in that they now form part of the Council. There is nothing to report in these specific areas as there has been little activity during the past year. Neil Webb has however been requested to compile an SAQCC course on Cathodic Protection which should keep him and his committee busy in the forthcoming year.

Membership

Our membership currently stands at 338 being comprised as follows:

Gauteng	222
KZN	64
W Cape	50
Outside SA	2

In the past, much administration time has been wasted trying to secure membership fees from recalcitrant members. Thus while it may appear that our membership has decreased, this year we have taken a strong stance with regard to clearing defaulters from the system.

Journal

It is now almost a year that Industrial Publications have been publishing our official journal, Corrosion, paint and Coatings. I am pleased to report that, after the disappointing experience with Prime Media we have found the solution.

I believe the journal now presents a more professional image for the Institute with technical editorials and also industry news. I would like to thank Mr Gerd Muller and his team for their efforts. May they continue with the good work.

Awards

One of the important functions of the Institute is to recognise excellence in the industry and to promote the development of corrosion engineering by means of our awards.

This year we are not awarding the Silver Medal or the Industrial award as it was considered that we had not had a paper worthy of the silver medal nor did we have suitable candidacy for the Industrial award.

I am however pleased to report that the Ivan Ogilvie Scholarship will be awarded. The recipient is Ms Vumeka Magaqa who is studying fulltime for a Master's degree at Pretoria University under the supervision of Professor Roelf Sandenbergh. Her project deals with the pickling behaviour of annealed stainless steel sheet. Unfortunately, she is not able to be with us tonight to receive her cheque.

It also gives me great pleasure to announce that this year we are awarding the highly prestigious Gold Medal to Dr Colin Alvey. The proposal for this award was submitted by Eric Duligal and Michael Brett, both of whom are Fellows of the Institute and Gold Medallists themselves. The citation reads as follows:

“In recognition of outstanding achievements in the development of Corrosion Science and technology and meritorious contributions over a lengthy period in the dissemination of knowledge, and training and education in Corrosion technology in Southern Africa.”
A very worthy recipient and we are both honoured and delighted to have people of Colin's calibre in the Institute.

Social

The regional golf days continue to be very popular providing a relaxed social occasion for our members and of course, to the benefit of well deserving charities. These events do not just happen – they involve a lot of behind the scenes effort. Our thanks to Walter Barnett and Goeff Harris who were responsible for arranging the golf day in Gauteng and to Michael Brett and his team for that in Kwa Zulu Natal.

Thanks

In these tough economic times, it is appreciated that ever-increasing demands are being made on peoples' time. I want to thank the Council members for giving of their valuable time, for all their tremendous support, hard work and enthusiasm during the past year.

Finally, my special thanks to Beverly van Niekerk, our administrator, for all her fortitude, support, patience and hard work during the past year.
Please enjoy the evening with us.

Meryl Nixon
President: Corrosion Institute of Southern Africa

1 st September 2000