

# Eco wins energy efficiency award

Small business enterprise, Eco-Insulation, beats global corporations in energy efficiency usage. It has become the norm to hear of the strides made by giant companies and global corporations in the field of energy efficiency and sustainable use of the planet's resources.

But a small business enterprise based in Cape Town has pipped the giants to the post in being awarded the Southern African Association for Energy Efficiency's Excellence Award in 2008.

The Southern African Association for Energy Efficiency (SAEE) is one of 67 international chapters of the American Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) and it is very active in southern Africa, especially since the energy crisis during 2006 and 2008.

The recipient company of the Excellence Award 2008, Eco-Insulation accepts old newspapers from recyclers and converts them via a low energy milling process into dry pulp, resembling cotton wool.

Once treated with an environmentally friendly fire retardant, this material can be safely pumped into the roof above the ceiling. In the roof it mats together and provides a thick layer of stable insulation 75 - 140 mm deep.

This acts as a barrier to the entry of heat in summer and to the exit of heat from the building during winter. The product is officially fire rated B/B1/2, meaning no spread of flame, and carries SA Bureau of Standards approval under code 1381-6.

Eco-Insulation founder, Cecil Homan,



*Eco-Insulation founder, Cecil Homan.*

is passionate about the future of Eco-Insulation, which previously earned him a Western Cape Productivity Award in 2006. He says the average temperature inside an insulated building can be as much as 10 degrees C lower on a hot day. "

or cavity walls of every building with such a product is enormous and this is why the product was nominated for the SAAEE award in the first place.

According to the Award citation, Eco-Insulation has established in just 3 years, not only a high-performing cellulose-based insulation product, but has also expanded to an agency network of over 12 trained installer sub-contracting businesses around South Africa.

The company achieved SABS compliances in a record time. As a building material inside peoples' homes and work environments, Homan regarded product safety as paramount, so he pursued national building standard approvals and fire safety compliances upfront during the product design phase.

"Eco-Insulation has made the business of energy-efficiency highly accessible to persons who have the drive to start their own installer operations, and particularly accessible to homeowners, contractors and developers who want a turnkey service for installing thermal and acoustic insulation on site. Upstream, Eco-Insulation has stimulated recycling because it is made from recycled newsprint arising from various waste streams", reads the citation.

The business continues to expand and seeks entrepreneurs who share its passion for promoting energy efficiency in South Africa and are willing to invest in becoming accredited agents in various regions of the country.

The recycling of paper waste into insulating material also provides a lower embedded energy solution than recycling it back into printing material. So it benefits the environment", he says. Of course, the energy-saving potential of fitting the ceiling



## Steenberg's R120m housing development

The National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC) is funding part of the R120 million housing project at Steenberg in Cape Town.

The project, comprising 450 housing units, is a mixture of bachelor, one bedroom loft units and two bedroom units.

The development is supported by the National Department of Housing, who through the Social Housing Foundation, has made available Capital Restructuring Grants, together with the Western Cape Provincial Government which provided provincial subsidies. The balance of the term funding required to complete the project has been made available in equal parts by the NHFC and the Dutch International Guarantees for Housing.

The project supports the National Housing Policy of Social Housing to boost the number of rental units available in the country. It is backed by the City of Cape Town which has entered into a partnership agreement with the SOHCO Property Investments, a Section 21 company, for the delivery of well located social housing to low income earners. The project is aimed to serve the lower income segment of the NHFC's target market.

The City of Cape Town needs to deliver approximately 20 000 housing units per annum for the next ten years

# Housing In Southern Africa

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## Editor's Comment

Taffy Adler, the former head of Johannesburg Housing Company has won numerous awards including the prestigious United Nations World Habitat Award 2006, for the best innovative and sustainable housing solutions. Hopefully, the HDA will play a vital role in the style of developments and encourage diversity in affordable housing.



South Africa has its share of inventors who created the Kreepy Krauly, Pratley, the first glue to be used in space and the Cat scan. Some of the weird and wonderful concepts have truly helped the community like the Hippo Water Roller – it enables water to be easily transported with the minimum of effort. The 90 litre drum has been successfully used in rural areas without access to tap water.

Time magazine recognised Ken Hall's 'Cobb', oven designed to prevent fire risks in informal settlements. It uses six charcoal brickets and provides heat for more than two hours.

The ingenuity of the designers and creators of the Eezi bicycle-powered water pump, the turbo-spiral solar heater, the suncatcher solar cooker and the solo-mobile water heater show the talent in South Africa.

The latest to this formidable list, with a patent pending, is the Sunsaver solar system. Usually solar heating systems come with a hefty price tag for going 'green'. But Gavin Brits and Albert Bester teamed up to create an efficient, solar system that is created from recyclable material for the affordable housing market. Sunsaver solar water heating system uses 500 ml and 2 litre plastic cool drink bottles.

Perhaps Adler will continue the trend and ingenuity with exciting developments at the Housing Development Agency.

Carol Dalglish