



October 2008

Sarpa Conference

The Southern Africa Regional PROFIBUS Association (SARPA) recently held a conference at the Eskom Convention Centre focusing on Asset Management and Diagnostics in the fieldbus arena, with a specific leaning towards PROFIBUS in process applications or PA.

The conference was preceded by a breakfast (see picture gallery) at which many noted persons from the instrumentation and control world were present including many from the industries press and other instrumentation institutes. The keynote speaker was Dr Jochen Mueller from PROFIBUS International in Germany; he is also head of the marketing team for PROFIBUS PA. Among the many interesting points that were spoken about, two bear repeating.

Firstly, the astronomical rate at which PROFIBUS continues to grow. Now with even the most optimistic expectations being exceeded, the future of this technology, already established as the most successful fieldbus in industry is assured of its rightful place as the leading fieldbus system.

Secondly, the announcement of Profile 3.02 for PROFIBUS PA which further improves this standard as far as:

1. Integration of devices is concerned.
2. Up/download times.
3. New and old model compatibility.

PROFIBUS PA V3.02 is set to further ease the transition from old to new technologies and help end-users fully realise the benefits of smart instruments and total asset management as a new and efficient strategy for managing the life cycle of their plant.

The day was rounded out with presentations by technology specialists from ABB and the PROFIBUS Competence Centre of South Africa. Both of these speakers echoed the theme throughout that real benefits in terms of maintenance, predicted failures, and greatly reduced documentation are key benefits of asset management products.

It was also well noted that in diagnosing problems on PROFIBUS

networks, special tools are essential if the entire ownership experience is to be stress-free. Most of the well-documented problem areas with all bus systems can to a large extent be avoided with good engineering, proper diagnostic tools and training.

In his closing words, the chairman of SARPA, Edwin Bauer noted that when we have the caliber of delegate in attendance, as was the case at this conference, it is clear that automated solutions and especially those that can realise true value and savings for the customer are here to stay. Proudly, PROFIBUS is at the forefront of this technology.

Wireless Co-Operation Team Makes Good Progress

The Wireless Co-operation Team (WCT) was founded in August 2007. Here, the Fieldbus Foundation, the HART Communication Foundation and PNO in Germany (for PI) have agreed on unprecedented and unique co-operation in the area of wireless technology for the manufacturing and process industry. The aim is to establish a common open standard and to promote greater acceptance of wireless technologies.

For process automation, WirelessHART technology is to be employed. In a first stage, the specifications for gateways between wireless HART networks and the individual fieldbus systems (Foundation Fieldbus as well as PROFIBUS and PROFINET) are being created. For this purpose, the three organisations have agreed to develop joint guidelines for inclusion into their respective product registration procedures.

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