

# Animated debate expected at Annual Congress of Shopping Centres

The 13th African Congress of Shopping Centres is expected to generate lively debate as shopping centres and retailers tackle the challenges of the current market. The congress is sponsored by Growthpoint Properties and will take place at the Sandton Convention Centre, from Wednesday, 16 to Friday, 18 September 2009.

Providing access to the latest thinking, innovation and information regarding shopping centre and retail trends in South Africa, the congress will feature a line-up of presentations and panel discussions by experts, opinion makers and the industry's leading minds. |

Now in its 18th year, the African Congress of Shopping Centres is said to be the largest gathering of retail and retail property people in Africa with over 1000 delegates including retailers, shopping centre owners, developers, investors, leasing and marketing agents, store designers and fitters, facilities managers, construction professionals and other suppliers to the industry. It is hosted by the SA Council of Shopping Centres (SACSC) and supported by the International Council of Shopping Centres (ICSC).

## Learn and be challenged

"This conference presents an opportunity for delegates to learn and be challenged and by doing so, to improve their business growth and prospects as well as those of the entire sector. We're pleased that by partnering this event we will be creating value for the industry," said Norbert Sasse, CEO, Growthpoint Properties.

Facilitated by Chris Gibbons, one of South Africa's leading business broadcasters, the keynote speakers will share their views on the industry in a two-day meeting programme. The speaker line-up features pre-eminent Canadian-based international shopping centre owner, manager, developer and investor Ivanhoe Cambridge senior vice-president for India Phil McArthur.

## Keynote speakers

It includes keynote speakers CEO of Pick n Pay Nick Badminton, Eileen Connolly who heads the UK and European DTZ Retail Marketing team, director of Investec Asset Management Jeremy Gardiner, MD of Retail at Woolworths Andrew Jennings and Andrew Ogg, MD of Leslie Jones, one of the UK's leading architectural practices specialising in retail and mixed-use regeneration projects. Also presenting at the congress are Hugues Witvoet of Edcon, Brian Coppin of Fruit & Veg City, Andrew Callie van der Merwe of Design Partnership, Jan Loubser of Retail Africa and Samuel Ogbu of Liberty Life Properties.

Topics relevant to the prevailing economic conditions are aimed at empowering shopping centres to perform optimally, with themes focusing on retail perspectives, the economic outlook, marketing and customer service, international and local architecture, retail property development and investment.

## Post 2010

There will be a presentation by Gillian Saunders, director of Grant Thornton, on the outlook for the longer, post-2010 term and what prospects the retail and hospitality industries can anticipate. Also of interest is Mike Stopforth, principal of Cerebra, the South African social media company, who will share his insights about the power of alternative media and social networking, which is taking retail marketing by storm in developed markets.

Making up an important element of the congress are the property tours of which there will be two, the first to Blu Bird Centre and Melrose Arch and the second along the Gautrain Route and to the Irene Village Mall. In addition there will be a number of networking events. The conference will also feature an exhibition, which runs parallel to the main event.

To find out more about the SACSC Congress, go to [www.sacsccongress.co.za](http://www.sacsccongress.co.za).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>