

Winning design of trolley for recycling

This year's Student Design Competition, in which entrants had to design the most innovative and practical trolley that could be pulled behind a bicycle for the collection of recyclables, was won by Reando Potgieter, Anthony Wilcox and Balungile Mahlangu from Tshwane University of Technology, who submitted a group entry.



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The competition is run by the Plastics Institute of South Africa (PISA), in partnership with POLYCO (the industry association promoting the recycling of polyolefin plastics in South Africa), Plastics|SA, Afrimold and the Universities of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and Tshwane University of Technology. Wayde van Heerden from the University of Johannesburg and Tiisetso Murray from the University of Witwatersrand entered as individuals.

Addressing the 21 finalists and winners at the prize giving ceremony at the Afrimold Expo at Gallagher Estate in Midrand, Plastics|SA Sustainability Director Douw Steyn, said, "The collection of post-consumer recyclables from households has become a daily occurrence in our streets and neighbourhoods. Our latest plastics recycling survey has shown that 40,950 informal jobs were created during 2010-2011 in the collection industry, with an average of 60kgs collected per person per day."

Finding a workable solution for daily challenges

Sam Matsemela, a collector himself and chairperson of the Trolley Brigade - an informal organisation formed to represent collectors in negotiations with municipalities and other organisations - addressed the organisers and students and was visibly moved by their efforts to make the lives of these workers that much easier.

"When Douw Steyn spoke about this competition six months ago, I thought it was just talk, but here I stand before you, a judge at the competition and my heart is overflowing with pride and joy! Fellow citizens will now become more aware of our contribution to their daily lives and at the same time we will be able to lead meaningful lives and earn a living."

Industry showing support

Steyn explained that the role players in the plastics industry were very supportive of the competition and that they had not hesitated to donate products ranging from plastic pipes to polystyrene for the students to use in their designs.

"We wanted the students to think 'outside the box' and incorporate as much recycled or recyclable material into their designs as possible. At the same time, the entries needed to be practical, cost effective, easy to build and operate and aesthetically pleasing."

Judges

The judges, who were tasked with the job of assessing and adjudicating the entries, were selected from the plastics and recycling industries because of their first-hand knowledge of the daily challenges faced by the collectors. They were:

- Annabe Pretorius (GM SA Plastics Recycling Organisation)
- Kirtida Bhana (Training Executive- Plastics|SA)
- Claire Warner (Education Manager - WESSA)
- Gugu Mkhize (Waste Minimisation and Recycling - City of Jhb)
- Simthiwe Memena (Waste Minimisation and Recycling - City of Jhb)
- Sam Matsela (Trolley Brigade)
- Alfred Mofokeng (Trolley Brigade)
- Simon Mbatha (Waste Pickers Association)
- Andrew Marthinusen (PACSA)
- Douw Steyn (Plastics|SA)

The judges made it clear that they were very impressed with the standard of the entries. "It was very difficult to choose a winner, as each and every design was a winner in its own right", said judge and CEO of the Packaging Council of South Africa (PACSA), Andrew Marthinusen.

"I believe this competition has proved that there is a workable solution for waste collection in our country and we hope to see industry and local municipalities working together in the near future to make one of these designs become a reality for Sam and the other collectors," concludes Steyn.

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