

New faces at diamond juniors

Brendan Ryan | Wed, 28 Oct 2009

[miningmx.com] -- DIAMOND juniors Rockwell and Pangea Diamond Fields (Pangea) - which both have alluvial diamond mining operations in the Northern Cape - have made key changes to their top management structure.

Rockwell has appointed Graham Chamberlain as chief operating officer (COO), with effect from November 1.

Chamberlain is a mining engineer with 26 years' experience, most of it spent with Anglo American Corporation.

His most recent position was as general manager of Pamodzi Gold's East Rand operations, where he was one of very few key executives to emerge from the collapse of Pamodzi with credibility.

In March Chamberlain warned investors about the rapidly deteriorating situation at the Grootvlei mine, and the potential dangers posed to its neighbours by flooding caused by rising underground water levels.

He confirmed outside reports on the pollution threat to the Blesbokspruit because of the financial squeeze affecting Grootvlei's water treatment operations, as well as providing updates on the situation.

He did so at a time when more senior executives - such as chief financial officer Kobus du Plooy and CEO Peter Steenkamp - either could not be reached or were refusing to comment. Chamberlain said he had now left Pamodzi because the new owners, the Aurora consortium, had put their management team on site.

He said: "This is my first exposure to diamond mining, and I view it as a huge opportunity. In the short-term I will be assisting (CEO) John Bristow, and then we will take it from there." Toronto- and JSE-listed Rockwell is due to release the details of a rights offer and private placement intended to raise between \$7m and \$10m early in November.

London-listed Pangea last week announced that operations manager Boris Kamstra would take over as CEO from Brett Thompson on November 1.

Thompson is relocating to Australia with his family, but will remain involved on a full-time basis until the end of December to ensure a smooth transition. After that he will continue as a non-executive director of Pangea.

Kamstra is a civil engineer with extensive operational, project management and management experience.

Earlier in 2009 he was loaned out to Rockwell to work on modifications to the diamond recovery plant installed at the Saxendrift mine on the Orange River.

Kamstra joined Pangea in May 2006 as engineering manager and oversaw the design, manufacture and construction of Pangea's bulk sampling plants in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and South Africa.

Pangea's immediate future rests on the success of one of those operations, Cassanguidi in Angola, where production is being scaled up.

Thompson warned in Pangea's interim results statement for the six months to end-June that - should there be any delays to scaling-up operations at Cassanguidi and should Pangea be unable to source additional bridge funding - "a material uncertainty exists which may cast doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern".

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