



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH

e-newsletter

2008 / VOLUME 32

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13TH SEPT 2008

AN INTERVIEW WITH ENGR. V. A. UGOCHUKWU, PRODUCTION MANAGER PHRC ON PROBLEMS OF FUEL SCARCITY IN NIGERIA

E-Newsletter: We want to know about your life. Please tell us about yourself

Engr. Ugochukwu: My name is Engr. V. A. Ugochukwu. I attended secondary school between 1972 and 1977 and later I had my tertiary education at Petroleum Training Institute where I obtained my HND in Petroleum Processing Technology. Furthermore I sought for and gained admission into the University of Port Harcourt where I graduated as a Chemical Engineer. I have been a registered member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers since 2000 and COREN in 2002. I joined the NNPC in 1982 after my NYSC as Technical supervisor 1 with the old Port Harcourt Refinery Company. I have experienced series of promotions through senior engineer, assistant chief, deputy chief, deputy manager and in 2007 to Production manager. I was transferred from Fuel Plant 2 to Fuel Plant 1 the new plant from there I was transferred to Abuja and lastly back to Port Harcourt as the Production Manager. I am married with children.

E-Newsletter: In recent times citizens of this country have been experiencing fuel scarcity problems. What is your opinion on this?

Engr. Ugochukwu: Fuel scarcity is with us and will continue to be in Nigeria until certain things are put in place. First, the last refinery was commissioned in 1989 about twenty years ago. The engineers then had proposed that for the country to be self sufficient in gasoline production; PMS, AGO, kerosene and other petroleum products we need additional refineries. They had projected that these additional refineries can take us up to certain period. In fact, Port Harcourt Refinery was designed actually for export not for internal consumption. In effect, it then means that with the three refineries we had at a time they would have taken care of the nation's need. However, you will realize that whether you like it or not even though people are not being employed as expected quite a number of people either through political dispensation have been empowered more to use more vehicles. With these more vehicles, it is expected that there should be more gasoline, PMS. Unfortunately we have not thought about expanding the refineries or at least building new ones to meet today's challenges. I remembered vividly that sometime in the past, I think about December last year our Group Executive Director, R & D and current MD, PPMC appeared in the National Television network where they stated that even where the four refineries were well re-activated, that is 100% capacity utilization, they can not meet the nation's need because we need to have more.

Apart from the fact that what we had then was not meant to stay beyond ten years but we are talking about twenty years, we've not had an addition. Instead, there is a depletion of those particular tools we have worked on. For example, by refinery international standard, every two years we supposed to do what they call Turn- Around Maintenance (TAM). This process is when all the tools are being serviced in order to give you at least close to what we started with. But we are not doing that. We can not run refineries like use personal cars or generators. We must follow the standard to achieve the desired throughput. That is on the issue of equipment. Outside equipment and running of the plant, if you produce and can not evacuate, you will still have problems of fuel scarcity. If the whole refineries are run at 100% capacity but the products can not be transferred or transported to the market. there will still be scarcity. That is where the issue of pipe line vandalization comes in. There is no day in our meeting that you would not hear of a punctured pipe lines here and there. The recent one is the Kuru supply line; repairs have not been done because of the high rate of compensation. Even though compensations are paid, more groups will rise and demand for their own compensation. With that kind of problem we can not continue production. There are so many cases of pipeline damage incidences and these things put together cause fuel scarcity.



Engr. V. A. Ugochukwu

E-Newsletter: What is the design capacity of PHRC and available production capacity of PMS?

Engr. Ugochukwu: All the output of the refineries in the country put together can not take care of the demand of the citizens. However the designed capacity of Port Harcourt Refinery is 150,000 barrels per stream day. The old refinery was 35,000 barrels per stream day and was upgraded to 60,000 bbls per stream day. And I know that Warri and Kaduna were both 100,000 barrels per stream day but eventually, Kaduna was upgraded to 110,000 barrels per stream day while Warri was 125,000 bbls per stream day. That was around 1984. You will also remember that when Prof. Tam David West was the Minister of Petroleum in this country, two extra refineries were actually planned for the country, one to be sited in Port Harcourt and the other in Cross-River State. Then individuals, organizations developed interest to build more refineries. Government should create enabling environment for private participation in this venture.

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The total output of the three refineries can not meet the nation's demand because they were not designed to meet eternity demand of the economy. We need to build more refineries. However, in building more, the networks transfer system should be considered. The pipeline network system, loading and offloading jetties and even the tanker drivers who take these products to hinterland lands have to be in place. Training is required in this regard.

E-Newsletter: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of fuel importation?*

Engr. Ugochukwu: What you don't have, you import. However in doing that you are depleting our foreign exchange because that importation will be paid from the foreign exchange reserve. You are also maintaining other country's jobs because if we were able to build at least two or three refineries in the past twenty years, definitely, not less than 300,000 Nigerians will be employed and of course when you move most people out of the streets, there will be more peace. Even if we import, the problem of receiving and evacuating will still be there.

E-Newsletter: *Can you tell us about your maintenance program? Have you not been following the MTCE Program?*

Engr. Ugochukwu: Equipment maintenance is done like every other ones. However, there is this national nonchalant attitude toward maintenance that has to change. Things are not working well. If you bring out a bad product and blend it with good ones, you will still have a bad product. Even if I have every good maintenance plan in place but I don't have the budget to operate, there is no way it can work. And the maintenance in most system depends on the material supply and the material management for repair. So if such materials are not quality materials, it will affect the maintenance activities. Human resources are needed.

E-Newsletter: *What do you think will make us to surmount these teething problems in our refineries in this country?*

Engr. Ugochukwu: I just pray that my advice will count. I have a role to play, you have a role to play and the Government also has a role to play. I will advise every citizen that whatever responsibility that is placed in our hands, we should contribute our best to make sure that things are done well and properly. We should take the work as our own. Funds should be made available always for those in the operations, procurement and maintenance departments so that quality equipment could be procured as fast as possible. Those in maintenance should ensure that equipments are properly maintained. The international standard of maintenance for refineries which is done every two years should be religiously followed. All these notwithstanding, government have to build more refineries or create enabling environment for private people to build more refineries with optimum design capacity. The E-newsletter has role to play by educating the public on this all important issue. Pipeline vandalisation is evil and should be condemned in strong terms. Thank you.

E-newsletter: *Thank you very much for your advice and the audience.*

NSE PORT HARCOURT HOLD HER 2008 ENGINEERING WEEK/ANNUAL DINNER FROM MONDAY 10TH NOV TO SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER, 2008.

INVITATION LETTER TO NSE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING "YANKARI 2008"

The National Engineering Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Society of Engineers will hold from **24th – 28th Nov, 2008** at the **Multi-purpose Sports Complex, Bauchi**. **Theme "Strategies for the Attainment of Vision 20/2020"** The Conference registration fee which also covers the Conference materials is N20,000 for Members who register before 31st Aug, 2008, and N25,000 after August 31st, 2008.

POSTCON 2008

Conference on Meeting Environmental Challenges in Coastal Region of Nigeria. **Date:** 29th—30th September 2008
Venue: Dundee, United Kingdom.. The Group Managing Director (GMD) of NNPC will declare the conference open. Engineers and environmentalists are encouraged to attend.

COREN 17TH ENGINEERING ASSEMBLY:
THEME: VALUE FOR MONEY IN ENGINEERING PROJECTS: THE ROLE OF ENGINEERING REGULATION. **VENUE: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE. ABUJA.** **DATE: 23RD-24TH SEPT, 2008.**
REG. FEE: #12,000. PRE-REG.: #15,000. AFTER 22ND AUGUST, 2008.
TECH & CRAFTMEN: #6,000 FLAT. **PROGRAMME OUTLINE: DAY 1: 9:00AM-OPENING CEREMONY, 12:00PM: TEA BREAK, 1:00PM: TECH SESSIONS, 7:00PM: DINNER. DAY 2: 9:00AM TECH SESSION, 12:00PM TEA BREAK: 12:30PM: TECH SESSION, 2:00PM . CLOSING**

Special Invitation

The Nigerian Society of Engineers
Port Harcourt Branch
Cordially Invites

To the

3rd Annual Lecture & Awards 2008

Eminent Lecturer: Engr. Prof Steve Odi-Owel, FNSE
Special Guest of Honour: Engr. Tele Ikuru, MNSE
(Deputy Governor, Rivers State)
Guest of Honour: Engr. Mrs K. J. Nwaoko, FNSE

Theme
"RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE: CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA"

H.S.U.P.

Date: Thursday, 18th Sept., 2008
Time: 4.00pm
Venue: NSE Secretariat, Off #3 Bernard Carr Street, Near Rivers State Library, Port Harcourt

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NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

All members of NSE PH should pay their **annual branch dues of N4000** and **compulsory levy of N5000** towards the Engineer Resource Center to **UBA ACC. NO: 0802080000194 (Port Harcourt main Branch)**. Also pay **National Annual Subscription of N5,500.00** directly to **AFRIBANK ACC No. 1420202215613** & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made at the Bank