

# BBR wins Africa rail award for 2008

## Business Reporter

BEITBRIDGE Bulawayo Railway Company, which builds and operates the railway between Bulawayo and Beitbridge, was named the Best Concessionaire for 2008 at the Africa Rail awards held in South Africa.

BBR chief executive Mr Avi Yakobovich said the company's shareholders were honoured to accept the first-ever Africa Rail award.

"This award is a symbol that we are embracing our vision and we would like to pay tribute to all those who have acknowledged our success and nominated us as the Best Concessionaire for 2008," Mr Yakobovich said.

He said BBR's vision was for the people of Africa to have better access to

improved infrastructure by way of transport, communication and electricity, through modern project financing and management.

This was the first time that awards have been given at the Africa Rail Conference and Exhibition, an annual event, which has been held every year for the past 11 years.

The Africa Rail Awards were introduced this year as the first awards solely for railways in order to celebrate the growth and success of Africa's rail sector and focus on some of the exceptional performers within the rail industry.

Although these were the first such awards, this is not the first time BBR's achievements have been acknowledged.

In 1999, the BBR was nominated the

best railway corridor in the region by the Southern African Railways Association.

BBR is a subsidiary of NLPI Limited, an investment holding company that focuses on infrastructure-related projects in Africa.

The BBR railway was built on a build-operate-transfer basis.

After BBR has operated the railway for 25 years, ownership will be transferred to the Government at no cost. The project cost over US\$65 million.

The 350-kilometre railway between Beitbridge and Bulawayo links the country to South Africa. It is also the gateway and shortest geographical route through Zimbabwe for countries such as Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo on their way to SA.

The National Railways of Zimbabwe holds a 15 percent stake in BBR.

The other 85 percent is held by NLPI, which has its shareholders Old Mutual, Nedbank and Sanlam (South Africa), New Limpopo Bridge Projects, which is controlled by entrepreneurs Mordechai Tager and Zion Elani.

The Africa Rail Conference and Exhibition every year brings together senior stakeholders in Africa's rails sector.

The conference provides a platform for delegates to share ideas on new rail concepts and discuss how to modernise and improve Africa's railway systems.

To provide a solid base for the operation of a viable, customer-oriented railway, Mr Yakobovich said.

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