

Instrumentation technician excels at apprentice school

Goodyear's valuable, steady contribution to the country's desperately shallow engineering skills pool is always boosted with the successful qualification of new apprentices, but recently shone with the remarkable achievements of one determined mechanic in particular.

Instrumentation technician Everton Fischer is one of just two people to have qualified in this important field of engineering in the Eastern Cape in the past few years, both of them having trained through Goodyear's apprentice school. Goodyear plant engineer Titch Booth said the company had closed its original school in 1995 after government withdrew funding for apprentice programmes, but had reopened after noting the resulting nationwide shortage of critical industry skills.

"We needed electronic and instrument mechanics at Goodyear's factory in Uitenhage, but there were none to be found and no suitable courses were available either. We realised in 2008 that we would have to provide our own training. This group of candidates is the first to have successfully passed their trade tests.

Serious shortage in EC

"Fischer is an exceptional talent, developed and nourished by Goodyear. We are proud of his achievements and pleased to have him on board in a permanent position from this year. Not only did he pass his trade test certificate after three years instead of the usual four, but he also achieved the highest marks in the country. What's more, although he was required to have an N3 in order to attempt his trade test, he studied in the evenings after work and successfully went all the way to an N6, obtaining first class passes in many subjects along the way," said Booth.

These achievements are all the more remarkable because he and the other successful candidate, Pheiliswa Kohliso, were the only two apprentices registered outside Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. This underscores the serious shortage in the Eastern Cape. There is simply nobody offering instrument mechanic training, other than Goodyear.

"Growing up, I always loved machines and went to a technical high school. My long term goal is to complete the Government Certificate of Competence and qualify as an engineer. I love the tyre industry - this is where I see a long term career unfolding," Fisher says.