

7 September 2005

Southern Africa

▼ **Merryl Ford** was among the 13 inventors from the *Council for Scientific and Industrial Research* (CSIR) who received recognition for patents granted to the CSIR during 2003. The Innovation Fund's Patent Incentive Fund aims to increase the number of inventions by researchers at publicly-funded research institutions, and to encourage them to file patent applications with the South African Patent Office. Merryl Ford developed a video-on-demand system that can be used for any multimedia content such as video, music, games, educational content and software. Her system is based on user preference and rating model and can predict which other multimedia content users are likely to want. The content, once downloaded into a system, is stored on the user's device and is available for access when the user wants to use it. The download and store algorithm eliminates the need for large bandwidth and therefore makes it easy to deliver bandwidth-intensive multimedia files over satellite. A potential use would be to cost-effectively provide educational material to schools. Ford worked with colleague Kobus Roux on the project that was developed in 1999. The Innovation Fund is an initiative of the *Department of Science and Technology*, and is managed by the *National Research Foundation*.

▼ **CCTV surveillance technology specialist, Thales Advanced Engineering**, has completed a multi-million rand contract from *ACSA* to manufacture and install an electronic on-line surveillance system for the parking facilities at Johannesburg Airport. The Thales SINON licence plate recognition system is being used in what the company reckons is the largest parking security installation in the country. Cameras cover the 20 000 parking areas and cover the 44 entry and exit lanes. The SINON system is highly automated and extracts the number plate and colour of the vehicle from the entry event. This information can also be recorded on the parking ticket for verification.

▼ **Comztek Africa**, a joint venture company between local IT distributor, *Comztek*, and *DS Technology Distribution*, has opened a branch in Zambia as part of its expansion programme into

the SADC region. Located in Lusaka with a depot in Kitwe in the heart of the Copper Belt, the new branch services not only Zambia but is also capable of servicing a number of other surrounding countries in the region. Comztek Africa says that its main aim is to grow its share of the African ICT market through the localisation of various aspects of its operations such as customer interface, stockholding and warranty administration.

▼ **Acterna**, recently acquired by *JDS Uniphase*, has appointed *Comtest* as its sole representative in southern Africa, effective 1 August 2005. Acterna is dedicated to communications test solutions. Comtest, provides test and measurement, communications, equipment and solutions from leading manufacturers to the southern African market. See page 19.

▼ **R.F. Cable & Connector Supplies**, a Johannesburg-based supplier of peripheral items to the commercial radio communications market for the past ten years, has now opened a new branch in Blackheath, Cape Town, in order to serve the Western and Eastern Cape regions. The branch carries a full range of the company's product lines, with daily deliveries to clients in the Cape peninsula. It is managed by Donevan Clark and assisted by Roger Bacon, whose responsibility is primarily for the out-of-town clients, extending as far afield as East London and Port Elizabeth. Contact: 021 905 3620, fax: 021 905 3482.

▼ **Auto Scanning Systems**, a *Trolley Scan* licensee that provides a second-source range of Trolleyponder technology, has launched its new website at www.autoscanning.com.

