

More depots open and more machines join fleet

AFI GETS £1.5M FUNDING BOOST

Already one of the UK's fastest-growing powered access rental companies, AFI has now opened two more depots and has further expanded its hire fleet following a £1.5 million injection into its business by Northern Venture Managers (NVM).

AFI has been able to accelerate its expansion plans by opening a new depot in Newport, South Wales, and one in Southampton – bringing its depot locations to 12.

AFI has also placed an order for 250 additional machines, and the new investment also puts the company in an excellent position to be able to acquire additional machines which may become available.

In return for their investment NVM have taken a 25% shareholding in AFI's business and Bill Dempster, a member of their investment team, has joined the Board of Directors as a non-executive.

AFI Managing Director David Shipman said: "The new investment will bring important advantages to our business by strengthening our balance sheet and providing the financial muscle that we need in

order to accelerate our expansion plans. It will enable us to provide our customers with a stronger depot network, a larger fleet and enhanced levels of customer service.

"We have made enormous progress over the last two years and we fully intend to continue this progress.

"While Newport and Southampton take our depot network to 12 locations, we also have a target of reaching the 15 depot mark by spring 2005.

"After that we expect to move further ahead to become a top 3 player in the powered access industry by the end of that year.

"In a relatively short space of time we have grown from 270 machines at three depots to 1600 machines at 12 depots.

"In our last full year we achieved a turnover of £7.5 million. We are also



(l-r): Deloitte Assistant Director David McNicholas, AFI MD David Shipman, Corporate Development Director Nick Selley, Financial Director David Ridge.

delighted to report that at the end of the last financial year we were trading with 2040 customers, compared with 1312 in the previous year, and our customers are also significantly increasing the volume of business they do with us.

"That is one reason why we are expanding the depot network and the rental fleet."

Bill Dempster, Investment Manager at NVM, said: "AFI represents an attractive investment for NVM.

"We are backing a highly capable management team, who have a clear strategy to build a successful business in a sector in which they have extensive experience."

Hospital visit for AFI scissors

Some of the lightest scissor lifts in the AFI fleet came into their own when they had to pass a weight check before they could go on site for a hospital appointment in Blackburn.

Hired by European Commercial Interiors, the three scissors are working on floors at Queens Park Hospital that have a maximum loading of 1.5 tons.

Weighing just 1.4 tons, the AFI electric scissor lifts passed the test, and with a width of just 30 inches were also compact enough to be lifted by a telehandler fork lift three storeys up to some of the areas where they are working.

AFI provided electric scissor lifts not only because they are lighter than diesel



models, but also because they offer fume-free operation – an important factor for indoor use. The scissor lifts also have non-marking tyres to protect the hospital's floor surfaces.

European Commercial Interiors are using the AFI scissor lifts to install plasterboard and metal stud partitioning throughout a major extension being built at the hospital by the

Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribbles Valley NHS Trust.

Site manager Mark Doyle said work at the hospital was being carried out on a fast-track basis and the manoeuvrability of the scissor lifts has enabled the company to make quick progress. The main contractors are the Balfour Haden joint venture company.

With a 7.8 metre working height and roll out deck extensions, the scissor lifts have provided easy access to high level partitioning areas for the operatives.

As part of a series of health and safety measures taken on site, the machines were sprayed with fire protective coating by Fire Safe Installations Ltd.

WHERE TO CONTACT AFI DEPOTS:

**BIRMINGHAM, EAST MIDLANDS,
HULL, LIVERPOOL, LONDON
EAST, LONDON WEST,
MANCHESTER, NORTH EAST,
PETERBOROUGH, SOUTH WALES,
SOUTHAMPTON, WAKEFIELD**

**To contact any of our depots,
telephone 08707 511005**



New depots will cater for significant demand

AFI's new depots in Newport and Southampton are both in areas where the company has identified significant demand from its existing customers, together with strong potential to further expand its client base.

The Newport depot is based at Broadquay Road, Felnax Industrial Estate, Newport, and has commenced operations with an initial fleet of 80 boom and scissor lifts.

Austin Baker, Operations Director for the North and Midlands, praised Newport City Council for helping AFI's move into the area.

"The Council helped us to identify the volume of work that would be available for a company such as ourselves and they also assisted us in finding the best location from which we could service that work," he said.

"Before moving into Newport we had already built up a presence in South Wales with our existing customer base. The new depot gives us the opportunity to gain substantially more business because we will be on the ground locally."

The Southampton depot will be based at Chalcroft Distribution Park, Burnetts Lane, West End, Southampton. The depot will enable AFI to accommodate the strong levels of business from that area which has previously come through the company's London West depot.

Jumbo contract for AFI boom lift

This AFI boom lift was called upon to help out with a jumbo-sized contract awarded by Air Atlanta to Med Clean Ltd of Kent.

The airline gave Med Clean the challenge of cleaning seven 747 jumbo jets at Kent International Airport. Med Clean hired the AFI S-85 boom lift to give their employees the necessary height and reach to tackle all areas of the giant aircraft.

Med Clean Operations Manager Colin Brazier said: "We began by scrubbing every inch of the planes and then finished off with a pressure jet wash. We had to be very careful with the pressure jetting because the planes have de-icers and various sensors on them which must not be touched."

"The AFI boom lift gave us the reach and flexibility to carry out the work and provided a very stable platform. We were cleaning the 747s, together with a number of 767s and 757s, because they were returning to Air Atlanta after being hired out to other airlines," he added.

The S-85's 27.7m working height and 23.4m outreach provided easy access to the jets, and the boom's articulating jib enabled the operators to gain even better access by manoeuvring the cage into different positions in relation to the boom.



New, user-friendly website

AFI has completely redesigned its website to offer a new, user-friendly site packed with new features.

So why not take a few minutes now to log onto www.afi-platforms.co.uk and check out the following features:

- Use our advanced machine selector to find the right machine for a particular job by specifying a variety of requirements – from working height, outreach and platform height, through to weight, width and lifting capacity
- Download spec sheets covering all our machines
- Download copies of all our main brochures
- Find your nearest AFI depot
- Check our recruitment section if you are looking for opportunities to join AFI
- Read all the latest news about AFI from press releases posted on the website



www.afi-platforms.co.uk

- Contact our depots directly by email.
- You can also open an account on line, and find out about our seven day hire service, machine sales and our wide range of training courses.

Log onto our members' area

Over the next few months, AFI will be developing a members' area on our website, where existing customers can receive additional information. For existing AFI account holders to access the members' area, simply enter your account reference as your user name and the first five digits of your company name as your password.

AFI now setting new standards in quality and training

AFI received an important external endorsement recently when it gained ISO 9001:2000 quality registration.

And in another quality and training initiative, AFI has made a commitment to attain the Investors in People Standard.

Training Manager Paul Maxwell said: "There is already a strong team ethic in place at AFI. Investors in People is designed to enhance this teamwork by empowering employees to develop their company systems and culture in line with their best interests and the company goals."

AFI appoints Training Manager

AFI has appointed Paul Maxwell as Training Manager, in a move which highlights the company's commitment to expanding its training both for customers and for its own workforce.

Mr Maxwell has joined AFI after running his own training company for construction industry clients.

He has many years' experience in the powered access industry, having held positions with a number of other major powered access companies.

Mr Maxwell's new role at

AFI will include broadening and expanding the range of courses offered by the company to cater for an increasing demand from all sectors of the construction industry.

He said: "I'm delighted to have joined AFI at such an exciting time.

"They are one of the fastest-growing powered access companies in the UK and are committed to expanding their training provision in line with the growth that is taking place in their depot network and their rental fleet."



Paul Maxwell (above) will expand AFI's courses to accommodate all sectors of the construction industry.

Delivering on customer service



AFI's new delivery vehicles.

In a move designed to further increase customer service levels, AFI has expanded its fleet of delivery vehicles by investing £250,000 in the purchase of three new tractor units and trailers.

The additional 44-ton units bring AFI's delivery fleet up to 12 vehicles, and several more purchases will follow.

Geoff Gibson, Commercial Director, said: "The expansion of the fleet is giving AFI far greater control over the delivery, handover and collection of powered access machines to the customer, and it is also giving us the flexibility to move specialist equipment around our depot network overnight to meet customer requirements faster and more efficiently."

"The market is continuing to grow and we are continuing to reap the benefits. We are a company which is still going forward, providing a quality service and investing heavily in all aspects of the business," said Mr Gibson.

Win £100 of wine vouchers

Please send me information on:
(Tick as appropriate)

Training

Hire/Sales

Please ask an AFI representative to contact me on the telephone number below:

Telephone

Read through the stories in this newsletter and you'll find the answers to the questions in our competition. Put a circle around (A), (B) or (C) as your answer and return your entry to the address below. The first two correct entries drawn after the closing date of October 15 2004 will be the winners.

1. How many additional machines has AFI ordered?
(A) 180 (B) 200 (C) 250
2. What was the weight of each scissor lift at Queens Park Hospital?
(A) 1.4 tons (B) 1.5 tons (C) 1.6 tons
3. How many jumbo jets did the AFI boom lift help to clean at Kent International Airport?
(A) 5 (B) 7 (C) 9

Please return to: Marketing Department, AFI Aerial Platforms Ltd, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Diamond House, Diamond Business Park, Thornes Moor Road, Wakefield WF2 8PT.