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AFI ACQUIRES AJ RENTALS

AFI has strengthened its presence in South Wales by acquiring the powered access rental division of AJ Access Platforms Ltd. The division will operate as AJ Rentals going forward.

AJ Rentals has a strong local customer base and a fleet of approximately 400 machines operating from depots in Swansea and Caldicot (near Newport). The AFI acquisition will take total fleet numbers in the area to over 500 machines.

AFI Director Nick Selley said: "Against the backdrop of a challenging economic climate, this acquisition is a further tangible demonstration of our confidence in the future of both AFI as a successful business and the UK powered access rental sector as a whole.

"AJ Rentals is highly regarded and provides strong levels of customer service. Its fleet has been well maintained and, like AFI, the business has a broad industrial and commercial customer base rather than being over reliant on the construction sector," he added.



"Existing AFI customers will gain from now having a stronger presence in Wales, and AJ Rentals customers will benefit from having access to one of the most modern powered access rental fleets in the UK."

Key personnel such as John Swift, an industry veteran and the former Rental Director of AJ Access Platforms Ltd, will be retained by AFI and will head AJ Rentals.

The AJ Rentals machines combined with AFI's rental fleet will bring the total fleet to over 4,500 units.

The AFI acquisition follows a current year investment of over £5 million in over 500 new access platforms, the latest being 60 Power Tower machines (**Page 7**).

AFI TO LAUNCH SYSTEM TO CONTROL ACCESS TO MEWPS ON SITE

Working closely with IPAF, AFI will shortly be launching a revolutionary new system to control access to MEWPs, in a move which will provide major safety benefits to powered access users. For more information about the new Infabric card reader system see **Pages 4 & 5**.



AFI MACHINES IN ACTION: AT

SUPPORT AND BACK UP WERE KEY FACTORS FOR INTERSERVE CONTRACT

Up to 23 AFI machines have been in action at the NEC to help principal contractors Interserve and a number of sub contractors carry out a refit to Halls 1 and 2.

Interserve Project Manager Mark Ball said key factors in the decision to award the contract to AFI were the company's ability to respond quickly with either a machine replacement or a service engineer visit in the event of a machine breakdown, a strong commitment to Health & Safety best practices, competitive pricing and a

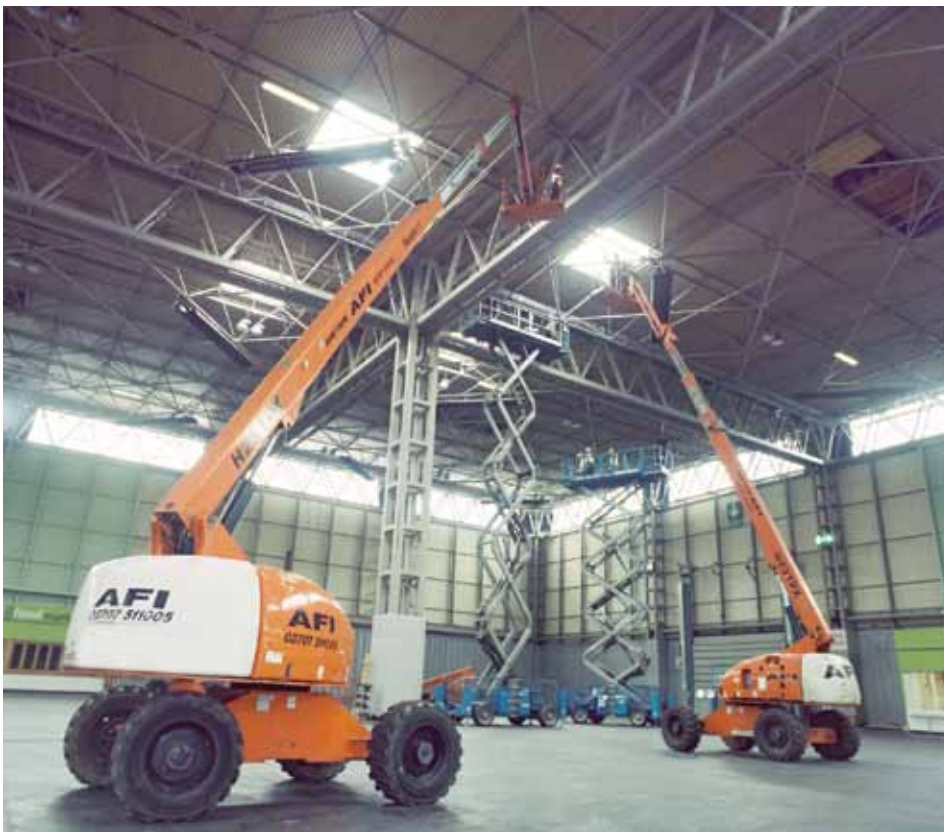


strong training resource. The 23 AFI machines were used to carry out HVAC upgrades and building management services work, including installing new wiring and electrical substations and upgrading fire systems.

The machines specified were the Holland Lift 195 scissor with a working height of 21.50 metres, the Haulotte HA20PX, H23TPX and H25TPX booms, with working heights of up to 25.30m, and the Genie GS5390 scissor, with an 18.10m working height.

Whilst most of the machines were used to work under the NEC's steel roof frame, the extra reach of the Holland scissor lift and the larger Haulotte booms took operatives right into the apex of the roof.

Interserve took advantage of a new AFI web portal, 'AFI Aspect', that enabled the company to track hire contracts in real time. Using the portal, Interserve was also able to view and download items such as machine documentation and account/invoice information.



SMALL AND TALL MEET ALL ACCESS

When contractors were called in to install data and fibre optic cabling at the NEC they hired machines from AFI to give them the height and manoeuvrability required to reach the roofs of the vast exhibition halls.

Over six months, Freedom Communications hired a wide range of AFI machines, from the 3.63m working height Pop-Up push around vertical to the Genie GS5390 scissor lift, which has a working height of 18.10m.

The AFI machines helped the contractors to install 12,000 metres of cabling throughout the whole NEC site to link security cameras to the NEC's Venue Operating Centre.

Kevin Maitland, Freedom Communications Cabling Infrastructure Manager, said: "We had a team of 12 people installing cabling in every exhibition hall, the atrium, corridors, concourse and offices. They were required to work at varying levels of height."



MACHINES REQUIREMENTS

"The smaller AFI machines, such as the Pop-Up, were ideal for working in the corridors and offices. We predominantly used Skyjack SJ9250 scissor lifts in the exhibition halls, apart from Hall 5 where Genie GS5390 scissor lifts were required to give us an extra metre of reach. AFI was able to provide us with the right machine to meet every aspect of our contract," he added.



AFI MACHINE KEY FOBS CARRY SAFETY MESSAGE

In a further move to promote the safe and efficient use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs), AFI has produced machine key fobs which list pre-use inspections and workplace inspections that should take place. The key fobs will be made available for all machine hires. In this article we look at the pre-use checks which need to be made.

Before the start of every shift or on the first use by an operator of a MEWP, the operator should inspect the MEWP to ensure that it is structurally safe to use and has no faults that could put the operator or others at risk.

The most obvious reason for doing this is to ensure that the machine has not suffered from any vandalism or abuse. It is also worth noting that machines can be subject to a variety of problems brought about through possible impact damage or even wear and tear. The tyres may have sprung a leak! The batteries may not have been charged and the machine may have run out of fuel.

Pre-use checks are not complicated and can be done in 10 to 20 minutes depending on machine size and complexity.

As well as promoting best practice, regular pre-use checks will reduce the likelihood of accidents and breakdowns.

IPAF says: "Before use each day or at the beginning of each shift, the aerial platform should receive a visual inspection and functional test including, but not limited to:

- Current in-service inspection
- Operating and emergency controls
- Safety devices
- Personal protective equipment
- Air, hydraulic and fuel systems
- Engine, cooling systems, water, engine oil and hydraulic levels
- Cables and wiring
- Loose or missing parts
- Tyres, wheels and brakes
- Placards, warnings, control markings and operating manuals
- Outriggers, stabilisers and other structures
- Guardrail system
- Other items specified by the manufacturer



AFI frequently finds that when we carry out customer audits on site when requested by our customers, the operators have not carried out a pre-use check and did not know how to use the emergency lowering controls.

The people operating the machine need to be able to bring the MEWP down quickly, in a safe and controlled manner, as part of the Rescue Plan. This is a basic function and is very easy to learn, but not enough people do so.

Another common error is operating the machine at high speed. When we ask operators why they do this we are regularly informed that the operator did not know that they could use a slower speed or that a lower speed was available on the machine. It is apparent therefore that in some cases pre-use checks are not taking place.



Top: An operator carries out a pre-use inspection.

Above: Wind speed being measured with an anemometer.

NEW SYSTEM WILL REVOLUTIONISE MA

Working closely with IPAF, AFI will shortly be launching a revolutionary new system to control access to MEWPs, in a move which will provide major safety benefits to powered access users.

Currently being trialled, the new Infobric card reader system being introduced by AFI will be a first for the UK powered access industry. It will enable contractors to have full control over who operates what type of MEWPs on their sites.

This means that only those people who have received accredited operator training for the specific machine type in question will be able to operate that machine.

Operators who are authorised by site managers will be given prototypes of IPAF's smart PAL Card, which contain details of their authorisation.

To unlock the machine, the operator swipes the card across an Infobric unit mounted on the machine. In a further safety measure, there is a customer option for the machine still not to unlock until the operator has confirmed that he has carried out pre-use inspection checks.

If an operator needs to leave a machine for a short break he can swipe his card across the Infobric unit to lock it, and when he returns he swipes it again to unlock it.

Main contractors and sub contractors can provide sole access or multi user access to a machine by designating who they want to operate a particular machine.

Not only does the system show who has used a machine but it also shows who may have tried to use it without authorisation – this feature provides additional security for the site. The



Clockwise from left: An operator swipes a prototype of IPAF's smart PAL Card over the Infobric unit to operate the machine. If the operator has been registered and authorised to use the machine and has confirmed that pre-use inspection checks have been carried out, the machine will unlock ready for use. Without the correct authorisation, access is denied.

new system will also enable the main contractor to monitor actual machine usage by all sub contractors on a site.

The AFI Infobric system can be part of an overall site management solution. For example, it can help to control access to the site as a whole. In such cases the SmartCards and Infobric readers can be set up to control turnstiles and access gates, which can all be covered by CCTV.

DEMONSTRATION AREA

All aspects of the new system can be seen at a demonstration area set up by AFI at its London City Depot. To find out more about the new system, or to request a demonstration, contact John Robertson on 07793 579720, jrobertson@afi-uplift.co.uk

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INTEGRATED TRAINING SOLUTIONS IS OFFERING TEN KEY COURSES



A close up of the Infobric unit.



The Infobric unit on a scissor lift.



The new system controlling gate access to a site.

In response to industry demand, AFI's sister company – Integrated Training Solutions (ITS) – is offering ten key courses.

First Aid at Work: Provides delegates with the necessary knowledge of the responsibilities for being a First Aider.

SMSTS (Site Management Safety Training Scheme): Designed to enable managers to help site supervisors and agents to:

- Manage Health & Safety on site in accordance with current legal provisions, and within the context of their management or supervisory role
- Develop an understanding of responsibilities and accountability for site health, safety and welfare
- Recognise a safe site is efficient, economical and productive

SSSTS (Site Supervisor Safety Training Scheme): Aims to ensure that all those given supervisory responsibilities understand:

- Why they are carrying out their identified duties
- What is expected of them
- That they contribute to the safety of the workplace

New Roads and Street Works Act Training: For operatives and supervisors involved in excavation, backfill and reinstatement of materials for undertaking street works.

Confined Space Training: ITS offers a range of courses, including providing delegates with a thorough understanding of confined spaces, the associated legislation, Approved Code Of Practice (ACOP).

Abrasive Wheels: The training aims to provide delegates with a thorough



understanding of the hazards associated with the use of abrasive wheels and to comply with regulations.

Manual Handling: For anyone who has to train and/or assess those who are involved in manual handling in the workplace.

Working at Height: A range of courses including:

- Rooftop Safety, including the safe use of harnesses and ladders
- Management of Working at Height
- Scaffold Safety Inspection
- Harness Awareness

Forklift Training: ITS trainers bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and the course is delivered to Road Transport Industry Training Board (RTITB) standards.

Asbestos Awareness: Designed for anyone who could potentially come into contact with asbestos.

The aim of this course is to create awareness of the typical locations of asbestos and how to work safely to avoid exposure.

For more information about these courses, contact ITS:

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SPOT THE HAZARDS IN THIS PHOTO TO WIN FREE TRAINING

Take a close look at this photograph – how many hazards can you spot?

We're offering free places on a MEWPs For Managers training course to the first five entries drawn after the closing date of 14 October 2011 which correctly identify the maximum number of hazards.

Send an email to newsletter@afi-uplift.co.uk briefly describing all the hazards you can spot. Make sure you also provide your name, company name and address, and a contact phone number.

Details about the winners and the full list of hazards will be shown on our website (www.afi-uplift.co.uk) on 21 October 2011. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into.

The MEWPs for Managers course is designed to instruct supervisors and managers on how to prepare for and safely co-ordinate various types of MEWPs within their control.

The course covers aspects such as awareness of Health & Safety regulations, accident prevention and control, personal protection equipment, the machine operating manual, familiarisation issues, the importance of selecting the correct machine, planning and maintenance considerations, and the implications of a hire contract.



NEW MACHINES AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

These Genie boom and scissor lifts are examples of the new machines available for immediate delivery from AFI Resale.

In stock at AFI's Wakefield depot, new machines are available with a comprehensive range of finance options as well as service and maintenance packages.

To find out more about these new machines and to inquire about AFI Resale's extensive range of used scissor, boom, mast lifts and push around vertical lifts, contact us on 08707 879 835 or email newmachines@afi-resale.co.uk



The Genie GS1932 scissor.



The Z30/20N boom.

AFI PURCHASES 60 POWER TOWERS

As part of its latest programme of fleet investment, AFI has purchased 60 Power Tower low level access machines to offer customers a cost-effective alternative to using scaffold towers or step ladders.

AFI's fleet is already significantly younger than any other national rental fleet, and the new Power Tower units will further lower the average age of the fleet.

The average age currently stands at just under five years and our goal is to reduce this to a level nearer to four years. No other national UK powered access rental business can match this.

So far this year we have invested £5.3 million in purchasing 500 new machines for the fleet, and this is the largest fleet investment by any UK powered access rental business this year.

Our latest machine order comprises 40 Power Towers with a working height of 5.10m and 20 Power Tower Nanos, whose working height is 4.50m.

Weighing 312kg and 285kg respectively, these ultra lightweight push around machines give important point loading benefits.

Power Tower

Designed for working on internal applications on flat surfaces, the Power Tower does not require outriggers or stabilisers. At only 1.50m x 0.78m x 1.92m, it comfortably passes through standard doorways and narrow aisles, and will fit into most passenger lifts.

Power Tower Nano

The Power Tower Nano maximises platform size (0.99m x 0.70m) while minimising working footprint (1.20m x 0.75m), giving the operator more room to work.

Other Machines

Other low level access machines purchased by AFI as part of its £5.3 million investment include 30 **Bravi Lites**, with a working height of 4.21m, and 30 **Youngman BoSS X3s**, whose working height is 4.55m. AFI also has a large number of **BoSS X2s**, with a working height of 4.01m.



Top: The Power Tower.

Above: Some of the first machines delivered to AFI.

Left: The Power Tower Nano.

FIRST OF NEW DELIVERY VEHICLES JOIN AFI FLEET

AFI has now received the first vehicles in an order of eight tractor units and nine rigid trucks for its delivery fleet.

The vehicles all conform to the latest European standards on emissions and they have been fitted with a range of fuel saving and emission reducing devices, including:

- Sophisticated telemetry systems to enable AFI to monitor vehicle and driver performance. This helps to monitor driver behaviour, which in turn brings important safety, fuel efficiency and emission reduction benefits.
 - An anti-idle feature, which cuts the engine out after two minutes of inactivity.
 - Some of the vehicles also have night heaters, which work from the vehicle's battery to defrost the cab without the need to keep the engine running. They can be pre-timed to operate 15 minutes before the driver is due to set off.
 - All of the trucks are automatics which further helps to improve mpg and reduce emissions.
 - Extendable work lights bathe the entire rear of the truck with light during loading and unloading.
- 
- AFI Director Nick Higgins (left) receives three of the new tractor units from Steve Welsh of MAN.*
- Extendable handrails allow the loading of machines as wide as the truck bed.
 - Two individual ramps with double flip design allow a very low angle for loading. They can also traverse, under power, across the back of the vehicle to come together to form one "wider" ramp for the loading of small machines. They create far less drag than other types of ramp and this will be crucial in achieving better mpg and lower emissions.
 - More tie down points to improve safety of machines in transit.
 - All the trucks have rear windows, allowing the drivers extra visibility.



LARGER PREMISES FOR MILTON KEYNES DEPOT

AFI has relocated its Milton Keynes depot to substantially larger premises – less than a quarter of a mile from its previous location.

Located at Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall, Milton Keynes, the new depot has 1.5 acres of land, a 6,000 square foot workshop and a much larger training room. The depot has seven staff, and an apprentice is due to join shortly.

Regional Manager Carlo Vinci said that as well as being much larger and more modern, the new depot also provides Health & Safety benefits. For example, vehicles can easily enter and exit the yard without having to carry out reversing manoeuvres.

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