

Metro booming

Saudi Arabia is undertaking a huge new metro project, and Potain is the contractor's tower crane brand of choice. **Punitha Govindasamy** reports.

A massive new metro project in Saudi Arabia will forever change the way the citizens of Riyadh get around their city. The new train system looks set to become the city's transportation backbone when it's completed, with 176 km (109 mi) of rapid transit. With a budget of US\$22.5 billion, no expense is being spared in constructing the six-line system, including the commission of 28 Potain tower cranes.

Arabian Towers Company (ATE), a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi, UAE-based NFT, is supplying the cranes for the project. Michael Koudmani, a company representative, said one of the biggest challenges on the project is space. The metro's subway is being built beneath busy streets

in a booming metropolis, where traffic, real estate and geographical elements all come into play. Timing is also a challenge, with the company adhering to a quick schedule.

"Working on such a significant project in tight working quarters would be difficult for any crane to tackle," Koudmani said. "The chosen cranes have an ability to operate in space-constricted sites and are capable of extremely fast lifting speeds to ensure that this huge project stays on schedule."

The cranes are owned by Manitowoc's Potain dealer in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), NFT, which supplied them to the project's main contractors: Fast Consortium for Lines 4, 5 and 6; and

ArRiyadh New Mobility for Line 3. All cranes are on rental contracts, through ATE.

"We convinced the contractors to go for Potain because it is the world's leading tower crane brand with a long track record of success," Koudmani explained.

The first batch of tower cranes was delivered in November 2015 and the remainder was delivered at the start of 2016. The MCT 205s are currently working

20 hours a day on a two-shift basis and are working at a height of 44.4 m (146 ft). All 28 cranes are expected to remain on the jobsite for at least 18 months.

As part of the rental contracts, NFT is fully supporting the operations and maintenance of the cranes.

The project is expected to be completed by 2018. In its final form, the metro system will have 96 stations in total, including four main/transfer stations, and five park-and-ride stations. ♦

ATE is providing 28 Potain cranes, including:

- 12 x MC 310 K12s
- 6 x MCT 205s
- 1 x MD 365 B
- 3 x MCT 385 L20s
- 1 x MC 175 B
- 2 x MC 205 Bs
- 3 x MC 235s

A fleet of Potain cranes help construct the new Riyadh Metro system in Saudi Arabia.

