



Part of the massive Bucyrus walking dragline machine movement handled by Belville Rodair International – see panel below.

Any job, anywhere

Freight forwarders and other logistics service providers serving the worldwide mineral extraction industry have to be prepared to handle almost anything – from equipment claimed to be the world's largest machine, to a small movie theatre.

The former was a walking dragline, a piece of equipment manufactured by US company Bucyrus and used for clearing surface earth down to depths of 150-200 m to expose coal beds (see picture above). It had to be moved from Ohio, USA, to Queensland, Australia, for multinational mining company Xstrata. The shipment, handled by Belville Rodair International (BRI), comprised over 2,400 pieces totalling 6,400 tonnes.

"The project movement took 14 months," explained Paul McAuley, BRI's vice-president projects, North America. "It took four months to transport 224 loads by road from Ohio down to New Orleans, where a further nine months was spent cleaning the equipment to meet Australian standards, before it was shipped by sea to Australia."

The small movie theatre, designed to provide entertainment at a mining camp, was one of the more unusual items moved by SR International Logistics. Chief executive Russ Steele adds that more typical items moved by the company, like most of its forwarding/logistics counterparts servicing the mineral extraction market, cover the full range of equipment required for both the project and production stages of mining operations.



McAuley: transport of the "world's largest machine" from Ohio to Queensland took 14 months.

The growing presence of Chinese interests in mining activities around the world, from South America to Asia, as well as their well-documented involvement in the African arena, is confirmed by logistics industry executives. "In Latin America, copper mining involves large projects, and we are now seeing Chinese organisations taking those over from Chilean, Peruvian and Argentine hands," said Southmark Logistics' Arroyo.

A similar story is reported by Chen of BDP International Indonesia. "The Chinese

are active here in Indonesia and other parts of Asia. The Chinese see the current economic conditions as being favourable to them in terms of increasing their control of resources outside China – which is important to them as they are one of the largest consumers of those resources."

The ever-growing involvement of China in global mineral extraction activities has implications for international logistics service providers active in that market. China is, for example, becoming an increasingly significant



BDP Southmark Logistics



Coal mining in Kalimantan, Indonesia.

BDP International Indonesia

manufacturer and worldwide exporter of mining equipment. That means foreign logistics providers generally need to have a strong presence in the country if they are to compete for the movement of such traffic.

Even then, suggest logistics industry sources, foreign companies will probably only secure shipments of Chinese-manufactured equipment destined for mineral extraction locations owned by international companies. When it comes to the movement of Chinese equipment to Chinese-owned mines, they say, the chances are that the related logistics business will be awarded to Chinese companies.

That point is confirmed by Laurance Langdon, the Malaysia-based group project logistics manager for GAC Project Logistics, which in the mining sector is involved with both project movements and the shipment of regular supplies.

"If there is a large Chinese mining project, then the Chinese themselves generally try to control the logistics out of China up to the destination port and then involve someone like GAC to take care of the customs clearance and delivery of the equipment to the site," he explained.

"So the involvement of an international logistics provider with the Chinese tends to be slightly different to that where a North American, European or Australian company is involved, when the requirement would probably be for a full door-to-door movement. The Chinese like to have more control over the cost and work with carriers like COSCO (China Ocean Shipping Company), for example, which has a lot of breakbulk vessels operating to Africa." ❌