

# Destination Impossible



Andy van der Velde, Chief Executive Officer,  
Berco - an Aramex Company.

According to Andy Van der Velde, CEO, Berco - an Aramex Company, has had a fantastic year in 2012. The acquisition went smoothly which started in December 2011. "The acquisition has been a success, a very good fit. All our management is still with us and there has been minimal staff movement. The growth at a local, South African level has been phenomenal," he says. Also the customer growth in international freight and courier has grown significantly.

"Due to the growth in freight, our freight staff have doubled, which has been a great indication that we are making a success of our business. However, having said that, recruiting is the greatest challenge we face as we need to find the right people for those all-important strategic positions," Van der Velde explains. This will be especially important as Berco/Aramex plans to expand into Africa next year. The growth of the network has come about in such a short space of time, so the move seems only natural, to invest into southern Africa.

Future developments for Berco - an Aramex Company, include the launching of software in the second quarter of 2013, which is basically a whole new operating system for the company. Also the eCommerce department will be expanding both locally and internationally. "We provide a full suite service offering with high service levels due to our great attention to detail. This puts us at a good stead to be the best in the business. We are also in the process of a name change to Aramex South Africa, which will take place in June 2013," comments Van der Velde.



## Mount Vinson Massif

Vinson Massif was first climbed in 1966. An expedition in 2001 was the first to climb via the Eastern route. As of February 2010, 1,400 climbers have attempted to reach the top of Mount Vinson.



The Seven Summits are the highest mountains of each of the seven continents. Summiting all seven as well as reaching the North and South Pole is called the Grand Slam. Vinson Massif is the highest mountain of Antarctica, lying in the Sentinel Range of the Ellsworth Mountains. The Massif is located about 1,200 kilometres from the South Pole and is about 21 km long and 13 km wide. At 4,892 metres, the highest point is Mount Vinson.

Van der Velde with a five man crew will be leaving on the 25 December 2012 for South America to conquer Mount Vinson. They will be dealing with temperatures at below -40 degrees. The mountain is virtually inaccessible and as van der Velde bluntly put it, they just have to deal with the pain of the cold. He has gone through vigorous training with Adventure Dynamics International (ADI), thanks to Sean Disney who is the Managing Director of the company. Disney is one of the world's most experienced mountain guides and expedition leaders and one of the first South African's to complete the Grand Slam. The team will ski to the South Pole once they have summited Mount Vinson.

Together with the unaided ski and the team having to move their own supplies on a sledge, the trip will take approximately five weeks to complete. The Berco/Aramex flyer bag travels with Andy to each of these extreme destinations, bringing new meaning to a courier company going to the ends of the Earth - a definite first for courier companies worldwide.

It is Van der Velde's personal goal to obtain the Grand Slam and he is not far from achieving this, with only one more mountain to summit. Sharing his previous experiences on the trip to the North Pole, Van der Velde explains there will always be banter amongst a group of South African guys. He has also seen polar bear footprints in the ice, which he explained as, 'beautiful and scary at the same time'.

"Setting a high goal and believing in yourself whilst being realistic about what you want and what your dreams are, is why I love doing these challenges. I hope to take my children on a trip like this one day," he says. He continues to explain that life is simple when you find that commitment to balance. In life everything is possible, once you find the balance in your work, family and interests. Van der Velde's pursuit to excellence, whether on mountain tops or in the boardroom, explains why Berco/Aramex has developed into such a powerhouse, with Van der Velde, leading the pack. □

## Andy's Expeditions to Date

1. Mount Kilimanjaro in 2003 (5895m)
2. Mount Elbrus, Russia in June 2006 (5642m)
3. Aconcagua in The Andes, South America in 2007
4. Mount Everest in May 07 (8850m)
5. Denali Mount Mckinley In Alaska June 09 (6194m)
6. North Pole Expedition in April 2011