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Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL NEWS

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Official Newsletter



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FOR INTERVENTION. *page 4***

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VISION

Intergrated sustainable people
centred development

MISSION

Facilitate and co-ordinate Intergovernmental
Structures and Developmental Agencies for
Sustainable Intergrated Service Delivery
through Public Participation and
Traditional system of governance

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Mpumalanga Provincial Government, the MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, neither does it reflect views of the management. Although care has been taken to verify the accuracy of information, the editorial team of this publication takes no responsibility for any inaccuracy.

MEC's FOREWORD



HON. RM MTSHWENI (MPL)
MEC FOR COGTA

South Africans who turned out in their numbers to vote during the fifth democratic elections on 7 May 2014 have once again mandated the ANC to take this country forward. The successful elections have proven that the power to decide on who to govern a country lies in the hands of the electorate, and that there is no need for blood-shedding to usurp power in government. The challenge now is for the government to serve the interests of all South Africans, regardless of who did they put their X next to on the two different ballots. As for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the leadership and the officials of the commission have outdone themselves in doing the splendid job. We look forward to the next local government elections scheduled for 2016.

As we begin the new chapter of the next five years, we in the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), commit ourselves to spare no efforts in a quest to provide all our people with access to water. During the run up to the elections, water became one of the issues raised by our people. Already, a number of initiatives have been made to improve delivery of water to all our people. The completion of the Victor Khanye- Delmas Bulk Water Treatment Works, the Bloemendal to Delmas Bulk water pipeline in which R171million was spent, remain the good story to tell, as we tackle the water shortage challenge.

Special attention was also paid towards the completion of the Bushbuckridge-Acornhoek Bulk Pipeline, Inyaka Water Treat-

ment Works. Furthermore, the Hoxane water treatment plant is being concluded. Several projects in seven of our municipalities are being upgraded and maintained to improve the capacity of water supply.

The responsibility to ensure that every household has water does not only lie with government, but our communities too. I have observed with disappointment the failure of some of our communities to act when some people connect water pipes illegally. Under their watch, the perpetrators misuse the very scarce commodity. We commend the Nkomazi Municipality, under the leadership of the Executive Mayor, Cllr Thulisile Khoza and the Mayoral Committee for taking action against such perpetrators, disconnecting illegal pipes. As communities, we must weed out people who render government's efforts to provide adequate water to all households in our midst, by reporting them to the nearest police station. We are working with law enforcement agencies to bring to book the perpetrators.

Whilst we acknowledge the frustration of our communities for the lack of water, acts of vandalism against public property as an expression of the frustration is unacceptable. The right to protest is enshrined in our Constitution, however, damage to public property and attack against public officials is completely criminal. We appeal to our communities to act with restraint and that any action should be within the ambit of the law. The law will take its course against people who act in contravention of legislation.

The winter season marks the period in which young boys attend to initiation schools as part of our cultural practices and a passage to manhood. Self proclaimed Traditional Leaders have hijacked our sacred practice and do this as a money-making exercise. We commend our law-enforcement agencies for arresting such individuals who perform the culture without the required certificates. Furthermore, we wish to commend traditional leaders for their sterling leadership by advising communities to take their children to the appropriate schools.

My sincere appreciation to the former MEC, Hon. Simon Skhosana (MPL) and former Head of Department, now Minister for State Security, Hon. David Mahlobo for taking the department to the level where it is now. My observation since I joined the department is that it operates as a well oiled machinery. It is staffed with committed and dedicated officials. Let us work together to take local government and the traditional leadership forward.

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HOD



MR RICHARD MNISI
ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

President Jacob Zuma's speech during the State of the Nation address has broadened the mandate of the local government sector. Over the years, municipalities focused on the provision of basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation. The outcome of this focus resulted in the increase of the number of households with access to basic services, as reported in the Census 2011 report.

In the next five years, municipalities will be expected to play a crucial role in the country's infrastructure development, as the President indicated. Municipalities are the first point of contact for our people and as such, they will give direction as to which specific areas require immediate attention for infrastructure development. These include water, sanitation, road, electricity and other amenities. This commitment should be seen in the context of government's commitment to restore the dignity of our people and the improvement of their lives.

Our department is gearing itself to provide municipalities with the necessary support to make the President's commitment a realization. Previously, lack of adequate capacity in our municipalities, especially technical skills, was a major challenge. The poor spending on Municipal Infrastructure Grants (MIG) which resulted in allocated funds withdrawn, remains a major concern. Working with the South African Local Government

Association (SALGA), the District municipalities, the Department of Finance, we hope to address this challenge. Already, critical vacancies have been filled in. Of the 21 municipalities, only four are without Municipal Managers and Chief Financial Officers. This matter is receiving immediate attention.

Premier David Mabuza has charged us with the responsibility to close the gap between government and our communities. In view of this, our department is in the process of strengthening public participation programmes. Recently, we appointed a number of Community Development Workers (CDWs) as part of this exercise. CDWs form part of the early warning systems to address community concerns. We are paying special attention to strengthen the functionality of Ward Committees. Already, Premier Mabuza has charged Executive Mayors and councillors to hold meetings with their constituencies every week. Records of the meetings will be required as proof for the meetings.

As we maintain close contacts with our communities, communication channels such as the media is vital. It is the means through which we can communicate government's policies, development plans and programme of action. We commend the Nkangala District Municipality and SALGA for embarking on a training programme for Councillors and Communication Officers. The outcome of the training will by all means inspire them to use the media channels with confidence to meet our Constitutional obligations of keeping our communities informed.

We welcome our MEC, Hon. Refilwe Mtshweni in our fold. Her commitment and dedication to her job, is indeed an inspiration to us all. Since joining the department, she hit the ground running by tackling the water challenges head on, facing our communities, in Nkomazi and Bushbuckridge Municipalities. We look forward to her leadership in making the government's priorities over the next five years and the National Development Plans (NDP) a reality.

We wish to commend former MEC, Hon. Simon Skhosana and former HOD, now Minister for State Security, Hon. David Mahlobo for their sterling leadership over the years. They served the department with distinction. Their passion to work with municipalities and traditional leaders to fulfil the department's mandate, made their demanding job look a lot easier to do. They tackled the challenges attached to their positions with vigour. We wish them success in their deployments.

MEC MTSHWENI VISITS WATER PROJECTS FOR INTERVENTION



ON DUTY: MEC Mtshweni (right) leads a delegation of Nkomazi councillors and officials to monitor one of the water projects at Mangweni.

MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in Mpumalanga, Hon. Refilwe Mtshweni visited several water projects in the Nkomazi and Bushbuckridge Municipalities for intervention. The visits formed part of her oversight role as the political head of COGTA, and the desire to ensure that communities have access to basic services such as water in line with government's commitment to do so.

In Nkomazi, MEC Mtshweni visited Mangweni, Steenbok and Block C villages, accompanied by the Executive Mayor, Cllr Thulisile Khoza and municipal officials. Like in many areas, the supply of adequate water in these areas is hampered by illegal connections, misuse of water and leakages. Water for the supply of the Mangweni community is abstracted from the Nkomazi River and 25 mega-litres of water is purified at Tonga Water Treatment plant, before distributed to a local reservoir and to a tank for supply to the local community. Of the 80% reticulated water, only 30% is supplied to the local community due to illegal connections.

COGTA and the Nkomazi Municipality are building a 3 Mega-Litres ground reservoir, as an intervention for improved supply of water. A separate bulk line is being installed to

transport water from the reservoir to affected communities. In Steenbok, the construction of a 2-mega litres elevated tank is underway, to provide the local community.

In Bushbuckridge, MEC Mtshweni visited the Casteel and the Cunningham water projects. Construction of the two projects will improve the capacity of the water supply interventions to the local villages for 24 hours a day. MEC Mtshweni was accompanied by the Executive Mayor, Cllr Renius Khumalo, Acting Head of Department, Mr Richard Mnisi, senior government and municipal officials.

MEC Mtshweni said water is a constitutional right for the people and the government is working hard to meet the obligation. "COGTA is a supporting pillar for municipalities to provide water. We are working hard to accelerate all water projects so that our people can have water," she said. She expressed concern about illegal connections, leakages and misuse of water which undermines government's efforts to provide water to all communities. She appealed to communities with water challenges to be patient.

MUNICIPALITIES REVIEW THEIR IDP'S



WORKING TOGETHER: (L-R) Mr Fanie Ngwenyama, Mr Solly Mabunda (both from MIG) and Mr Murius Loock of Spatial Planning preparing documents for the IDP assessments at Ehlanzeni District Municipality.

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act No: 32 of 2000 municipalities are required to adopt a single inclusive and strategic plan (IDP) for the development of the municipality. The IDP is reviewed every year in accordance with changing circumstances and previous year performance. All municipalities managed to review and adopt their IDPs for the 2014/15 financial year except Thaba Chweu which to-date has not adopted both the IDP and Budget.

As part of the department's legislative mandate, the department conducted the IDP assessment with other provincial and national stakeholders. The IDP assessment exercise aimed at checking the municipal IDP responsiveness to community needs as well as compliance with legislation. It has been observed from the assessment that municipalities do consult their communities to review and guide the prioritization of service delivery needs. Municipalities have allocated most of their resources to water services, thus working towards meeting the target of 100% of households with access to water. Waste removal is the least prioritized basic service exacerbated by the huge backlog on infrastructure such as licensed landfill sites and availability of removal trucks.

The department acknowledges minimum improvement by municipalities in putting efforts to develop and implement revenue enhancement strategies to improve institutional financial viability. In addition most municipalities have managed to

fill the critical vacant posts of section 56/57 managers thus improving institutional development. National and provincial sector support remains critical for Integrated Development Planning.



POINT TAKEN: COGTA officials listening attentively during the IDP assessments at Ehlanzeni District Municipality

NEWLY-ELECTED MBOMBELA MAYOR TABLES A R2.4 BILLION BUDGET

Newly-elected Mbombela Executive Mayor, Cllr Sibusiso Mathonsi has tabled a budget of R2.4 billion for the 2014/15 financial year during a council sitting at the Civic centre. Sixty percent of the budget has been allocated to provide water, sanitation and electricity for local communities. "In order to address backlogs in water provision, roads and storm water management, sanitation, community facilities and electricity supply, the municipality aims to spend R954 million," Cllr Mathonsi said.

Mbombela is the capital city of Mpumalanga. Over the years, the municipality experienced an increased number of people flocking to areas in Mbombela in search of economic opportunities. Due to the high levels of poverty and the necessity to increase basic services, Cllr Mathonsi says the allocation of 62 percent of the budget for capital projects such as water, the municipality is addressing the backlogs in the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity. "Our society continues to face the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. More effort is required to improve the level of basic service delivery such as water, electricity and sanitation. These statistics reflect the realities in terms of backlogs and socio-economic challenges our people faced with, which means we have to work harder and smarter together, to address these challenges," Cllr Mathonsi explained.



WATER FOR ALL: Mbombela Executive Mayor, Cllr Sibusiso Mathonsi allocated sixty-two percent of the total 2014/15 total budget for water provision, sanitation and electricity.



RIGHT TO CLEAN WATER: The provision of water to communities is on top of the agenda in Mbombela.

By allocating sixty two percent of the budget to address water shortages, the municipality wants to ensure that every household has access to water in line with Section 27 (c) of the Constitution which stipulates that every person has the right to have access adequate food and water. R69 million of the amount will be utilized for bulk-water infrastructure and reticulation networks. 832 households will be connected with waterborne sewerage systems. R18 million has been allocated for electrification of 700 households," Cllr Mathonsi indicated. He added that R79 million will be utilized for renewal and construction of new roads and storm water systems while R18 million of the budget has been allocated for the construction of three community halls.

COGTA IN ACTION



ACCOUNTABILITY: MEC Mtshweni talks to Mr Ephraim Mabilane of Ligwalagwala FM's Current Affairs Programme about COGTA's support for municipalities and traditional leadership. Ms Lefentse Nkosi looks on.



AT WORK: MEC Mtshweni visits the Casteel water project in Bushbuckridge Municipality. He is accompanied by the Executive Mayor, Cllr Renius Khumalo.



SOLEMNIZATION: Premier David Mabuza shares a smile with some of members of the Provincial Cabinet during a cabinet announcement. (L-R) Hon Norah Mahlangu-Mabena of Culture, Sports and Recreation Hon. Gillion Mashego of Health, Hon. Refilwe Mtshweni of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Hon. Violet Siwela of Human Settlements.



HERITAGE: Inkhosi Bheki Mnisi of Mantjolo Traditional Council marvels at traditional dances during the Mantjolo annual traditional festival at Enkontjaneni. Member of the Provincial Legislature, Hon. Simon Skhosana and Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi Mathibela Mokoena were amongst the guests.



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: COGTA's Mr Jabulani Mayindi addresses delegates during COGTA's LED Workshop in Nelspruit.



STATUS QUO: MEC Refilwe Mtshweni meets members of COGTA's management for a briefing. (L-R) Ms Noxolo Oyiya and Ms Hellen Shube.

COGTA cautions communities against fires



WARNING: COGTA's Senior Manager for Disaster Management, Mr Slykie Dhludhlu educates a local community against domestic and veld fires during one of the campaigns.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in Mpumalanga has stepped up a campaign to prevent the loss of life due to veld and domestic fires. In winter, the Mpumalanga province is prone to veld fires due to dry grass and the humidity. Unattended domestic and veld fires have contributed to the loss of lives and the destruction of nature.

Several efforts are being made to prevent uncontrollable fires. The department has adopted a zero tolerance to the outbreak of fires. These include educational awareness campaigns by COGTA officials in the Disaster Management Directorate,

targeting communities and farmers. The campaigns are held jointly with organizations established to prevent the spread of fires.

The June - August months are considered a high risk period for the spread of fires. MEC for COGTA, Hon. Refilwe Mtshweni appealed to communities to be on high alert. She further urged them to observe the following precautionary measures:

- ***Do not leave a burning candle, a heater, a burning fireplace unattended.***
- ***Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach***
- ***Do not leave open fires (imbawula) unattended, especially indoors***
- ***Do not put candles where they have a high chance of falling over, instead cut candles in half and place them in candles holders***
- ***Never leave paraffin appliances unattended and always put them in flat firm surfaces***
- ***Do not leave children unattended to where there are open fires and/or candles***

MEC Mtshweni further urged farmers to be careful when starting fires. "I appeal to farmers to adhere to the Veld and Forest Fire Act when starting fires in the farms during the winter season. She added that failure to do so will result in prosecution.

The department has established a toll free number to report cases of fires and emergencies. The number is: **0800 202 507**. MEC Mtshweni says the co-operation of communities is crucial in the fight against the outbreak of fires.



PREVENTION against fire: Local residents prevent the spread of veld fires in Hazyview.

Nkomazi Municipality clamps down on illegal water connections



CLAMP DOWN: Nkomazi Executive Mayor, Cllr Khoza (left) and MEC for COGTA, Hon Refilwe Mtshweni inspect a bakkie full of disconnected water pipes at Block C.

The adequate supply of water to a number of communities remains a major challenge facing government. Despite government's intervention to fulfil its Constitutional mandate of providing all communities with clean water, the inconvenience of travelling few kilometres to fetch water is still experienced, especially in rural areas.

A number of water projects have been rolled out in Mpumalanga, as part of government's intervention to ensure that all households have access to water. According to the 2011 Stats SA report, the number of people with access to water services in Mpumalanga increased to 87.4 %. With the completion of major water projects, such as the Bloemdal in Victor Khanye Municipality, the installation of the water bulk line in Msukaligwa Municipality, the completion of the Inyaka Dam multi-million rand project in Bushbuckridge, the number of people with access to water has increased. Most of the projects were implemented following an intervention by Premier David Mabuza in which he assigned the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) to help 8 identified municipalities, to accelerate the provision of water.

In the Nkomazi Municipality, illegal connections, misuse of water and leakages are the major contributing factors which

hamper the provision of water. At Mangweni village outside Komatipoort, of the 80 percent reticulated water, the community only obtains 30 percent of the supply. New settlements, are the hardest hit by the lack of water.

In an effort to improve the supply of available water, the Nkomazi Municipality raided households in several villages with illegal connections. During the raids, a number of water pipes were removed. Executive Mayor, Cllr Thulisile Khoza says disconnecting the pipes is part of the solution for water shortage. "Now that the pipes have been disconnected, the pressure of the water will be increased. If the pressure is increased, communities at the end of the pipeline will also receive water," she said.

During the raids, municipal officials were accompanied by law enforcement agencies. Cllr Khoza says the officials are also hard at work to repair leakages and damaged pipes. "We are convinced that this approach will contribute to the possible water solutions in our municipality which has seen communities taking to the streets," Cllr Khoza said.

A public-private partnership in Dipaleseng transforms a local school



EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS: Local councillors and volunteers share the responsibility of improving the local Nthoroane Secondary School.

The call by the government for the private sector to contribute in the development of the country has been embraced in the Dipaleseng Local Municipality. In Balfour, a local power station contributed to the improvement learning conditions at the local Nthoroane Secondary School. The dilapidated School was rebuilt by the Grootvlei Power Station in line with government's prioritization of education as one of the key priorities. The project started last year to improve the classes in the school with 520 learners. Grootvlei Power Station Manager, Mr Gershon Bonga says the Nthoroane Secondary school was selected from six schools which are in a poor state. "The windows and the doors were broken. The ablution facilities were also a major concern with the stench of raw sewage," he said.

The school has now been restored to its former glory. "All the classrooms were painted, over a hundred and fifty windows were replaced, ablution facilities were repaired, doors were replaced, and the surfaces in the classrooms were fixed," Bonga says.

The refurbishment of the school is one of the many public-private partnerships in the country. Limited budgets by the government due to unfavourable global-market conditions makes it impossible to address all challenges facing communities in the country. In Balfour, not only was the school renovated, but an environmental-friendly atmosphere was created by planting more than fifty trees. "The planting of the trees gave the learners an opportunity to learn how to plant, and care for the seedlings they grow. The whole initiative with the various pro-

jects that were completed did not only create a conducive and safe environment for the learners but together with all stakeholders learnt the importance of teamwork, leadership skills, taking responsibility and developing a deeper connection to their communities and each other along the way," added Mr Bonga.

The power station says the implementation of the renovation of the school seeks to improve the lives of the local community and to improve learning conditions thereby encouraging learners to attend classes daily.



PRIORITY: The poor state of the Nthoroane Secondary School was improved in Balfour.

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EHLANZENI DISTRICT	
Ehlanzeni Disaster Management Centre	013 762 4000
Mbombela Disaster Management Centre	013 759 9141/ 013 753 3331
Umjindi Disaster Management Centre	013 712 2222
Thaba Chweu Disaster Management Centre	013 235 7304
Bushbuckridge Disaster Management Centre	013 797 1367
Nkomazi Disaster Management Centre	082 806 1611
GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT	
Gert Sibande Disaster Management Centre	017 801 7000
Govan Mbeki Disaster Management Centre	017 620 6143
Lekwa Disaster Management Centre	017 712 9661
Msukaligwa Disaster Management Centre	017 801 3412
Pixley ka Isaka Seme Disaster Management Centre	017 734 6100
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