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HOD BIDS FAREWELL TO THE HANDYMAN OF THE STATE

Almost a decade of success on public infrastructure delivery is amongst the achievements that HOD Kgopana Mohlasedi will carry as his signature of service delivery as he ascends to the higher office. Mr Mohlasedi who has recently been appointed as the Acting Director-General in the Office of the Premier, Mpumalanga Province, has been the driving force behind the *Handyman of the State* which has successfully facilitated a more than R23 billion investment which the Province injected on infrastructure projects such as schools, clinics, libraries and roads to cite a few since 2009.

On the same breath, the Honourable MEC introduced Ms Sindisiwe Xulu as the new Head of the Department. Ms Xulu is no stranger to the leadership

position as she has been heading the sister Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land & Environmental Affairs where she led with absolute distinction.

"Our mandate remains central to the development agenda and collectively we carry an imperative responsibility of ensuring that our people have access to better public infrastructure facilities that promote socio-economic development. I therefore expect this team to never lose sight of such a mandate even beyond the current administration," said MEC Manzini as she bids farewell to Mr Mohlasedi who undoubtedly departs with impeccable experience in the public sector which will come handy in his new responsibilities



SALUTE: MEC Sasekani Manzini bids farewell to HOD Kgopana Mohlasedi as she welcomes HOD Sindisiwe Xulu.

Mpumalanga MPLs track the trail of service delivery during TLP



THE WALK OF SERVICE DELIVERY: MEC Sasekani Manzini (left) walking with fellow MPLs during TLP at eMalahleni.

As part of the Legislature oversight function, the Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs) got an opportunity to interact with the residents of eMalahleni Local Municipality at Sy Mthimunya Stadium, Ackerville from 12 to 16 March 2018, in order to address service delivery challenges.

Over the five day period, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, MEC Sasekani Manzini and Acting HOD Morake Morolo joined the MPLs for oversight visits to various projects on what is known as Taking Legislature to the People programme. The delegation visited projects that were identified as needing special focus in order to fast-track service delivery in communities around the municipality.

Some of the infrastructure projects visited included Leeuwfontein/Kendal, Duvha Primary School, Ogies Clinic, Phola Youth Centre, KwaGuqa Library, Maths and Science Academy, Empumelweni and Siyanqoba Informal Settlement. Improvements were identified in the implementation of these projects by departments and municipalities as most of them had started to benefit communities.

The MEC for Public Work, Roads and Transport visited Duvha Primary School. The R41 million

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DISCLAIMER

Although care has been taken to verify the accuracy of information, the editorial team extends sincere apology for any inaccuracies that may occur.

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school which accommodates 1200 learners, was constructed over 12 months from April 2016 and completed in April 2017 to reduce overcrowding as well as creating a conducive learning and teaching environment that is more conducive to the mental and physical development of learners. The improvements accompanied by a strong academic programme will lead to improved educational effectiveness in the school and spill over into the community.

Throughout the week, citizens were given a platform to engage with the MPLs as well as departmental and municipal officials on service delivery issues. Mr Rudolph Mekoa, a resident of Ward 6, Ezinambeni was one of the residents who spoke about community concerns. ***“I am standing up with a request to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport. As a community of KwaGuqa, we are requesting the Department to build us an off-ramp between Empumelelweni and Extension 12 road since we are struggling to access the main road,”*** said Mr Mekoa. All relevant MECs answered some of the issues raised by members of the community, while other problems were noted down for further investigation.



INVESTING ON INFRASTRUCTURE: Recently built Duvha Primary School visited by MEC Manzini during TLP.

SCHOLAR TRANSPORT SMOOTHENS THE JOURNEY OF LEARNING

A long walk to a brighter future is a journey every child has to take. The Department continues to provide scholar transport services to over 60,231 learners who reside more than five (5) kilometres from the nearest school in Mpumalanga.

Recently additional sub-contractors were appointed to augment and improve the service. Mbali Sthole is a grade 9 learner from Sidunge High School also shared his sentiments; ***“before I started using scholar transport I used to pay for transport and my family was struggling, I would catch a taxi which got me to school very late but since I started using scholar transport things are much more easier.”***

The Department is assuring parents of learners that are using scholar that the Department is committed to assist in the promotion of access to education, improving culture of learning and teaching through the provision of an effective and efficient scholar transport.



LAYING THE FOUNDATION: Sidunge High School learners boarding a scholar transport bus.

MOLOTO CORRIDOR PROJECT OPENS UP BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES



LAYING THE FOUNDATION: Road construction bringing about economic opportunities.

Business is booming along the Moloto Development Corridor as business people are reaping the rewards of the construction project with workers on site queuing to enjoy a variety of African cuisine flavours sold on countless stalls erected adjacent to the construction site. Government's cooperation and commitment in working with local SMMEs and communities is bearing fruit as many are now able to put bread on the table thanks to the harmonious relationship between the Provincial Government and SANRAL.

According to one of the street vendors, Ms Anna Mahlangu, since government started with the upgrading of Moloto road business has been booming as workers are buying food from us. “So far we are happy with the way government is handling the relocation of hawkers. We were informed that after completion of certain portion of the road we will be relocated to the other site of the road so that we make way for the construction of the road” she explained. She further added

that they support the initiative by government to improve the road since there is high rate of road carnage.

Ms Maria Twala from Kwa-Mhlanga is a flag bearer on the construction site. She explained that she has been buying her lunch from the hawkers since the meals are cheap and delicious. Furthermore, hawkers are next to my work station, so I do not have to travel a long distance to get food” she added.

In one of the Ministerial briefing sessions held at Kwa-Mhlanga Government Complex Chambers, MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Sasekani Manzini appealed to contractors to empower and support local communities during the construction process “Our people and the local business must benefit from the project, so we urge all stakeholders to prioritize and support them,” she pleaded.

Delmas to Gauteng Border Road Due For Major Upgrade

The Department is investing over R106 million to rehabilitate the 13 km of P36/2 road west of Delmas towards Gauteng border near Devon. The road is used mostly by freight industries and is an entry point to Mpumalanga from Nigel and N3 road.

The rehabilitation includes raising the road levels, road widening to accommodate gravel and surfaced shoulders, drainage, culvert widening, road marking and signs and fencing along the road. This investment is expected to create much needed work opportunities for local people, and also empower local SMMEs through sub-contracting and skills transfer.

The project commenced in January 2018 and is expected to be completed by July 2019. Road construction is Government's investment in communities and is aimed to stimulate socio-economic progress thereby breeding confidence to local communities and local businesses. The Department is implementing Social Enterprise Development Model through infrastructure delivery which was announced by the Honourable MEC



LAYING THE FOUNDATION: Badly damaged P36/2 road soon to undergo major facelift.

Sasekani Manzini during the presentation of 2017/18 Policy and Budget Speech.

In terms of the model, when building a road or school, some of the material and labour should be sourced from local communities. Procurement of bricks, window frames, doors, paving blocks, sand to name but a few are sourced from the local communities, including SMMEs and Cooperatives, where the projects are being implemented.

Clr. KV Buda, the Chief Whip of Victor Khanye Local Municipality welcomed the project especially as it is going to provide economic relief to many families living under economic distress as a result of poverty.

"We welcome any project of whatever size, because it goes a long way in providing much needed work opportunities for local people. These project also assist a great deal in transferring skills to local SMME'S,"

said Clr. Buda who accompanied @work to the site.

Matibidi village gets a new school delivered on the door step of the rural community

Mpumalanga Province has embarked on an intensive programme of building new and upgrading existing schools with the purpose of improving the standard of education.

Motlolane and Relane Primary Schools are one of schools that benefited from this programmes, the schools are situated in a village called Matibidi next to Dwaarsloop under Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. The project to demolish and build new schools started from October 2016 to be completed by January 2018. Both projects costed the total amount of more than R40 million.

The scope of work for Relane Primary School consisted of demolishing and construction of 10 new classrooms, kitchen, Grade R centre, 25 toilets, upgrading of electricity and water, new administration block, and fencing of the entire school. The scope of work for Matlolane Primary School it includes demolishing and

construction of 6 new classrooms, kitchen, and Grade R centre, 11 toilets, upgrading of electricity and water, new administration block, and fencing of the school. The community of Matibidi village also benefited in terms of job opportunities created by this project where by a number of labours from the community were hired more especially the youth and women.

Sakhile Mogane a Grade five (5) learner from Relane Primary School said, ***"I am very happy about the construction of the new structure because the existing building was very old and as learners we no longer felt safe. During rainy seasons our learning materials would be soaked in water due to the leaking roof. We would like to thank our government for building us such a beautiful new school."***



A KEY TO SUCCESS Newly constructed Motlolane Primary School at Matibidi village.

MUNICIPAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME A MAJOR BOOST ON ROAD MAINTENANCE



READY TO ROLL: Yellow fleet awaiting service delivery.

The Local Municipalities in Mpumalanga Province are reaping the rewards of the Municipal Support Programme, which assists them with maintenance of roads infrastructure. The programme was introduced in 2013 by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport seeing that communities in the rural areas are battling to reach public amenities such as grave yards, clinics and schools. The Department through the programme managed to re-gravel 1081.78 km of the roads and graded about 4936.23 km with 163421.98 square meter of roads patched in the province in the 2016/17 financial year at a cost of R55million.

Municipalities which benefitted from the programme includes amongst others the Bushbuckridge, Thaba Chweu, Msukaligwa, Dipaleseng, Chief Albert Luthuli, Lekwa, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Govan Mbeki, Mkhondo, Mbombela, Nkomazi, Steve Tshwete, Thembisile Hani, Dr JS Moroka, EMakhazeni, Victor Khanye and eMalahleni.

The main interventions within the programme includes amongst others blading, regravelling, patching, block paving and drainage structures, with priority areas given to rural areas. In a move to fast track the provision of service, the Department has procured at least 16 graders and three tipper trucks to augment the existing yellow fleet totaling (697). The 697 figure comprises of the 101 graders, 80 TLB's, 105 Tipper Trucks, 92 water tankers and 319 other items such as rollers, excavator's lowbed. The equipment is used to assist municipalities in the province, whilst also carrying out other departmental duties.

By the end of 2017/18 financial year, the Department would have spent a total of R30 million towards the Municipal Support Programme with R10 million set to boost municipalities within Ehlanzeni District; Nkangala and Gert Sibande districts receiving at least R7 million each respectively.

YOUNG PEOPLE TURN IN GREAT NUMBERS FOR NYS RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Almost 6000 young people across the Province filled the National Youth Service (NYS) briefing sessions to full capacity during a recruitment drive from the 5th to the 9th of March 2018. The Department is aiming at recruiting 350 young people into the NYS programme for the 2018/19 financial year. Successful candidates are expected to commence in July 2018. More than 1794 young people turned up in Ehlanzeni district; 1197 in Bohlabela, 1822 in Gert Sibande and 989 in Nkangala district

The National Youth Service is a nationwide programme which seeks to address the massive shortage of artisans in the built environment. The programme is made-up of theory and practical training on selected infrastructure projects. During training, candidates will acquire artisan skills such as landscaping, painting, bricklaying, plastering, tiling, carpentry, fitting of doors, boiler making, plumbing, electrical works and welding. After completion of the programme they will be accredited with certificate of artisanship which will enable them to enter the employment market.

The eligibility to participate in this programme includes amongst others that a person should be a resident of Mpumalanga Province, unemployed youth between 18-35yrs, have a grade 12 with Mathematics and Science or equivalent qualifications. Thulisile Mnisi (28) is a resident

of RDP section in Sakhile, Lekwa Local Municipality, who attended the recruitment drive at Standerton Community Hall. She was enthusiastic about the opportunity.

"As you can see, there are many of us here in this hall, all competing for the 12 spaces allocated to our municipality. We are however very pleased with this rare opportunity. I am sure whoever get the opportunity will make good use of it," explains Ms Mnisi.

She further commended the Department for this programme. "This is the programme for the youth. We have many young people who are not working, and any programme designed to alleviate unemployment is very much welcomed," she concluded.

During the 12 months training period, participants are deployed to infrastructure projects within 50km radius of their areas of stay; receive R4000 stipend and would be grouped into cooperatives as part of their exit strategy. This opportunity also offers them a chance to accumulate required experience to do trade test.



LISTENING ATTENTIVELY: NYS recruitment drive at Lekwa Local Municipality.



SHARING THE OPPORTUNITY: EPWP officials hard at work during NYS recruitment drive.

ALL HANDS ON DECK: SNAP SHOTS

Being the “Handyman of the State” is indeed a highly intensive task which demands hard work, dedication, and is spiced with hectic and erratic schedules to deliver service to the masses, @work



S OF THE HANDYMAN OF THE STATE

tion, innovation and most importantly love for the job at hand. In between the crunch time of deadlines managed to steal a few snapshots of the men and women behind service delivery.



Reconstruction of flood damaged culverts

The Department as part of the Integrated Rural Mobility and Access (IRMA) has invested over R13 million to reconstruct Magogeni Bridge which was washed away by floods in Nkomazi local municipality in 2012/2013. The reconstruction of the Bridge commenced in January 2018 and is scheduled to be completed in June 2018.

The project is expected to create about 23 work opportunities. The Department has also committed to invest towards development of SMMEs in line with the Social Enterprise Development Model announced by MEC Manzini in her 2017/18 policy Budget speech.

The 2012/2013 floods which occurred in the Province left communities in many areas disconnected from major social amenities such as schools, roads, bridges and health care facilities. As a result emergency services could not even reach communities due to the condition of the infrastructure.

The scope of work includes, repairs of road based failures, subbase layers, culvert widening, subsoil drainage, v-drains, including surfaced shoulders, road markings and road signs.

To amplify this important rural development investment by the Department, MEC Manzini said ***“Our people in rural areas are faced with poor transport infrastructure and inadequate public transport services that prohibit access and mobility. Given that transport infrastructure and services are significant catalyst for sustainable economic development, the improvement of these will always assist with poverty alleviation.”***

Bohlabela District scoops a double portion of libraries



A READING NATION IS A SUCCESSFUL NATION: Mashishini Regional Library under construction.

Two communities from Thaba Chweu and Bushbuckridge Local Municipalities respectively stand to benefit from the construction of a new library and upgrading of another.

The Mashishing Regional Library project in Thaba Chweu started in September 2017 and is expected to be complete by the end of March 2018. The scope of work mainly focused on upgrading of the existing structure which included repainting, reinstallation of ceiling, tiling and fencing amongst others. The R7 million project created thirteen work opportunities for the locals mostly youth.

The construction of MP Stream Library has also brought joy to the Bushbuckridge community after years without an information centre. Ms Rose Mashego who is a grade 10 learner from Manikahle High School situated at MP Stream in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality had this to say,

“I am glad that we now have a Library next to our school, that will give us an opportunity to improve our grades and assist us when we conduct research for our assignments. We do not have to travel as far as Dwarsloop anymore to get library services.”



WORK IN PROGRESS: MP Stream Library under construction.

MALIBONGWE – WOMEN TAKING LEAD IN ROAD MAINTENANCE



THE RIGHT MARK: Kwaggafontein Cost Centre officials marking P95 road near Verena.

The harsh working conditions on the roads will never deter the perseverance and commitment which a maintenance team from Kwaggafontein Cost Centre display when conducting their daily duties on the road. A maintenance team comprising of nine women is marking roads, cutting grass and clearing the cut ridge in some of the major roads around Nkangala District. The team was spotted marking the P95 road near Verena and explained to @Work how they manage to keep the roads around the district in a well maintained condition.

Ms Meissie Sibanyoni who is leading a maintenance team of nine (9) women from Kwaggafontein Cost Centre explained that working on the road has its own challenges as some motorists fail to adhere to road signs. ***“One of the road worker was nearly hit by a car whilst marking the road as the car driver failed to obey the stop signs as well as the flag bearer.”***

Despite some of the challenges we face daily, we love what we do and we are a committed team of women performing what has been previously regarded as man’s work,” she adds.

Anna Masombuka is one of the team workers who displays hard work and passion for her work. ***“I love my work very much as I make sure that our provincial roads are in a good driving condition. What I love mostly is when we do marking on the road so that motorists could see the signs and directions and also this could avert road accidents,”*** she added.

The maintenance team from Nkangala district under the leadership of Mr Aaron Mbatha appreciate the support from the management of the district which ensures that they receive proper training to enhance their skills. The team is performing their duties well judging from the work done on the road.

LEARNERS ENCOURAGED TO GO FOR 100% PASS RATE

The Department's Employee Health and Wellness Section visited Sidungeni Secondary, a rural School in Mbombela Municipality, to distribute dignity packs on the 2nd of February 2018. This comes as the Department has embarked on a Gender mainstreaming initiative, which promotes good hygiene and health at schools. The Department was able to identify the school through the assistance of the Department of Education's Ehlanzeni District.

A total number of 404 dignity packs were given out to the learners; 206 were given to boys, and the pack contained toothpaste, roll-ons, bath soaps and face cloth; and 198 were given to girls and contained packs of sanitary towels, toothpaste, roll-ons, bath soap and face cloth. Each dignity pack had a supply to last each learner for a period of three months. The learners were overwhelmed by the kindness and



LAYING THE FOUNDATION: Restoring the dignity of future leaders.

love the Department has shown towards them and picking them out of many schools within the Ehlanzeni District.

Mr L.N Ngwenya, one of the educators at the school expressed words of appreciation to the Department for the important project and for recognizing a rural school and acknowledging the learners at Sidungeni Secondary School.

He encouraged the learners to work harder in order to achieve a 100% matric pass rate, as a sign of showing appreciation at what the Department has done for them. Speaking on behalf of the Department, Ms Thandi Maziko thanked the MEC and the HOD for allowing the section to embark on such a great initiative and pleaded with private donors to come forward and assist the department on this initiative as the section aspires to distribute such packages to schools quarterly.

NYS CO-OPERATIVE MAKING A MARK AT BERNICE HOSPITAL IN DELMAS



APPLYING SKILLS: NYS participants earning their cheque as they paint Bernice Hospital.

The move to introduce cooperatives in the National Youth Service Programme is proving to bear some positive spin-offs for the Department, as maintenance work in most government buildings are on track. This is evident at Bernice hospital wherein participants of the NYS cooperative are busy painting the building, doing carpentry work and installing lights for the hospital. The cooperative is constituted by six participants of NYS namely Ms Gugu Mnguni, Mr Mduduzi Mlibane, Ms Tebogo Shabalala, Ms Thandi Thoben, Ms Zanele Mlangeni and Ms Zandile Mahlangu.

@Work spoke to the leader of the cooperative, Ms Zanele Mlangeni about the prospects of the cooperative for the future. ***"After completing the NYS programme, the sky is the limit for our cooperative as we plan to register as company. We plan to do electrical work for the local and surrounding communities in Botleng after completing the programme. I am proud to say that we have done some artisan work for two local families and they are happy with the work done"*** she said smilingly.

According to Ms Mlangeni, the journey has not been easy at first as some members wanted to desert the group as they were hoping to get quick bucks, but seeing that there is a high demand for artisan work in many households they decided to remain behind. Perseverance, hard work and desire to succeed is evident on Zanele's face. "For us to succeed we sometimes have to use our stipends to buy materials and I am now working on getting a drivers licence," she said.

In the past ten years, the Department has contributed quite significantly in addressing youth unemployment since the launch of the programme in 2007. To date, a total of 2950 youths have been empowered through the artisanship programme, which saw participants undergoing a classroom and practical training. In 2017/18 there are 350 youths who have been enrolled into the programme, with another 350 participants expected to be absorbed into the programme during the 2018/19 financial year.

The Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport has taken the NYS programme a step further by introducing cooperatives aimed at empowering the youth with entrepreneurial and artisanship skills. The initiative is called the National Youth Service Building Maintenance programme where participants maintain government offices, provincial hospital, selected schools and sanitation project. The skills acquired through artisanship includes amongst others glazing, tiling crackers, painting wall, electrification, plumbing, paving and landscaping. A total of youth are benefitting from the project.

CAPACITY BOOST FOR EMERGING CONTRACTORS

Dedication, commitment and perseverance are the words that can easily describe the owner of Ahi Khomisaneni Trading, Mr Christopher Sibuyi, an emerging contractor and candidate of the Department's Sakh'abakhi Emerging Contractor Development Programme. Mr Sibuyi has been awarded a four month contract to renovate Botleng Public Library, as part of his two year training contract with the Department.

Mr Sibuyi together with 55 emerging contractors were selected to participate in the 2016/17 intake of the programme. It is a two year theoretic and on the job training aimed at developing emerging contractors to become fully-fledged contractors who are able to compete for bigger contracts. He was awarded a R1.3 million project contract to do plastering, tiling and electrification of the public library.

The sky is the limit for the 34 year old Sibuyi who has technical skill in plumbing and general maintenance. The Sakh'abakhi programme has mentors who are appointed by the Department to assist participants with technical skills.

Sibuyi has employed at least 16 local labourers and the figure might increase as the project reaches its peak. Mr Sibuyi's Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) grading for plumbing and other maintenance work secured him participation into the programme. Despite the unfavourable working environment he finds himself working under as a result of community unrest, his persistence and desire to reach his goals are attributes which describe his persona. **"I need to nurture my financial and management skills, so that I can be a better contractor and nothing**



BUILDING FUTURE BUILDERS: Sakh'abakhi participants ready to demonstrate their new-found skills as they build Botleng Public Library.

will stop me from achieving my goals." said Mr Sibuyi.

One of the workers on site is a 32 year old Ms Makgetho Meropa who expressed her deepest gratitude for the opportunity the programme has presented. **"I am very much grateful that I am part of the team which renovates the community library. At least I am now able to provide for my family which is a rare opportunity these days due**

t the high unemployment rate. It is also a great opportunity to harness my skill in the technical field since it is perceived as a male dominated field. I sincerely appreciate the offer which Mr Sibuyi has given us. He is indeed a testimony that commitment and hard work pays off" said Ms Makgetho with a beaming smile on her face.

The National Department of Public Works is embarking on a nation-wide Policy review consultative process to review all its founding and enabling pieces of legislation which collectively outline the mandate of the Department. According to the Minister of Public Works, Mr Thulas Nxesi, the review process is aimed at reviving, strengthening and refreshing the policy mandate of the Department to strengthen service delivery.

In the five year policy statement and vision for 2014-2019, the Minister stated that **"In reviewing and revising the current white papers, the Department will inter-alia, explore strengthening the regulatory role of the Department in the above sectors (Construction and Property Sectors) while furthering transformation and paving the way for the development of the Public Works Act during the current MTEF period."** Some of the pieces of legislation were developed and adopted in the first five years of democracy and have to be aligned with the new realities.

In this regard, the Minister clarified the process and its intention; **"We have to embark on a thorough policy review. We have to go through the White Paper process culminating in a Public Works Act by the end of this administration tenure to refresh and clarify our mandate and to establish a platform for sustainable development."** The review of the White Paper includes reflecting on the mandate of the National and Provincial Departments concurrent nature of the public works function as reflected in Schedule 4, Part of A & B of the Constitution, 1996.

The Department of Public Works does not have a comprehensive Act that defines its mandate but rather relies on various pieces of Legislation, Cabinet directives and historical practices. The review redefine the Department's role in a developmental state, to reinforce DPW's role in driving transformation in the construction and property sectors, to review and update policy goals and approaches to address current events within the context of the local and global construction and property sectors.

NDPW redefines its mandate to strengthen service delivery



PAYING ATTENTION: Departmental Management during Policy Review Programme.

ROAD UPGRADE IMPROVES MOBILITY FROM ERMELO TO BREYTEN



LAYING THE FOUNDATION: New state-of-the-art road between Ermelo and Breyten.

For a long time, the road between Ermelo and Breyten was a nightmare for motorists. This is one of the busiest roads which links the southern part of Mpumalanga with the north. It is also used extensively by trucks transporting coal to nearby power stations from coal mines. Within its limited fiscal resources, The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport began with major rehabilitation of the road which began in January 2015 and was completed in June 2017.

The project which mainly focused on the rehabilitation, upgrading and maintenance of the P26/4 road between Ermelo and Breyten for a total length of 20km, was implemented at the tune of R244 million. The Department is implementing the Social Enterprise Development Model to address socio-economic issues such as unemployment and poverty, to bring about socio-economic transformation to the local communities.

In this regard, over R 19 million was invested to Small Micro Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) through sub-contracting and procurement of plant equipment and diesel supply just to name a few. This project was also used as a tool to invest in skills development and poverty alleviation. As a result, 190 work opportunities were created for a period of 30 months.

In her policy and Budget speech MEC Sasekani Manzini said, ***“When government invests in communities, it breeds confidence and encourages further investment from local businesses and families. This means that when building a road or school, some of the material and labour should be sourced from local communities. We will be procuring bricks, window frames, paving bricks and sand from local communities including SMMEs and Corporatives, where the projects are being implemented.”***

Mr Samuel Mkhonto (46), is an employee of a logistics company and uses P26/4 road almost daily. Like many motorists using this road, he is happy with the good quality road. ***“We work on time in the logistics industry. A good road is pleasurable to drive on. We thank government for this beautiful road. Unfortunately, we are already seeing damage on the other side between Bryten and Carolina. The trucks transporting coal from nearby mines are really damaging this road, and one hopes something can be done about that,”*** said Mr Mkhonto

PILGRIM'S REST RETURNS TO ITS FORMER GLORY



A NEW STAGE IS SET: Pilgrims' Rest restoration underway.

Pilgrim's Rest is a small peri-urban village situated on the magnificent Panorama Route in the eastern escapement region of Mpumalanga. The village was declared a National Monument in 1986. The area is richly imbued with diversity of natural, cultural and historic gems. The uniqueness of this historic village is vividly

evident in its museums and historic buildings. It is renowned for the World Gold Panning Competition, a game based on the golden early ages of gold mining activities that took place in the area.

Over a period of time, the town, like many other historic infrastructure has faced a severe strain

of dilapidation due to natural causes such a weather and aging effects.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT) is the custodian of the little town and is in charge of maintenance including the provision of other municipal services. In the recent past, there has been a concerted effort by Government to rejuvenate the town and return it to its former glory as one of the bastions of tourism in the Lowveld. In this regard, multi-pronged and multi-stakeholder approach has been developed with each stakeholder assigned a specific task in the total project plan.

Along this approach, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) has already appointed consultants to conceptualize and conduct a feasibility study on the socio-economic heritage of Pilgrim's Rest with the aim of restoring and revitalizing tourism. On its part, DPWRT is refurbishing dilapidated structures including the stage at the gold panning site and building new ablution facilities. The Alanglade House Museum is also under restoration maintenance.

“As a result of this work, we are already seeing an increase in the number of people visiting this area, which augurs well for us to be able to generate much needed revenue. We have recorded 1442 ticket sales during the month of December 2017. It is worth noting that the indicated number is only for the tickets sale at information centre for the museum visits. Many people visits the town but not necessarily visit the museums,” said Ms Pretty Makhubedu, the Town Manager of Pilgrim's Rest village.

THE LAW TAKES ITS TOLL ON EASTER HOLIDAYS

The Department together with various law enforcement agencies intensified law enforcement operations during the Easter holidays between 29 March and 02 April 2018 in a bid to curb road accidents. As a result, a total of 2838 Minibuses and Buses were stopped and screened for compliance with the National Land Transport Act. Public Transport Inspectors were deployed all over the Province in various major routes identified as hot spots. The inspectors conducted vigorous law enforcement operations focusing exclusively on public transport or vehicles that convey passengers for reward.

Out of the 2838 vehicles that were screened, 880 were impounded as they were found to have been operating in contravention of the said Act. Many of these were either found to be operating without valid operating licenses or unroadworthy. Furthermore, 882 summonses were issued with

finances ranging between R2000 and R2500. The Department has in the past observed several common challenges on the road particularly during holidays including overloading and speeding.

Church congregants travelling to various destinations equally experienced the heavy hand of the law to ensure their safety. The Director for Regulation and Control, Mr Mojalifa Tsotetsi explained that many people, especially church congregants are inconvenienced due to vehicles that get impounded as a result of non compliance with traffic regulations. ***"We urge public transport drivers to apply for special operating licenses prior to undertaking religious trips to different destinations. We have had to stop many vehicles transporting church-goers because they were operating on unauthorized routes."***



SAFE JOURNEY OR JAIL TIME: Law enforcement officers left no stone unturned in a bid to ensure safety on the road during Easter Weekend.



**WHEN THE SUN RISES
WE WORK HARD TO DELIVER**

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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME