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A couple of months ago the world was celebrating the birth of a new year 2020 but no one could have phantom the calamity that would soon besiege the human race. Dreams have been crushed as thousands perish under the deathly virus and millions receiving medical attention while the rest are confined in lockdown, a desperate attempt to preserve life. Indeed we convey our sincere condolences to families and friends of the departed.

South Africa is in no variation with the rest of the world. From the inception of the unprecedented battle against this invisible coronavirus, there is no doubt that the Almighty God has been leading the warfare through President Cyril Ramaphosa and many fellow South Africans who rose to the occasion as true ambassadors of "Thuma Mina". We give a standing ovation to all essential service workers such as nurses and doctors and of course all those who kept the lights on, ensuring food supply and transportation of these imperatives.

Although lives have been lost and the value chain of economic activities disrupted, Government will never close shop to service delivery. If anything, the pandemic has resuscitated the spirit of "Batho Pele" and redefined the fight against unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The advent of this episode illustrates the Department's commitment towards the provision of safe, reliable and efficient public transport system and infrastructure to rejuvenate socio-economic activities. MEC Gillion Mashego has been at the forefront to ensure that public transport adheres to the Disaster Management Act regulations, it is therefore safe to say we are in this together.

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MPUMALANGA TACKLES COVID-19 ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Writer : Mxolisi Cyril Dlamini



LEADING FROM THE FRONT: Mpumalanga Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane accompanied by MEC Gillion Mashego at Mbombela Taxi Rank engaging commuters about preventative measures to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

In a bid to combat the scourge of coronavirus that has resulted in an unprecedented lockdown, the Mpumalanga Provincial Government is leaving no stone unturned as Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane and MEC Gillion Mashego handed over hygiene packs to District Municipalities for distribution in all taxi ranks throughout the Province to ensure that these public amenities are not a breeding ground for COVID-19 which has already claimed many lives in South Africa.

The Premier and the MEC together with the Executive Mayor of the City of Mbombela Local Municipality, Cllr Sibusiso Mathonsi visited Mbombela Taxi Rank on Thursday, 09 April 2020 where they handed over hygiene packs which included sanitisers, masks and gloves amongst others. The dignitaries, joined by members of the Mpumalanga Taxi Council also pulled up their sleeves in an effort to disinfect taxis in the taxi rank.

As the custodian of public transport in Mpumalanga Province, MEC Mashego emphasized that the intervention will go a long way in curbing the spread of infections.



HYGIENE BEFORE HIGHWAY: MEC Gillion Mashego distributing sanitisers to taxi drivers in a bid to ensure that public transport is not a breeding ground for infections.

"This is a collective effort between Government, the taxi industry and the public at large in order to save lives. We are appealing to our people to comply with the

relevant regulations prescribed by the Disaster Management Act. The fact that the Premier has joined us here today highlights the significance of this operation," explained Mashego.

The MEC further visited Emalahleni and Msukaligwa taxi ranks in Nkangala and Gert Sibande districts respectively on the same day where he was joined by the Executive Mayors of both district and local municipalities as well as the representatives of the various taxi associations.

Government has called upon all stakeholders in various sectors to ensure full compliance with the regulations especially the application of preventative measures. The Department of Transport has since promulgated travelling restrictions across provinces as well as public transport operating hours which have been revised to between 5h00am and 07h00pm during level 4 to cater for essential services workers and those commuting to access necessities such as food and medication. These restrictions also dictate the maximum capacity of occupants per vehicle which is 70% for public transport. Minister Fikile Mbalula has emphasized the use of face masks by all passengers. **"No person is allowed to use public transport who is not wearing a face mask. We call on the public to ensure strict adherence to this requirement by obtaining their own face masks,"** reiterated Minister Mbalula.

In line with the Department of Employment and Labour COVID-19 regulations, *"The Handyman of the State"* has established a steering committee to drive the COVID-19 programme in order to ensure a safe and healthy environment for both employees and clients visiting departmental offices. In line with the regulations, necessary precautionary measures are being implemented which include mandatory face masks, sanitising stations, temperature monitoring and registration of all individuals accessing Government buildings for tracing purposes. Furthermore, the Department has embarked on fumigation programme of all Government offices and vehicles.



GETTING READY: Executive Mayor Muzi Chirwa (Gert Sibande District Municipality) allocating hygiene packs donated by MEC Gillion Mashego to various taxi associations in Gert Sibande District..

NEW MAPULANENG HOSPITAL TO CHANGE THE FACE OF BUSHBUCKRIDGE HEALTHCARE

Writer : Dimakatso Matentshi

The construction of the New Mapulaneng hospital is expected to change the face of Bushbuckridge as it is going to be a catalyst development in the area, but also bring about much needed job opportunities to villagers around Dwaarsloop. Local residents were excited in anticipation as they converged at the new Mapulaneng hospital project site for the technical site handover of contractors. The technical site handover was held on 22nd of January 2020 at Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

According to the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mr Gillion Mashego, the project has been divided into three phases of which phase one and phase two have been completed. Phase one constituted the building of palisade fencing, water reticulation, sewer reticulation and construction of access road. The implementation of Bulk earthworks and retaining walls was part of Phase two. The last phase, which will be further subdivided into 3A, 3B and 3C will be the construction of the main building.



DELIVERY: MEC Gillion Mashego and MEC Sasekani Manzini accompanied by Executive Mayor, Cllr Sylvia Nxumalo during a handover of Mapulaneng Hospital contractors in Bushbuckridge.

"The construction of Out Patient Department (OPD), trauma unit, inpatient department, maternal care, non-clinical services will form part of phase three," said MEC Mashego. He added that more than R1 billion will be invested towards the project.

Ms. Lucy Mathebula from Dwaarsloop village could not hide her excitement upon learning that at least more than 500 work opportunities will be created during this phase.

"I have been unemployed for more than five years, so I am hoping like many in my village that this project will bring about some form of relief with job opportunities when the project starts" she smiled.

RESTORING PASSENGER SAFETY

Writer : Dimakatso Matentshi

Mpumalanga MEC of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mr Gillion Mashego accompanied by Gauteng MEC of Public Transport and Roads Infrastructure, Mr Jacob Mamabolo, officially launched a new fleet of 50 PUTCO buses at Roodeplaats Dam along the Moloto Road on 31 January 2020. PUTCO operates buses across three provinces on daily basis and this new fleet will bring about relief to commuters. The new fleet will service Thembisile Hani and Dr. JS Moroka Municipalities in Mpumalanga province with allocation of 30 new buses. The remaining 20 buses will be allocated to service Soshanguve in Gauteng, an increase from the 11 buses that were provided in 2019.

The introduction of the new fleet follows discussions between the two MECs and PUTCO management to address road safety concerns, especially accidents that involve PUTCO buses along Moloto road and improve the quality of service to commuters. The introduction of the new fleet will also reduce the number of breakdowns that are sometimes caused by aging fleet, theft and vandalism. Theft of batteries, diesel and vandalizing of buses, makes it difficult to cover all shifts due to severe bus shortages, impacting negatively

on the quality of service and affecting commuters who are expected to arrive at their place of work daily and on time.

MEC Mashego commended PUTCO for addressing the aging fleet, which has been a cause of disagreement for a while, resulting to major fatalities on the Moloto road. ***"We want to thank Putco bus for resolving the issue of aging buses especially in Mpumalanga as this was the major cause of road accidents. Our people around Thembisile Hani and Dr JS Moroka rely on Putco buses when travelling to work and back home. We hope that the company will remove all unroadworthy busses on the road,"*** he stressed.

In December 2019, PUTCO entered into an agreement with Gerotek, an agency of Amcor in an effort to enhance road safety education and introduce advanced driving techniques to Putco bus drivers. The first cohort of 30 drivers trained by Gerotek, were selected from drivers operating Soweto buses and those along the Moloto corridor.

Mr. Franco Pisapia, the Managing Director of PUTCO stressed that commuter safety was their primary concern at all times. ***"For us one accident is one too many,***



SAFETY FIRST: (From left to right) MEC Jacob Mamabolo, MMC Poppie Msiza, PUTCO Managing Director, Mr Franco Pisapia; Executive Mayor, Cllr Nomsa Mtsweni and MEC Gillion Mashego unveiling the new buses.

however, I am pleased that since the introduction of our fleet monitoring programme with Altron Netsar, we have seen a change in driver behavior and a reduction in unfortunate road accidents where Putco buses were involved, especially along the R573 -Moloto corridor." Furthermore, he continued, "in 2016/17, our buses were regrettably involved in 61 accidents and by the end of December 2019; the number had dropped significantly to 18. We will continue to implement preventative measures to reduce the carnage on our roads".



RIDING TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Writer : Dimakatso Matentshi

Cheering and ululation were the order of the day when the Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms Dikeledi Magadzi, arrived at Swartklip Combined School; Victor Khanye Local Municipality on 17 February 2020 to handover more than 360 bicycles to learners in three schools, Swartklip Combined, Sisofunda Primary School and Khangela Primary school. Learners and educators were excited alike, and expressed their joy with what they called, "better life" coming their way. The bicycles were handed over as part of Shova Kalula programme, which supports learners not covered by Scholar transport, meaning they travel between 3-5km to and from school. Of these, 170 bicycles were handed to Swartklip Combined School, Khangela Primary school received 161 bicycles and Sisofunda Primary school got 29 bicycles.

One happy learner was Lesedi Tshiloane, a grade 6 learner from Khangela Primary who stands to benefit from the programme. According to him, traveling to school has been a major headache because he walks more than 4 km to schools. ***"I get***

exhausted when I arrive at school and it affects my concentration in class, but now I am happy because I will be getting a bicycle and do not have to walk long distances" he smiled.

Addressing the event, the Deputy Minister emphasized the importance of education as only dependable means to escape poverty. ***"This program of giving bicycles to deserving learners goes at the heart of a slogan that we are a caring government. We want to ensure that you ride the bike with an interest of gaining knowledge to prepare each of you for a better future, where you shall be equals to your counterparts anywhere in the country or in the world"***, she stressed. She hinted that non-motorized transport system, was not only a mode of transport,



RIDING ALONG: Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms Dikeledi Magadzi together with Education MEC, Mr Bonakele Majuba and Victor Khanye Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr KV Buda handing over bicycles to Swartklip Combined School learners.

but contributed massively to efforts of living positive and active lifestyles to be a healthy nation. She further appealed to communities and learners alike to safeguard the bicycles so that they benefit even those coming behind.

The Deputy Minister was accompanied by MEC for Education in the Mpumalanga, Mr. Bonakele Majuba and the Executive Mayor of Victor Khanye Local Municipality, Cllr KV Buda.

DEVELOPMENT CENTRES TO SHED A RAY OF HOPE FOR PIENAAR YOUTH

Writer : Mpho Gabashane

The residents of Daantjie and Msogwaba popularly known as Pienaar in Mbombela will never be the same again as they are geared to benefit from two youth development centres in their respective communities. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, as a custodian of public infrastructure, is building the centres on behalf of client department, Social Development.

The building of these two centres is part of inter-departmental efforts to upscale social infrastructure in the densely populated areas, to expose young people to opportunities through constant support, dialogue and development. The staggering unemployment facing South Africans, especially young people, demands that government invest heavily on all projects or programmes, which can uplift and rescue young people from socio-economic challenge of the time.

Construction of one of the two centres, Msogwaba Youth Development Centre, began in August 2018 and scheduled to be completed by June 2020. The critical aspect of all infrastructure projects is their ability to create much-needed jobs for local people where these projects are being built. To date, the projects has been able to create jobs for 55 people with conscious bias towards women and youth; with 18 being women, 20 young people and the rest males.

The scope of the R44 Million project includes construction of main hall, administration building, training facility, ablution block, computer centre, kitchen facility, resource Centre, entrance guardhouse, external works and electricity supply. The computer and resource centres epitomize the core of the youth centre, giving meaning to its development orientation.

“We cannot wait for this centre to be completed. We are struggling so much as young people; just to get information is such an effort around here. We are therefore excited with prospects of having two youth centres, our lives will never be the same,”

said Nkayiso Simelane, a young person living in Msogwaba.



ROOF TOP: Construction of the R44 million Msogwaba Youth Centre is nearing completion.

WOMEN MAKING INROADS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Writer : Dimakatso Matentshi

Women are making inroads in the construction sector which is formerly known to be a male dominated industry. This has been demonstrated by the construction project of Culture, Sports and Recreation offices at Embalenhle, Govan Mbeki Local Municipality where women are at the forefront.

Development is seen as a progressive transformation tool used to alter the skewed allocation of opportunities previously reserved for a few mostly at the expense of women and youth. This project is a testimony of hope towards gender equality where women are at the center of service delivery. Thirty-five year old, Mpho Tsoenyane, is a qualified Quantity Surveyor, who is displaying her technical skills in the project.

According to Mpho, women have to work twice as hard to prove to their worth as opposed to their male counterpart. ***“It is very difficult for society to accept***



GRINDING STONE: Ms Mpho Tsoenyane (Sited), a qualified Quantity Surveyor sharing her expertise with fellow co-workers, Nomvula Dlamini and Sophy Ngobeni at the construction site.

that women are also capable of working in an environment perceived as male dominant. But I am happy that women have taken the bull by its horns in many industries” she explained.

As a site agent, she has to ensure that the project adheres to sound financial management practice in order to accomplish the task at hand according to budget. She also must guarantee that all necessary materials are in place according to specification.

The construction of the R28 million offices started in November 2018 and is scheduled to be completed in May 2020. To date, more than 25 work opportunities have been created for local people and quite importantly, women are the majority of the workforce. Nomvula Dlamini and Sophy Ngobeni are amongst the female workers involved in plastering and bricklaying amongst other duties.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO THE GRINDING



STONE WHILE WELCOMING ANOTHER



The lily of Misty Mountains blossoms new opportunities for farm school learners

Writer : Mpho Gabashane

The construction of Boarding schools in Mpumalanga for rural areas has reshaped education sector in the province. Mpumalanga is a predominantly a rural province, and many people in this peripheral areas had been excluded from development and lack basic social infrastructure for their well-being. The construction of state of the art and highly equipped boarding schools in rural areas goes a long way in dismantling structural fault lines of inequality, poverty and underdevelopment.

The construction of Thaba Chweu boarding school began in May 2018 and scheduled to be completed by 28 February 2020 but has been officially opened for academic programme in January 2020. The school, which is a combined school, has amalgamated seven former farm schools in the area, and has resumed with over 1000 enrollment.

This is quite a high number compared to other boarding schools in the province, says education

department officials during the site tour on the 3rd February 2020 by both Heads of Departments; Ms SP Xulu (A) for Public Works, Roads and Transport and Mr. JR Nkosi of Education.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, which is a custodian of public infrastructure, has partially handed over the school for the academic programme to resume, notwithstanding continuing construction sports fields, Sports Change Block, Guardhouse and Janitor's Room. The sewer and water systems works are being finalized but are functional access gates and boreholes. Once these aspects are complete, the school will be officially handed over in a public event to the department of Education. Thaba Chweu boarding school is unique in some respects compared to other boarding schools in the province. The first being the extensive and modern infrastructure layout in the school, enabling these rural and farm children to be worthy citizens who

will compete at equal level with their counterparts in urban areas.

The scope of work, for this over R380 Million, consists of 28 Classrooms, ablutions facilities, administration block, library, science lab, computer lab, Grade-R Classes(4 Blocks), Grade-R Residences (3 Blocks), Girls Dormitory (4Blocks), Boys Dormitory (4 Blocks), Multi-purpose Kitchen-Dining hall, Janitor's Room, Sports Change (2 Blocks), Guardhouse, Refuse Block, Sports Fields, Water & Sewer treatment plants, electricity & fencing.

The most important aspect of any infrastructure project is potential to create as many jobs as possible. To date, the project created over 387 job opportunities for local people and poignantly youth constitute majority at 334 and over R22.9 million was spent on local small business fraternity.



THE LILY OF MISTY MOUNTAINS: Thaba Chweu Boarding School has enrolled over 1000 learners from seven farm schools.

SUBCONTRACTORS GET A SLICE OF THE PIE AT AERORANT SCHOOL

Writer : Mpho Gabashane

Emerging contractors are making a mark at the construction of a school in Middelburg, Aerorand Primary School. The local economy also received a major boost with at least nine (9) subcontractors getting a slice of R57 million budget allocated to the project. They provided plant hire to this 12 months project, which commenced in October 2018 and due for completion in the first semester of 2020.

Speaking to the contractor, Mr. Duncan Dlodlu on how the project was rolling out, he highlighted the importance of empowering emerging contractors, and how the department can create a good working relationship and services with suppliers. According to Mr. Dlodlu, Local subcontractors benefited

immensely as they received a share of R10 million for various services rendered. He further appealed to government to address the issue of late payment to service providers. **"Late payments of suppliers is financially crippling our business, as workers and other sub-contractors are not paid on time, so late payment has an adverse effect on the implementation of project. We therefore appeal to government to rectify the hindrance,"** he stressed.

The project consists of 24 classrooms, administrative block, library, computer center, 36 toilets, fence, electrical connection, water connection, kitchen, sports grounds, guardhouses, refuse rooms, staff parking and drop zone. As with all infrastructure projects, the most important aspect is job creation. In this regard, at least (146) Work opportunities were created during the construction process.



BREAD AND SALT FOR ALL: Aerorant Primary School construction project has placed local subcontractors at the pedestal of local economy.

Lubombo To Receive A World-Class Circuit Office

Writer : Benika Khambule



THE FORMULA OF SUCCESS: Lubombo Circuit is another success story amongst many with the aim of improving the quality of education in Mpumalanga Province.

The Department is persistent in its mandate of providing building infrastructure, as a custodian of the Provincial Government. The Lubombo community will soon join a long list of jubilant communities that will enjoy the privilege of receiving a new circuit office. This infrastructure was built with the aim of adding immense value to the community and improving academic knowledge around the area.

Lubombo is a rural community situated just south of Malelane and Komatipoort, in the Nkomazi Local Municipality, bordering

Mozambique. This circuit office is one of the state of the art offices constructed as part of the Department's commitment to develop world class infrastructure both in rural and urban areas.

The project started in June 2019 and will be completed in June 2020 at a cost of R9m. During the construction, the Department provided employment, skills development and economic empowerment to local contractors and community at large. More than forty (40) local residents benefited and local SMMEs participated on the project.

The Crown of KaShabalala Bestows Glory On Education

Writer : Benika Khambule



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: KaShabalala Secondary School stands as a beacon of hope and testimony to Government's endeavours to improve education especially in rural communities.

The construction of Ka-Shabalala Secondary School has finally been completed. This is yet another service delivery achievement by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government in its effort to improve the culture of teaching and learning. The scope of work of this R52 million project included amongst others; 28 classrooms, administration block, laboratory, library, computer centre, school hall, 40 toilets, fence, electricity, water reticulation, kitchen, ramps and rails, three sports grounds and car parking.

The construction of the school began in October 2018 and was completed in December 2019 just in time for 2020 academic year. As with all infrastructure projects, the construction of the school also served as a tool to invest in skills development and poverty alleviation with at least 31 jobs created for local people and it provided also business opportunity for local SMMEs.

Vusi Hlatshwayo, one of the local residents, explained how he and the entire community are grateful to the Department for such an initiative of building a state of the art school in their community. **"We are so delighted to our government for such a beautiful and modern facility"**, he said.

SIBUKOSETFU REFLECTS ON R11M FACELIFT

Writer : Benika Khambule

Learning at Sibukosetfu Secondary School will never be the same again. The school, which is located at Kamajika just outside Hazyview in Mbombela Municipality, will soon open its doors to their refurbished school building. The school was previously built in the 1980s which prompted a complete redesign and extension of its facilities. Learners of the school have been faced with challenges associated with unpleasant classroom learning environment since the building was no longer safe to be used as an education facility.

This is a great way of breathing new life into aging building stock that is no longer fit for purpose. The refurbishment of the school is valued at approximately R11 million. According to the Project Manager, Mr Caswell Mpangane, the scope of work includes the refurbishment of existing 20 classes, administration block, library, and laboratory and staff room. The construction of the project began in November 2019 and scheduled for completion in May 2020. To

date, the project has created about twenty two (22) job opportunities for local residents and local SMMEs are benefiting through sub-contracting.

Thembaletu Masango, a learner at the school, could not hide his excitement when @work visited the school.

"I am very excited and quite motivated about the renovations of our school building and the addition of a laboratory. I am confident that our school will perform better this year especially the Grade 12," he concluded



MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL: Sibukosetfu Secondary School at Kamajika will soon reflect the true value of education with R11 million injection.

Yinhle Lentfo PS Concludes First Construction Phase

Writer : Benika Khambule



SANITATION IS DIGNITY: The new Yinhle Lentfo Primary School in Masoyi has completed its first phase which included fencing and ablution facilities.

The community of Masoyi in the City of Mbombela is the recipients of a brand new primary school, Yinhle Lentfo. This is a significant milestone aimed at improving the quality of education in the rural areas. The school will alleviate overcrowding at other schools in the village and the surrounding villages.

The construction of the first phase which covered the 29 Enviro-loo toilets and fencing has been completed. The scope of work for the second phase will cover the construction of new 24 Classrooms, 2 Grade R Block, Administration Block, Computer Centre, Kitchen, Library, Guard House, ramps and rails, covered carports and electricity reticulation. The project started in 2019 and

is planned for 18 months at a cost of approximately R56 million.

In the process, the project created more than 22 jobs opportunities for local people and business opportunities for SMMEs through sub-contracting. **"This is one of the exciting and inspirational projects that will be appreciated by the community for generations,"** said Ms Mdhluli, one of the villagers.

Patience Is Virtue, Says Daggakraal Community As Road Project Nears Completion

Writer : Mpho Gabashane



IN PROGRESS: Road D281 between Volksrust and Daggakraal taking shape.

There is light at the end of the tunnel, so goes the saying. The people of Daggakraal in Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality are now singing this popular phrase as the endless struggle for a tarred road is paying dividends with the upgrading of road D281 between Volksrust and Daggakraal nearing completion.

The community is reaping the benefits of their relentless engagements with the Department since 2015 requesting the upgrade of this road. The construction of this road began in November 2018 and scheduled to be completed in May 2020. Although the project is nearing completion, it was not without challenges. The constant thorn in infrastructure delivery is community disruptions and strikes over very same project aimed to better their lives. This has been flaked by President Ramaphosa in his 2020 State of the Nation Address.

The main work is to upgrade from the road from gravel to surfaced road. Built at the cost of R133 million, It involves construction of 30mm asphalt, construction of imported 1500m G2 base, 200mm subbase (C4), construction of 2 150mm selected layers, removal and

replacement of approximately 20 pipe culverts, Construction of in-situ box culverts and construction of side drain and channels. It further includes installation of concrete kerbing, construction of stone pitching and gabion erosion protection, erection of new guardrails, painting of new road markings and erection of new road signage.

To date, the project has created over 32 job opportunities for local people and over R2 million has been spent on local SMMEs for provision of services such plant hire, security, prefabricated culverts and transport. **“Although we had to patiently wait for the availability of funds, we are nevertheless excited that our rural town and its dwellers can now claim the fruits of democracy like others in other areas. Road means a lot to any community,”** said Mr. Simon Mbatha, a resident of Daggakraal.

Cost Of Nature Bearing On The Department As Rehabilitation Of Delmas Sinkhole Nears Completion

Writer : Mpho Gabashane

Mpumalanga is the energy hub of the country as it houses most of the energy producing industries in the province such as Sasol, Coalmines and Power stations. Whilst this would be a welcomed situation, the reality is that development comes with unintended consequences, many with huge financial burden on responsible government agencies. The province is not only prone to seasonal floods which erode most of roads infrastructure and cut people from social amenities, but has another elephant in the room with sinkholes developing in former mining areas, most in the high veld.

This is the case with a sinkhole near Delmas, which, when it surfaced on road P29/1, broke down a commonly used road, causing mayhem and frustrations to local people and those using the road to connect to adjacent areas.

The cost of repairs on such unexpected and unplanned projects is not only huge, but set back the department on its effort to reach out to communities in dire need of road infrastructure, as budgets have to be reprioritised to factor this inevitable repairs. The reconstruction of the sinkhole, costing R50, 6 million, began in March 2018 and due to unforeseen

circumstances, revised for completion from November 2019 to end of January 2020. The project proved a bit difficult as it consisted of highly specialised works. In this regard, it became rather difficult to achieve the targets for local expenditure, as most materials used could not be sourced locally. Further than this, discovery of additional hard materials, because of the nature of the sinkhole proved a challenge.

The scope of work included; rehabilitation of subsistence (sinkhole) by deep excavation of loose material and re-compaction using dynamic compaction and grouting of cavities, reconstruction of 200m road section to repair damaged roadway including lined drains and berm/channel combination. In the process,

“More than 20 job opportunities were created for local people and local SMMEs benefited immensely for provision of services,” such as fencing, plant hire, security and transport.

Modernisation Of Taxi Industry At Forefront Of Discussions At Indaba

Writer : Mpho Gabashane

The taxi owners, under the banner of Mpumalanga Provincial Taxi Council, and drawn from different associations converged at Olifants River Lodge in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality on the 26th and 27th of February 2020 for a two days Provincial Taxi Indaba. The Indaba was aimed at addressing pertinent issues affecting the industry. Delegates and stakeholders including the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport were participants to support this worthy initiative. The Chief Director for Public Transport, Mr. Matsemela Moloi delivered a keynote address, on behalf of MEC Gillion Mashego.

In his address, Mr. Moloi did not mince his words as he blasted on operators who continue to abuse women based on their dress codes, “Stop attacking women because of the way they dress, the problem is not with them but you, this barbaric act must come to an end”, “Not in my name” he stressed. He further commended the industry for the positive contribution it is making towards curbing road fatalities **“We are very proud that programmes such as Hlokomela road awareness campaign by South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) are yielding some positive spinoffs, as accidents on minibus taxis are minimal. Government will continue to invest and ensure that the industry is formalized,”** he assured delegates. He praised SANTACO for its contribution towards empowering youth and government.

The Taxi industry continue to be the backbone of commuter transport not only in the province but also in the country as a whole. According to the 2015 National

House Travel Survey, taxis were the most frequently used mode of public transport in Mpumalanga. More than three quarters (78, 4%) of households used taxis; 28, 7% used buses. The survey further shows that the main mode of travel to work in Mpumalanga is public transport. It records that more than 40% of workers (41, 3%) used public transport (buses and taxis) as their main mode of travel to work. It reveals that majority of day-trippers used taxis (52, 6%), followed by those who used cars/bakkies/trucks as passengers (14, 7%), while 14, 8% of travelers walked all the way to their destinations. More than half of overnight trips were made using taxis (54, 4%) as the mode of travel, followed by those who travelled by car/bakkie/truck as passengers (19, 9%) to reach their main destination. Alongside the Indaba, 16 graduates received certificates on advance and professional driving after a 12-month internship programme. Ms Pinky Sindane from Ndlazatshe is one of the graduates, explained that the internship has bolstered her qualification and career, as she plans to venture into the industry.

The Industry which has been marked by taxi conflict is transforming at a fast pace as modernization, unity, regulation, law enforcement, Public transport funding model, training and customer care were some of the issues discussed during the two days Indaba. One of the delegates from Thathazakho Taxi Association in Mashiding explained that transformation is key for the success of the industry **“We need to accept that times are changing and technology is at the forefront of everything and the industry must adapt to these changes”** she stressed.

WHAT IS COVID-19 AND WHAT IS A PANDEMIC

A pandemic is an epidemic of disease that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents, or even worldwide. A widespread endemic disease that is stable in terms of how many people are getting sick from it is not a pandemic. Further, flu pandemic generally exclude recurrences of seasonal flu. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, which may cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The spread of this virus causes the disease known as COVID-19 which is now defined as a global pandemic. The virus was first identified in China, and is now affecting many countries around the world.

BASIC PROTECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE NEW CORONAVIRUS

Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO website and through your national and local public health authority. Most people who become infected experience mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for others. Take care of your health and protect others by doing the following:

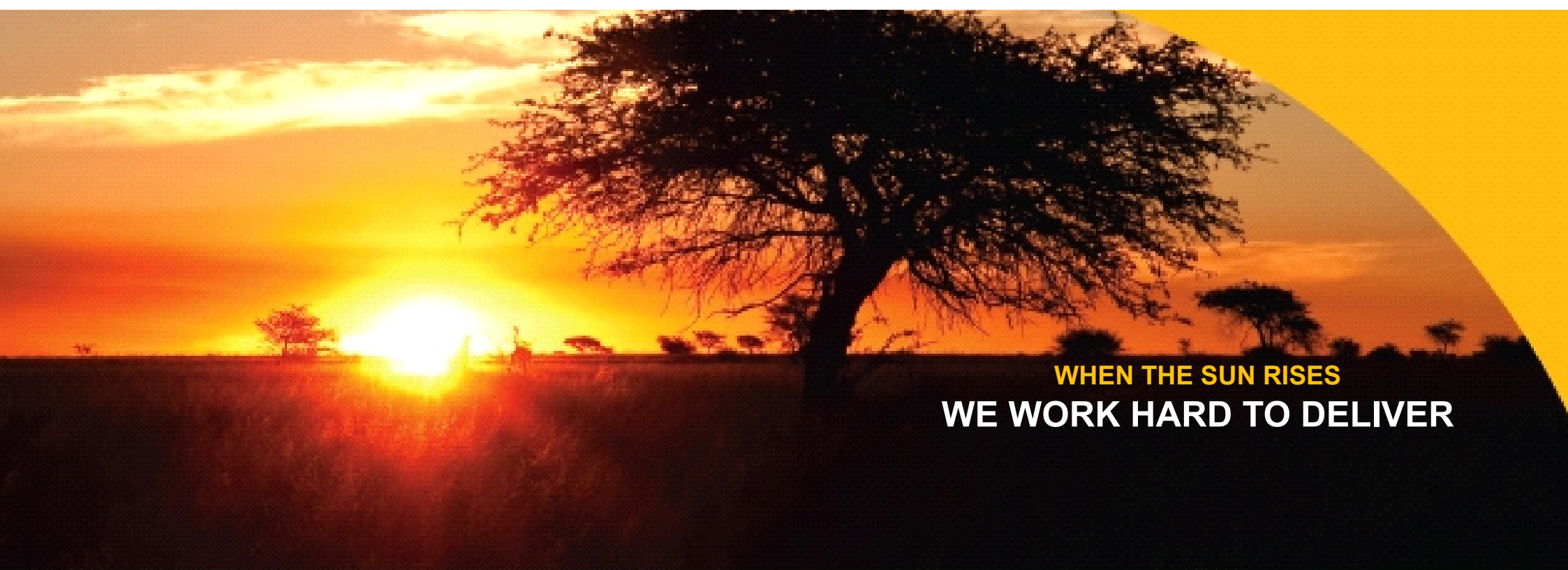
- (i) **Wash your hands regularly**
Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- (ii) **Maintain a good distance**
Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. Why? When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth, which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.
- (iii) **Avoid touching your face**
Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
- (iv) **Practice respiratory hygiene**
Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
- (v) **Stay home when you are unwell**
Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority. Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
- (vi) **Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19**
Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer on how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area. They are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.

PROTECTION MEASURES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE IN OR HAVE RECENTLY VISITED (PAST 14 DAYS) AREAS WHERE COVID-19 IS SPREADING

- (i) Follow the guidance outlined above.
- (ii) Stay at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose, until you recover. Why? Avoiding contact with others and visits to medical facilities will allow these facilities to operate more effectively and help protect you and others from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- (iii) If you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel or contact with travelers. Why? Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also help to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, NO. 43107 18 MARCH 2020

1. **Government released the regulations to give effect to the measures put in place to fight the pandemic.**
Release of Resources:
 1. The Department of Defense must, for the duration of the declared national state of disaster, within its available resources:
 - (a) Release and mobilise any available resources, including human resources, stores, equipment, ships, aircraft platforms, vehicles and facilities; and
 - (b) Ensure the delivery of essential services, as may be required, to prevent, limit, contain, combat and manage the spread of COVID-19.
 2. National organs of state must, within their available resources release their personnel for the rendering of emergency services, as contemplated in section 27(2)(b) of the Act.
 3. Institutions within national, provincial and local government must make resources, other than funding, available to implement these Regulations or directions issued in terms of section 27(2) of the Act regarding the national state of disaster.
 4. Institutions within national, provincial and local government must:
 - (a) make funding available; and
 - (b) as far as possible, without affecting service delivery in relation to the realisation of the rights contemplated in sections 26 to 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, shift funding, within its budget to implement these Regulations or directions issued in terms of section 27(2) of the Act, regarding the national state of disaster.
 5. The National Treasury and provincial treasuries must take the necessary steps in terms of applicable legislation to implement these Regulations or directions issued in terms of section 27(2) of the Act, in relation to the national state of disaster.
 6. Donor funding received to assist with the national state of disaster must be:
 - (a) paid into the Reconstruction and Development Fund, established by the Reconstruction and Development Fund Act, 1994 (Act No. 7 of 1994), and
 - (b) used strictly for purposes of implementing these Regulations and directions issued in terms of section 27(2) of the Act in relation to the national state of disaster.
2. **Prevention and Prohibition of Gatherings.**
In order to contain the spread of COVID-19, a gathering is prohibited.
3. **Refusal of Medical Examination, Prophylaxis, Treatment, Isolation And Quarantine.**
No person who has been clinically, or by a laboratory, confirmed as having COVID-19, who is suspected of having contracted COVID-19, or who has been in contact with a person, who is a carrier of COVID-19, may refuse consent to an enforcement officer for:
 - (a) submission of that person to a medical examination, including but not limited to the taking of any bodily sample by a person authorised in law to do so;
 - (b) admission of that person to a health establishment or a quarantine or isolation site.



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

4

**PRECAUTIONS
TO FOLLOW
TO AVOID
BEING
INFECTED**

1

WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands with soap thoroughly. Wash the back of your hands, between the fingers and under the nails. Always wash your hands with soap before you eat and after being out in the public.

3

DO NOT SHARE FOOD AND UTENSILS

Bacteria can be transmitted to knives, forks, spoons and straws. Only use clean utensils and do not share drinks. Always clean your hands before eating.

2

GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE

Cover your mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your face with dirty hands at all times. If you have to, be sure to wash your hands with soap thoroughly first.

4

SEE A DOCTOR IF YOU ARE UNWELL

Typical symptoms include coughing, running nose, fever and shortness of breath. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, seek medical attention promptly. Call the clinic of doctor ahead of your visit and inform the of your symptoms and travel history.

24HR NICD HOTLINE 0800 029 999

REMAIN VIGILANT AND ADOPT PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES
The situation is evolving, check updates on www.health.gov.za and www.nicd.ac.za

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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME