



public works,
roads & transport

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Departmental Newsletter

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Issue 45



Minister Mbalula Bids Farewell with A Multi Million Rand 'Interchange' Legacy

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Perspective



Karino Interchange, A Signet of Service Delivery

“The Karino Interchange project on the N4 which provides a link between Mbombela, KaNyamazane, N4 and access to the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport has also been completed and is operational,”

that was a jubilant expression by Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane during the 2023 State of the Province Address (SOPA).

The former Minister of Transport, Mr Fikile Mbalula accompanied by MEC Mandla Ndlovu, HOD Charles Morolo and various dignitaries graced the occasion for the official opening of Karino Interchange on the 4th of November 2022. “Service delivery par excellence,” is how the Minister described the R375 million project on the N4 in the City of Mbombela which has economically benefited local SMMEs and the workers alike. He said the purpose is to develop the main economic artery that connects South Africa with Mozambique which plays a critical role as far as tourism and freight are concerned. He also indicated that Government’s strategic goal is to reduce traffic volume in terms of trucks in favour of rail.

The South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) which is the implementing agency, commenced with the project in 2019 and completed in 2022. The interchange required an 80 meter long bridge which took about 1200 cubes of concrete over two days. Furthermore, the construction included a four kilometre dual carriage. About 276 blasting of the rock surface were conducted and more than 350 000 cubes of rocks were excavated. The amount of work, afforded business and work opportunities to over 44 local SMMEs and 843 labourers.

While the interchange has brought relief to traffic congestion, perhaps it will also soothe the pain of those who lost their loved ones along that stretch of the road. Unlike the newly built interchange, the previous intersection had become a death trap to unsuspecting drivers. Reckless motorists took advantage of the openness of the road without being considerate of other road users. As a result, many innocent lives met their fate due to either impatience or speeding of others.

MEC Mandla Ndlovu reiterated the call to all road users to obey the rules of the road while being cautious of the errors of others. ***“We are not opening a floodgate of carnage but this is the democratic Government’s response to better the lives of its citizens. Please let us take necessary precautionary measures whenever we are on the road. We all have a responsibility to use the road in a manner that guarantees the safety of others including ourselves,”*** pleaded MEC Ndlovu.

During her State of the Province Address, the Premier revealed that in addition to the Karino interchange, SANRAL is implementing various projects in Mpumalanga, such as the Moloto Road that interconnects Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, the R23 national road in Lekwa District Municipality and the R33 national road which crosses through Mkhondo and Msukaligwa Local Municipalities amongst others.



SERVICE DELIVERY PAR EXCELLENCE: Newly constructed Karino Interchange outside the City of Mbombela near KaNyamazane township is granted a signet stamp of approval by road users.

As the sun rises, we are reminded of the journey laid before us, to make hay while the sun shines. Ours is underpinned by constitutional values to uplift the lives of the citizens of Mpumalanga through *Economic Transformation and Job Creation* amongst the apex priorities of the sixth administration of the democratic Government. This 45th edition of our bulletin is a glimpse of our journey over the past semester, highlighting some of the inroads we have made to accelerate our mandate. It is not an opportunistic platform to beat our own drum but to outline our performance; embrace constructive criticism; take our people into confidence and harness our effort.

First, we welcome on board the Honourable MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga, Mr Mandla Ndlovu who took over the reigns in October 2022 from *Imbokodo*, Ms Mohita Latchminarain to whom we bid farewell. Like soldiers in the army, our marching orders are to rally behind the Honourable MEC’s vision of creating a *People-Oriented-Government*. For this reason, the MEC has been at the forefront of service delivery since his deployment to the new portfolio. The Department draws much inspiration from his expertise in Cooperative Governance.

We started the semester with a celebration of October Transport Month, which by the way contributed to the reduction of road fatalities by 23.8% in Mpumalanga during the festive season. We continue to engage on robust discussions with the taxi industry, one of our most critical stakeholders, to find common ground on a variety of issues. We remain confident that together we will turn the curve in order to ensure safe, reliable and affordable transport system that is economically beneficial to everyone, especially our commuters.

To complement the above, several transport infrastructure projects are at an advanced stage in various areas to improve our road network. This will ensure that public amenities such as schools and clinics are accessible. On that note, efficient and effective execution of our mandate towards client departments in terms of building infrastructure is paramount. For this reason, we completed 102 building and transport infrastructure projects as pronouncement by the Honourable Premier during the State of the Province Address.

Lastly, we bid farewell to Mr Fikile Mbalula and Ms Patricia de Lille, wishing them well on their new responsibilities. We welcome equally seasoned leaders, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga and Mr Sihle Zikalala, as Ministers for Transport as well as Public Works & Infrastructure respectively. Well, the journey continues. Bon voyage.

MC Morolo
Head: Public Works, Roads and Transport

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

R5,4 billion to crank the engine of infrastructure delivery

“Social and economic infrastructure has a direct impact on the economy and investment potential in our communities,” said

Finance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC, Ms Nompumelelo Hlophe during the tabling of the 2023/24 Provincial Budget on the 7th of March 2023 in Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature. The budget is a financial aid in response to the State of the Province Address (SOPA) pronouncements by Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane.

The Department of Public Works Roads and Transport which is the custodian of public transport and infrastructure, has been allocated R5,4 billion (R5 466 783 000) to execute its mandate. According to Treasury, this will include developing and maintaining the road network infrastructure with a specific focus on tourism and coal haulage routes as well as other programmes contributing to economic growth.

MEC Hlophe also highlighted that funds that are added to the baseline include: R20 million each towards bridges in Driekoppies and Emalahleni; R70 million for Renewal Energy focusing on health, administration, and educational sites; R90 million for the Parliamentary Village, and R73 million towards Mkhondo Boarding School.

During SOPA on the 24th of February 2023, the Honourable Premier indicated that R4,294 billion was set aside during the 2022/23 financial year for strategic infrastructure development initiatives to unlock investment and growth.

“We have completed a total number of 102 projects which include both building and transport infrastructure. These projects include 88

Educational facilities; three Health facilities; two Social Development facilities; and one

Library,” Premier explained. She also listed several roads that have since been completed. The bulk of the allocated funds will be injected on outstanding multi-year projects as well as new ones such as road P216/1 from Secunda to Embalenhle and a bridge from Emalahleni City centre leading to Pine Ridge, Clarinet, Siyanqoba and Verena.

Reckless drivers recite Christmas carols behind bars during festive season

Even before the long awaited celebration of Christmas, more than 2000 motorists throughout the country had already greeted the magistrate for various traffic offences, according to statement issued by the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC). Statistics collected by the agency indicated that 2241 motorists were arrested prior to Christmas for drunken driving, speeding, driving without a licence and violation of permits, amongst others.

As the champion of public transport in Mpumalanga, MEC Mandla Ndlovu led various operations across the Province in a bid to ensure safety on the road. **“Those who cannot take care of themselves while on the road during this festive season, for their own sake we will take care of them. We have sufficient prison cells in our Province to keep them safe than to risk casualties of innocent**

lives,” said MEC Ndlovu while addressing law enforcement officials in Standerton during one of the joint law enforcement operations.

During the release of preliminary 2022 festive season statistics on the 17th of January 2023, Minister Mbalula said human factors account for 87% of all road fatalities. These are followed by road and environmental factors at 8%, with vehicle factors at 5%. “We have no doubt that road safety education and awareness remain critical to arrest the carnage,” said the Minister. Mpumalanga improved by 23.8% in terms of road fatalities reduction from 189 to 144. Nationwide, 1 452 people died on the road during 2022 festive season, a reduction of 13.9% from 2021. The message is simple, safety starts with you.





Mpumalanga's rising sun shines on foreign land

The sun has risen, the stage is set, law and order serenades the atmosphere and Mpumalanga is in Free State to salute about one hundred sons and daughters of the soil who successfully completed their Road Traffic Law Enforcement training. The Department together with the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA), Matjhabeng Traffic Academy and Matjhabeng Local Municipality conducted a Pass Out Parade on the 23rd of February 2023 in Welkom where various dignitaries including parents of the students graced the occasion. Matjhabeng, which literally means 'where nations meet' was a befitting place for Mpumalanga to fly the flag of the rising sun high above the sky as the platoons of Transport Inspectorate trainees paraded the streets of the mining town which had become home to the students for the past 15 months of intensive training. The Pass Out Parade showcases both the discipline and competence of the students which they have accumulated during their training. As peace officers, they will be expected to discharge and facilitate law and order in a manner that exhibits these significant traits.

During his keynote address, the Executive Mayor of Matjhabeng Local Municipality, Cllr T.D. Khalipha, said Mpumalanga should take pride of raising a generation of disciplined youth. **"I am proud to indicate that since their arrival in our town, there was never a time where we needed to attend to a case of misconduct. This is evidently reflective the hands that have groomed them. It is proof that they are from disciplined homes and indeed a disciplined Province,"** said the Executive Mayor who also took the opportunity to unpack the economic spin-offs generated by Matjhabeng Traffic Academy to the Municipality. "Although our local economy consists mainly of mining and agriculture, the traffic college is an investment to the municipality. We are happy that the Mpumalanga Government decided to choose Matjhabeng Traffic College while there are other colleges throughout the country. It is a decision that is not only helping to profile our college but is also assisting Matjhabeng in terms of rands and cents. Your presence here has already benefited the local economy," articulated Cllr. Mkhaliphi.

These young men and women from Bohlabela, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala districts in Mpumalanga were recruited as part of Government's long term strategy to equip young people with critical skills in order to combat unemployment. Furthermore, as a custodian of public transport, the Department is in a quest to intensify road safety by ensuring maximum law enforcement. TETA which sponsored the training programme is a strategic partner which has over the years positioned itself as a beacon of excellence in the transport sector. The Department's Acting Deputy Director-General, Mr S.B. Mona, conveyed the Department's gratitude to all stakeholders who made it possible for Mpumalanga's rising sun to shine on foreign land. "Although the MEC could not be here due

to other commitments, he has expressed his appreciation for the unwavering support from all our stakeholders particularly the Province of Free State for accommodating our sons and daughters. Today, Mpumalanga has a pool of soldiers who are ready to be deployed in various areas as duty calls," said Mr Mona.

Mr Bongani Ngwenya and Ms Ntlantla Mgidi from Pienaar and Siyabuswa respectively are amongst the students who graduated with flying colours. Mr Ngwenya who was a designated Captain of the trainees said it was a dream come true to be part of the learnership programme because he always wanted to be a Law Enforcement Officer. The training has presented Ngwenya with an opportunity to put bread on the table. **"I was unemployed when I applied for this learnership and in my family I will be the only one who is employed. I was raised by a single parent which is my mom. This is an opportunity for me to assist her together with my siblings as well as my children,"** he explained.

Speaking to Ms Mgidi from Kammelvriër A. in Siyabuswa, Dr J.S. Moroka Local Municipality, **"I have always admired the work that traffic officers do which is ensuring safe and free flow of traffic to prevent road crashes. I also wanted to be part of the team to ensure that road users including pedestrians use our roads in a safe and orderly manner."** Asked about her personal experience and expertise she accumulated over the 15 month period, Ms Mgidi said, "I have learned how to handle pressure and the demands of being a commander on the road." She further elaborated that working with people from all walks of life comes with the package. As a result, she acquired observation skills to pass good judgment of character, solve complex issues, understand the parameters of the law as well as logic reasoning to make quick decisions.

According to the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), most road accidents and fatalities are a result of human error mostly due to deliberate contravention of the law such as speeding, overloading and drunken driving. These acts necessitate a change of attitude accompanied by tight law enforcement in a form of men and women in uniform. Public transport in particular inflicts more casualties because of the number of occupants per vehicle. A case in point is the recent head-on collision between a bus and a cash-in-transit van on 13 February 2023 which left 20 people dead in Limpopo Province. This was followed by another on 3 March where 21 fatalities were recorded on R573 road. Hopefully, more boots on the road to enforce compliance as regulated by the National Land Transport Act no of 5 of 2009, may help curb the carnage. Without any doubt, these young men and women have their work cut out for them.



sun 'where nations meet'



LEADERSHIP: Executive Mayor, Cllr. T.D. Khalipha (Middle) together with Acting Deputy Director-General, Mr S.B. Mona (Left) and Matjhabeng Municipal Manager, Adv. L. Ngoqo.





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2023 ANNUAL

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Mpumalanga Department
of Public Works, Roads
and Transport

AL CALENDAR

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SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

COSTAL PROVINCES (KZN, EC, WC & NC)

1st Term : 16(18) January - 31 March
2nd Term : 12 April - 23 June
3rd Term : 18 July - 29 September
4th Term : 10 October - 13(15) December

INLAND PROVINCES (FS, GAU, NW, LM & MP)

1st Term : 09(11) January - 31 March
2nd Term : 12 April - 23 June
3rd Term : 18 July - 29 September
4th Term : 10 October - 13(15) December

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day : Sun, 01 Jan
Human Rights Day : Tue, 21 Mar
Good Friday : Fri, 07 Apr
Family Day : Mon, 09 Apr
Freedom Day : Thu, 27 Apr
Workers' Day : Mon, 01 May
Youth Day : Fri, 16 Jun
Women's Day : Wed, 09 Aug
Heritage Day : Sun, 24 Sep
Reconciliation Day : Sat, 16 Dec
Christmas Day : Mon, 25 Dec
Day of Goodwill : Tue, 26 Dec

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DECEMBER



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Nkomazi drills new fountain of knowledge

“Those who do not read, should not lead,”

these are the words articulated by one of South Africa’s leading academics, Professor Tshilidzi Marwala, in his book, *Leading in the 21st Century*. If anything, his sentiment poses a good challenge to the community of Schoemansdal where the Mpumalanga Provincial Government has just completed an R18.6 million state-of-the-art library. Even the *Generation Z* would find it more useful and user-friendly than Facebook and Instagram.

Perhaps, it is time to switch books as Haruki Murakami puts it, “If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking.” Fortunately, the newly built Schoemansdal Community Library offers a wide range of literature and services to benefit everyone. The facility which is under the custodianship of the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR) showcases Government’s commitment to serve delivery. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT) had its work cut out but like many similar projects, it managed to deliver one of the best facilities.

The construction of the library commenced in February 2021 and was completed in December 2022. While there were hurdles encountered along the way due to the Covid-19 pandemic, seemingly the wait was not a waste. Like fine

wine which matures with time, ironically the delays perfected every detail into a sight to behold. This masterpiece features a study hall, computer center, boardroom, kitchen, guardhouse, parking and fencing as well as basic services such as sanitation, water and electricity.

One of Mpumalanga Provincial Government’s apex priorities is *Economic Transformation and Job Creation*. Apart from the utility value derived from public infrastructure development, the Department strives against the triple challenges characterized by poverty, unemployment and inequality. As a result, every project is expected to generate business and work opportunities for the local residents. During the construction of the library, a total of 23 local labourers under the main contractor were able to put bread on the table while 11 SMMEs scooped subcontracting opportunities which further created 59 job opportunities for the locals.

According to DCSR’s 2020/21 Annual Report, the Department is continuously supporting children, youth, women and people living with disabilities when it renders its services. The report states that library material, free Internet and Wi-Fi as well as electronic books amongst others, are appealing to all designated groups in the Province. To date, the DPWRT has implemented numerous library projects throughout the Province including Umjindi, Emthonjeni, Mashishing and Verena libraries.

Road rehabilitation gives panoramic view on town

By Rodney Madalane

The Department has budgeted around R126 million for the upgrading of D4422 access road near Thulamahashe in Bohlabela. The construction of the 5.6 km road started in May 2022 and is scheduled for completion in January 2024.

Initially, the gravel road was dusty and inaccessible during rainy seasons. This was very problematic since connects many villages with critical amenities such as schools, clinics shops and work places.

Amongst the scope of work that is being carried out on the project, is the construction of bypass, replacement of existing pipe culverts, construction of concrete edge beams and kerbs, installation of block pavings for side walks and bus stops. The upgrading of the road will also see the construction of a 106 meter bridge, road markings and the installation of signage.

Currently, the project has afforded work opportunities to 48 youth, 30 women and two people living with disabilities. The project is expected to absorb a total of 120 women, 128 youth and two people living with disabilities in the near future.

Another project that has been implemented excellently by the Department is the emergency repairs on P57/2 (R533)

road between Graskop and Bushbuckridge in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality.

The scope of work for this project consisted of rockfall mitigation works (mesh drapery of exposed rock faces) as well as general maintenance of the road sections in the form of pothole and guardrails repairs as well as installation of road signs and markings.

According to the Project Leader, Mr Ngoni Chimusoro, there were rock deposits on a section of the P57/2 road that have been posing a threat to road users. If left unattended, this had a potential to cause serious injuries or fatalities especially at night where vision is limited.

“To avoid future damages or even loss of life due to severe rockfall events, it was therefore decided to protect several exposed rock faces along the route,” highlighted Mr. Chimusoro

The project started in January 2022 and completed in February 2023 at a cost of R33.5 million. At least 20 people were employed during the implementation of the project, the number includes youth and women.



A new lease of life for

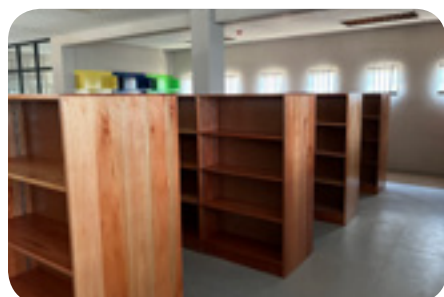
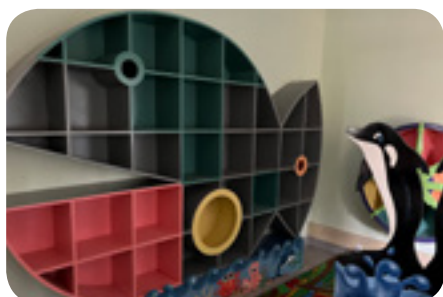
“The most effective and sustainable way to build an economy is to equip people with the skills and know-how to drive it. We have therefore been working to strengthen the link between the skills that we develop and the skills the workplace needs,” explained President Cyril Ramaphosa during the 2023 State of the National Address.

Responding to the President’s marching orders, the Department has embarked on a recruitment drive to empower young people in Mpumalanga with entrepreneurial and technical skills in the built environment. A total of 350 qualifying young men and women stand a chance to participate in the National Youth Service programme which will offer a monthly stipend of R4300. This training will equip the young minds with artisan skills to required in building maintenance of various State facilities. This will entail performance of basic competency in respective trades such as landscaping,

painting, bricklaying, plastering, tiling, carpentry, plumbing and electrical works.

Briefing sessions will be held throughout the Province. Unemployed young people who are between 18 and 35 years of age, with a minimum qualification of Grade 12 or equivalent, residing in Mpumalanga and interest in the built environment, had an opportunity to apply. As an affirmative action employer, the Department is committed to providing equal opportunities by promoting representivity in terms of race, gender and disability when filling vacant positions. As a result, women and people with disabilities have been encouraged to apply.

Indeed, as the sun rises, Mpumalanga dawns with new possibilities. These are not the only efforts championed by the Department. In February 2023, the Department advertised 100 internship opportunities in different professions from Accounting to Engineering. These are viewed as critical to empower young graduates with the necessary experience. Equally important, these young people who are facing multiple socio-economic challenges, are able to put bread on the table. This is another way the Department is making a difference.

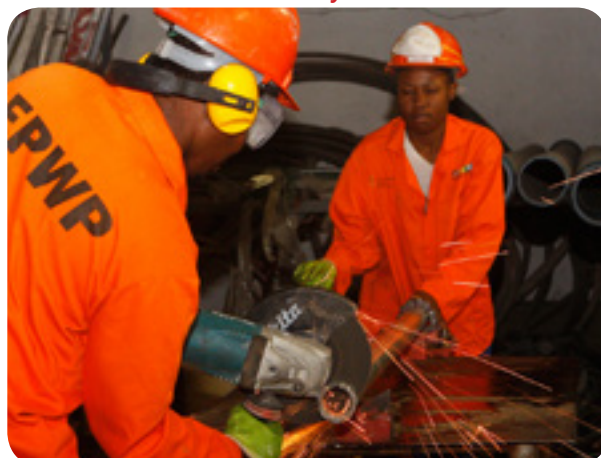


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or unemployed youth

By Nelisile Malambe



Prince H.R. Nkosi primary school rekindles the flame of education



One of the greatest philosophers, Socrates, described education as “the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.” That is probably what Prince HR Nkosi Primary School in Msogwaba, outside the City of Mbombela, represents. The newly built, R56.3 million primary school is a priceless investment to the future leaders of the rural township which will kindle an unquenchable flame of excellence. The project which encountered several delays mostly due to Covid-19 lockdown, serves as a testimony that there is a rainbow after every storm. The long awaited dream has finally come to fruition.

The scope of work included the construction of 24 classrooms, an administration block, laboratory, library, computer centre, 30 toilets, kitchen, sports ground, parking, fencing, water and electricity. During construction, the project was able to generate much needed work opportunities. A total of 46 local labourers comprising of 10 women, 21 youth and 15 men were employed. Today, the school is standing tall, paying homage to Prince H.R. Nkosi but most importantly, paving a way for the little princes and princesses to become kings and queens of their destiny.

“We are determined to ensure that those who enter the basic education system at Grade RR proceed and complete at Grade 12. We are seeing improvement in the number of learners who start grade R and complete matric rising from 59.7 % to 61.2%,” explained Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane during the tabling of the State of the Province Address on the 24th of February 2023 in Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport is charged with a mammoth task to deliver safe, reliable and affordable public infrastructure. Unlike any other Province, Mpumalanga has raised the bar as far as the provision of education infrastructure is concerned. Prince H.R. Primary School is a sample of many projects that are currently being implemented across the Province. These include amongst others, Mkhondo Boarding School in Mkhondo Local Municipality, New Ermelo Primary School in Msukaligwa Local Municipality as well as the refurbishment of Engabezweni Secondary School and Bergland Primary School in Albert Luthuli Local Municipality and City of Mbombela Local Municipality respectively. In addition to this, the Department has been at the forefront of addressing basic services such as water and sanitation in various schools throughout the Province.

'SHOVAKALULA' STILL PEDALING THE WHEEL OF EDUCATION

By Nthabiseng Thabethe

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” these are Madiba’s words which are still echoing in the echelons of academia. The global icon’s philosophy has found expression within the Department’s mission as MEC Mandla Ndlovu donated 217 bicycles to learners in Gert Sibande District as part of Shovakalula Bicycle Programme.

On the 31st of October 2022, MEC Ndlovu visited Khonzakahle Primary School at Breyten in Msukaligwa Local Municipality where he donated 20 bicycles. This is part and parcel of the Department’s mandate to ensure the provision of safe, reliable and efficient scholar transport services to qualifying learners. Shavakalula specifically focuses on learners who are traveling to school between two and five kilometers. This helps to ensure that the learners are not subjected to exhaustion. Instead, they are able to arrive at school on time, with less effort and can concentrate on their studies.

Prior to the school visit, the MEC conducted an inspection of scholar transport vehicles in Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality early in the morning on the same day. Contrary to Shavakalula, scholar transport assists learners who are traveling above five kilometres per trip to the nearest school.

Since safety is non-negotiable, the Department has deployed Transport Inspectors through out the Province to monitor compliance of transport operators. As the captain of vessel, MEC Ndlovu wanted to get a first hand experience of the joys and challenges encountered by learners everyday. As a result, during the trip from Carolina to Breyten, the MEC had a fruitful interaction with the learners.

Boy Mathebula, one of the beneficiaries of Shovakalula, expressed his excitement that the days of walking long distance to school are over. **“From now on I will be able to be at school on time and learn without feeling sleepy or tired. I am excited with my new bicycle, thank you very much MEC,”** said Mathebula with a bright smile.

Since learners had to return to classes and the day was just getting started, the MEC proceeded to Breyten’s R36 road the Department conducted a Joint Law Enforcement. This initiative formed part of the October Transport Month campaign. The MEC vowed to intensify law enforcement which evidently paid dividends during the festive season as Mpumalanga managed to reduce road fatalities by over 23%.

State’s Handyman rolls



THUMBS UP: MEC Bonakele Majuba; Executive Mayor, Cllr Sibongile Makhulu and Ms Mafalda Kumalo giving thumbs up for the work in progress



Engabezweni Refurbishment stands out from the crowd

By Dimakatso Matentshi

Lack of public infrastructure in poor communities negatively affects the lives of local residents. The Department has been tasked with the provision of these critical socio-economic assets in the Province. One of these endeavors is the refurbishment of Engabezweni Secondary School at Emanzana, in Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality.

The refurbishment process started in September 2022 and is expected to end in May 2023. The eight month project has injected some economic benefits to local communities with the employment of at least eighteen (18) residents comprising of women and youth making up the majority. The scope of work includes renovation of 19 classrooms and administration block as well as the construction of Enviro-loo ablution facilities.

It is no secret that Mpumalanga is making inroads in closing the gap

between the rich and the poor as far as access to quality basic education is concerned. The Department of Basic Education’s (DBE) statistics, released in 2015, highlighted that out of the 23 589 public ordinary schools in the country, 77% did not have stocked libraries, 86% had no laboratory facilities, and 5 225 had no reliable water supply. A total of 913 schools had no electricity, and a further 2 854 had to make do with unreliable power supply.

Despite a seemingly gloomy picture, much progress has been made especially in Mpumalanga which where education is the apex priority. Since 2015 hundreds of education facilities have been constructed, renovated and upgraded. These include boarding schools, primary and secondary schools, Early Childhood Development centres (ECDs) and well as the provision of basic services such as sanitation, water and sanitation.



up the sleeves



she-Mazibuko; MEC
ess.



MEC Mandla Ndlovu and MEC for Bonakele Majuba together with the Executive Mayor of the City of Mbombela Local Municipality, Cllr Sibongile Makushe-Mazibuko conducted a school Infrastructure oversight visit on the 15th of November 2022 in the City of Mbombela where the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT) is busy with upgrades and renovations of Laerskool Nelspruit, Bergland Laerskool, Nelspruit Primary and Laerskool Laeveld.

The Department is currently building 40 additional classes in the mentioned four schools to address overcrowding. This has been deemed critical since the city is growing and local public schools are no longer able to accommodate learners residing within.

The MECs and the Executive Mayor were impressed about the progress made thus far. They also emphasized that the contractors must finish the projects on time so that learning and teaching can resume at full scale without hindrances. After the visits the MECs met with principals and school governing bodies from the four schools under Mbombela Circuit to discuss school infrastructure

By Bongani Dhlamini
challenges and possible solutions.

On other news, MEC Mandla Ndlovu together with the Acting Premier, Ms Busi Shiba visited schools and clinics that were badly damaged by the recent heavy rains that left most parts of Mpumalanga submerged in water.

The Acting Premier and MEC visited amongst others, Inkunzi Secondary School at Numbi, Lundanda Primary School, and Siphumelele Secondary School at Mahushu as well as Sandriver Clinic at Nkambeni.

The DPWRT was tasked to assist the Department of Education with assessment of the damage to speedily address the situation. The MEC said contractors would start immediately to fix all the damages so that when schools re-open in January 2023, there would be no challenges. *"This includes a number of roads that have been affected throughout the Province. We have a huge responsibility placed on our shoulders. However, we are equal to the task,"* said MEC Ndlovu.



TRUCKING INTERACTION: MEC Mandla Ndlovu (Middle) together with Ms Mary Phadi (Left) from TASA interacting with truck drivers during a road safety campaign at Middelburg Weigh Bridge focusing on freight transport.

MEC puts trucking safety under the microscope

By Samukelisiwe Lekhuleni

South Africa has recently experienced an influx of road accidents and fatalities involving freight transport vehicles particularly trucks. One such accident that is still an unerasable tragic memory is the Pongola carnage on N2 road where an articulated truck collided with a bakkie transporting school learners. 20 young lives were lost including two adults. An investigation by the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) revealed that the driver of the truck had seriously transgressed the law by amongst other things overtaking on a barrier line and driving about a kilometer across the opposite direction lane. This reckless behaviour is an indictment to economic spin-offs facilitated by the trucking industry.

During the festive season, MEC Mandla Ndlovu led a safety awareness campaign accompanied by the Executive Mayors of Steve Tshwete and Nkangala District municipalities, Cllr Mhlonishwa Masilela and Cllr Leah Mabuza respectively. The President of the Truckers Association of South Africa (TASA), Ms Mary Phadi was also part of the Joint Law Enforcement operation which was held at Middelburg Weigh Bridge in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. The operation was attended by various stakeholders such as Labour; Home Affairs and Community Safety, Security and Liaison departments as well as the South African Police Service (SAPS).

The main purpose was to ensure that truck drivers adhere to the rules of the road, understand their responsibilities and are physically and mentally fit to be on the road. Equally important was the road worthiness of vehicles since this plays a major roles in accidents especially such heavy vehicles. The former Minister of Transport, Mr Fikile Mbalula together with all MECs who are responsible for transport in the nine provinces took a decision to

vigorously engage with the freight industry in a bid to ensure compliance with relevant transport and traffic regulations or face the fire.

"We take personal interest about the safety of our people on the road. We cannot allow a situation where reckless drivers become law unto themselves without repercussions. We understand the pressure that most truck drivers find themselves in, hence we are here together with various stakeholders to listen to our fellow brothers and sisters who spend their time behind the wheel. So that our response and intervention is holistic for the benefit of everyone," said the MEC

who also visited the Middelburg Toll Plaza where he interacted with road users.

MEN STAND AGAINST THE SCOURGE OF GBV

By Muzi Maseko

**STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**



According to the South African Police Service (SAPS) 2021/22 Crime Statistics Report, one in five women (21%) had experienced physical violence by a partner while perpetrators take such acts as a norm. Gender Based Violence (GBV) and femicide remains a deep rooted problem in South Africa and reinforces gender inequality. In support of eradicating the scourge of GBV femicide, men within the Department joined forces with other GBV activists to condemn acts of violence against women and children during Men's Forum session held in Middelburg, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality on the 8th of December 2023.

During the session, speakers from various institutions shared information with the audience on a variety of subject matters on how to avoid domestic, physical and intimate violence as well as psychological and emotional abuse. One of the attendees, Mr Mashaya Mahlalela, voiced his concerns about

how men find it difficult to express their emotions. *"Let us avoid unnecessary depression and other health issues by expressing our emotions to our families, friends and colleagues if there are matters that are bothering us. The notion that 'Indoda ayikhali' (a man does not cry) is killing our men species as most are deeply wounded but cannot express their emotions due to this statement. The notion is the source of the problem resulting in men ventilating their anger towards women and children,"* he said.

Men were encouraged to work together with police, prosecutors and courts to ensure that those who hurt and abuse others are arrested and convicted. "Report all cases of rape, sexual assault or any form of violence to a local police station or call the toll-free Crime Stop number: 086 00 10111" said Mahlalela. GBV does not discriminate. Any person of any race, age, gender or religion can be a victim or perpetrator of GBV. Men were encouraged to join the movement to end gender based violence and femicide.



WHEN THE SUN RISES IT UNFOLDS SERVICE DELIVERY

BATHO PELE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Public Servants Rolling Up Sleeves To Spring Clean Service Delivery Points

1 CONSULTATION

All stakeholders should be consulted on the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided in order to determine the needs and expectations of the end users. Citizens can be consulted through the following:

- Customer surveys
- Campaigns
- Isimbizo
- Workshops

2 SERVICE STANDARDS

Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect

- Service charters
- Strategic plans
- Booklets with standards
- Service level agreements

3 ENSURING COURTESY

Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration e.g. tools, measurements & systems put in place to effect customer care - customer care units & staff

- Right attitude!!

4 ACCESS

All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled, e.g.

- Decentralized offices (MPCC, one stop shops etc)
- Extended business hours
- Use of indigenous languages and sign language
- Service charters displayed
- Improved service delivery to physically, socially and culturally disadvantaged persons (including infrastructure)
- Signage must be clear and helpful
- All frontline staff should wear name tags

5 INFORMATION

Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive e.g.

- Braille and functional sign language, help desks, brochures, posters, press information to be available at service points, in various official languages
- Weekly newsletters
- Frontline staff training
- Induction training is made compulsory to all new employees

6 OPENNESS & TRANSPARENCY

Citizens should be told how departments are run, how much they cost and who is in charge. The Citizen should know who the Head of the Unit is. The management must be transparent and open to all staff members, e.g.

- Appointment circulars
- Regular staff meetings with Management must be encouraged

7 REDRESS

Establish a mechanism for recording any public dissatisfaction e.g.

- Toll-free number, suggestion boxes & customer satisfaction questionnaires
- Each Unit must have a complaints handling system in place
- Staff must be trained to handle complaints fast & efficiently

8 VALUE FOR MONEY

Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money e.g.

- The use of expenditure controls, improved internal controls (e.g. private use of phones, budget reviews)
- Costs per unit of services delivered

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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME