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MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



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Issue 16

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“Getting Mpumalanga To Work”



Editorial Comment



The year 2013 has finally come to an end. What a year it has been! There were many milestones and achievements witnessed during this year. The @ Work team was always on site and criss crossing the Province to capture those moments. New roads were surfaced and constructed. Public Transport activities were intensified. State of the art health infrastructure and schools were constructed. The administration team made sure that they supported all the programs in order to optimally utilize the financial and human resources.

MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu and the HOD, Mr Kgopana Mohlasedi continued to give the department political and administrative guidance. However, without taking anything from the progress and the sterling work of management and staff, it was also a tumultuous year as many people in the province are still leaving in squalor conditions, without access to roads, clinics, schools, etc. Some are still subjected to harsh realities of unreliable and unsafe public transport. As we take stock of all the achievements and challenges, we need to join hands with the communities, private sector and walk side by side in improving the social ills.

Sadly we closed the year with the passing on of one of the greatest leader of the World, Dr Nelson Mandela, Father of our Nation. The World almost came to a standstill as leaders and heads of states graced our soil to bid farewell to the greatest statesman the World has ever seen. As a Department family we join the rest of the World to pray for his soul to rest in peace. We commit to take his legacy to greater heights and do even more to improve the lives of the people.

A NEW LIFELINE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



From left: MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu; Ms Nora Fakude-Nkuna, First lady Ms Nompumelelo Zuma and Deputy Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga.

The Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport in partnership with the National Department of Transport and BUSCOR PTY (LTD) have reached a milestone with the launch of the first kind of its kind; buses for people with disabilities.

On Friday the 11th of October 2013, MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu was joined by South Africa's first lady, Nompumelelo Zuma; the Deputy Minister of Transport, Sindisiwe Chikunga and BUSCOR (PTY) LTD Executive Chairperson, Nora Fakude-Nkuna where they together launched the buses.

The day started in the early hours of the morning in Hazyview, about 60 kilometers outside of Nelspruit where they boarded a bus with commuters to Nelspruit. This was

aimed at allowing the first lady, the Deputy Minister and MEC together with BUSCOR management to interact with passengers in order to get a first hand experience on their everyday plight. This was also their endeavour to assess the state of public transport in the country.

The executives spoke to a few passengers while on the bus about the state of transport. **"Deputy Minister and MEC, we appreciate your presence and as you can see, everything is in order with regard to the service we receive from BUSCOR. We hope that you will continue to do this more often as it gives us confidence in the public transport,"** said Stella Maluka who boards a bus everyday from Hazyview to Nelspruit where she works.

After boarding the bus, the entourage attended a Law Enforcement Operation in Nelspruit. The operation was conducted

together with the South African Police Services, Home Affairs and the South African Revenue Services Customs division. During the operation 750 vehicles were stopped and searched. Two (2) public transport vehicles were discontinued after it was found that they are not roadworthy, Two (2) were impounded, 193 goods were confiscated and 29



Lindi Sibiya is lifted into the bus.

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Should you wish to comment on this newsletter or share your views with the readers of @Work, you can e-mail your views or comments to the e-mail below:

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Talk shows

Tune in on the following radio stations every Tuesday fortnightly:
LIGWALAGWALA FM : 19H45 – 20H00
IKWEKWEZI FM : 19H15 – 19H30

Disclaimer

Although care has been taken to verify the accuracy of information, the editorial team extends sincere apologies for any inaccuracies

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illegal immigrants were arrested and detained.

The entourage then left for the main event at BUSCOR parking ground in Nelspruit where the buses for people with disabilities were launched. The main event was also attended by a representative from the Office for the Status of Disabled People, Mr. Robert Masambo and Councilors from the Mbombela Local and Ehlanzeni District Municipalities.

Four (4) buses that cater for people with disabilities were launched. Two of the buses flip open from the side and a stretcher comes out and a disabled person who uses a wheel chair is lifted up and delivered into the bus where belts are then strapped on the wheel chair to make it stable as the bus moves. The other two buses are able to kneel in the front for elderly people and those who are heavily pregnant to be able to board the bus easily.

Delivering her keynote address after being introduced by MEC Mahlangu, The Deputy Minister of Transport, Sindisiwe



(purple dress) MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu and Deputy Minister of Transport Sindisiwe Chikunga (green dress) in a bus.

Chikunga applauded BUSCOR for their commitment in accommodating people with disabilities. *"Today marks a very important day for our people. We have seen our people with disabilities suffer when they have to go to work and in various areas because they are not catered for in the transport industry. Some are still struggling even in their work place to move around, but today BUSCOR has set a good example on what needs to be done. This milestone of having transportation that accommodates people with disabilities must be cascaded to all types of transport*

so that our country can be a better place. As government we are still going to engage various transport companies so that we see what we can do to lend a helping hand to cater for people with disabilities in the transport sector," said Deputy Minister Chikunga.

The Executive Chairperson of BUSCOR Ms Nora Fakude - Nkuna said "The launch of the buses that accommodates people with disabilities is a response to the call made by people with disabilities

during President Jacob Zuma's Siyahlola campaign in the province where he came to listen to people with disabilities. " After MEC Mahlangu persuaded us to do something on our mode of transport to accommodate people with disabilities we decided to act. We are launching four (4) buses for now and we are looking into expanding the number of buses later. Our people are being carried into our buses like bags of mealie -meal and we as BUSCOR are saying enough is enough, hence the launch today"

One of the people with disabilities who attended the launch, Ms Lindi Sibiya, could not hold back her excitement when it was demonstrated to the public how the buses ferry people with disabilities. She smiled while being lifted into the bus. "I am so excited because this is my first experience and that I am the first person to get into the bus in this manner. I hope that many people who are disabled like me will find the experience helpful because it is obvious that the initiative will really help our people" she concluded.

QUICK ACTION KEEPS COMMUNITY SMILING

During the month of June this year, Mpumalanga Public Works, Roads and Transport, MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu conducted a sod turning ceremony to pave a way for the rehabilitation of road D3928 from the R40 junction in Greenvalley to Morolo Village in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality within Ehlanzeni District. Five months after the ceremony, the R66.9 million project is on track.



Construction work is underway along the Greenvalley to Morolo road.

The rehabilitation of the 6.8 kilometre road started in May 2013 and is expected to be completed in April

2014. Currently, there are 35 people who are employed on site. Out of the total number, three are adult males and five are adult women. The others are the youth with 13 males and 14 females. More community members are expected to benefit in terms of employment as the project continues.

Previously, the road was not accessible especially during rainy seasons preventing the community from accessing basic services such as schools, shopping centres, graveyards and health care centres.

Nelsie Khoza is one of the teachers at Reamogetwe Crèche in the village. She expressed her joy about the construction of the road. "I am so happy! The gravel road was a health hazard for our kids since the crèche is right next to the road. We waited too long for the



Construction workers busy with the construction of one of the bridges along the road.

implementation of the project. We thank the Department for listening to our cries and we are looking forward to a good road at the end," added Khoza.

Another community member who was also grateful about the project is a Grade eight learner; Labona Morema who attends school at Maphutha High

School. She said she will enjoy going to school once the road is tarred.

In February 2013 thunderstorm washed away a bridge along the road which also presented a huge challenge to the community. The project scope includes amongst others two big culverts to be constructed.

CHRISTMAS CAME EARLY FOR THREE FAMILIES



Premier Mabuza and MEC Mahlangu officially handing over a new house to Mtshali family.



Premier, MEC and other dignitaries taking a tour inside of the donated houses.

Christmas came early for three (3) families from the Dipaleseng Local Municipality. The Thwala, Sibaya and the Mtshali families were each handed a fully furnished house that has been donated by the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport after MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu requested assistance from a few good Samaritans. The official handover of the houses took place on Saturday, the 23rd of November 2013 in Balfour where the Honourable Premier of Mpumalanga, Mr David Mabuza officially handed over the houses to the families together with the Deputy Minister of Transport, Sindisiwe Chikunga.

Premier Mabuza who delivered the keynote address said, ***“What we have done here is an example that as government we prioritize people’s needs. Working together with our communities we can change people’s lives for the better.”*** The Premier further thanked all the business people who assisted in constructing the houses.

One of the beneficiaries, Gogo Thwala could not hold back her tears when she was officially handed the keys to her new house. “It is the first time I am this happy. From today I will be sleeping in this beautiful house and leave the old shack with everything inside,” said the happy pensioner. Another excited beneficiary is 22 year old Phumzile Mtshali who stays with her sister and her daughter. “I do not have words to express how I feel. From now on I will be able to point with pride and say



BEFORE: The old shack where one of the beneficiaries, Gogo Thwala used to stay .



AFTER: One of the new fully furnished houses donated to Ms Phumzile Mtshali.

this is where I stay” said Phumzile. The three houses have been furnished with a kitchen unit, tables, chairs, stove, fridge, lounge suit as well as beds. The plight of the families prompted the MEC to intervene as she approached local business people to assist in helping the poor families.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS GET RECOGNISED

The community of Acornhoek and surrounding areas at Bohlabela District have benefited from one of Government’s projects. The Department is building a school for children with disabilities called Tsakani Special School.



The school for children with special needs to be finished soon.

The school will consist of an Administration Block, Media Centre, 10 Classrooms, Four (4) workshops, Five (5) toilets, Two (2) garages and a guard house .The project started in February 2013. Over half of the construction work has been completed. The total cost of the whole project is R58 million. Local people have also benefited from the project with almost 400 job opportunities created. The job opportunities consists of 172 Males, 119 Females, Youth 33 and 67 people with disabilities.

Ms Maggie Mashego, a single mother of four children from Buffelshoek said “I am so excited about the government initiative to build this kind of school for us, I have a 10 year old daughter who was born with a disability. It has always been my dream to take her to a special school where she can learn to do something with her hands”. The school is expected to be finished by the end of February 2014.



A foundation of the school under construction.

OLD GOVERNMENT ASSETS A BENEFIT TO THE SOCIETY



Some of the cars that were auctioned by the Department.

Have you ever asked yourself what happens to the assets that are bought for work purposes by government after their life span has lapsed? Well if you do, you should be glad to know that it is put into good use. This is where auctions come into play.

The Department conducts auctions where old government assets which includes amongst others computers, electrical appliances, furniture and vehicles are auctioned to the public and sold to the highest bidder. The Department together with other government Departments in the province conduct quarterly auctions where the assets are sold.

Mr. Dumsane Nkambule who works under Government Motor Transport section (GMT) from the Department of Public works, Roads and Transport is entrusted with the responsibility to facilitate auctions together with the selected committee members. The auction depends on the number of items in the store-rooms of the Department. On the 23rd of October 2013, valuable assets such as office furniture, electrical appliances, computers, printers to car tyres and cars were sold to the

highest bidders at an auction held by the Department in Nelspruit. Regular bidders did not miss the opportunity to purchase cars with the hope to resell at a higher price. Any member of the public including government officials are allowed to take part in the auctions.

Participants are required to put in a cash deposit amount depending on the requirements of the particular auction. This money is used as a registration fee to determine the number of people who will be taking part in the auction. If a person decides to buy an item, the money is included in the total price of the item he/she is purchasing. If a person decides not to buy anything the money is fully refunded. The amount generated is deposited into the Department's bank account which is later transferred to Treasury.



Computers that were auctioned

COMMUNITY EXCITED OVER THE OPENING OF NEW ROAD AND CULVERT BRIDGE



Orange overall: MEC Mahlangu and officials cutting the ribbon to open the D481 Road.

Jubilation and excitement filled the packed marquee tent at Ekulindeni village in the Albert Luthuli Local Municipality when the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga, Dikeledi Mahlangu officially opened the D481 Road and the Steynsdorp Culvert Bridge on Tuesday the 29th of October 2013. She further handed over food parcels to a total of fifty (50) families.

Mr. Steven Moyane is a self employed father of five (5) children. He survives by selling vegetables to the local people of Ekulindeni and Steynsdorp. He has been doing this job for the past 10 years. He is one of the people who were very excited when the construction of the road started three (3) years ago. ***"We used to travel on a gravel road and this really affected our health because the road was very dusty and the costs of maintenance on my bakkie were high due to the bumpy gravel road. I am happy because I now travel smoothly when I move around,"*** He said.

Mr. Moyane said the opening of the Culvert Bridge is a bonus. "I will now spend less on my travel expenses because previously I had to travel a long distance to take my kids to the other side of Steynsdorp since there is a river separating the two communities in the steynsdorp village. Now I will just drop my kids who assist me with selling the

vegetables in a nearby place and they can be able to travel through the bridge to get to the other side of the village to do business.

When delivering her keynote address; MEC Mahlangu thanked the community for their patience during the construction of the road and culvert bridge. "Government expects quality service from contractors, so if they fail to deliver quality work or fail to adhere to the condition of their contract, we will not hesitate to terminate the contract. I am happy because the work has been completed and our community is benefitting" she explained.

The 9,6 km road was built at a tune of more than R59 million during which a total of 229 people were employed. The construction started in May 2010 and completed earlier this year. The steynsdorp bridge has been constructed at a tune of R2.4 million and 19 local people got employed.

In addition, MEC Mahlangu handed over food parcels to impoverished families in the area.

Mrs. Pertunia Zodwa Mathebula, who has been unemployed most of her life thanked the MEC for the food parcel. "I am happy that my family will have something to eat today, because we sometimes sleep on empty stomachs" she smiled.

COMMUNITIES ASK DEPUTY MINISTER TO INTERVENE ON MOLOTO ROAD



MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu together with Deputy Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga shaking hands during the Imbizo.

“A feasibility study is underway to determine the best mode of transport which could address the road carnage at the Moloto road,” said the Deputy Minister of Transport, Lydia Sindisiwe Chikunga during the Transport Imbizo held on the 4th of October 2013 at Moloto village near Kwa-Mhlanga.

The Deputy Minister was addressing the community as well as stakeholders from transport fraternity including delegates from South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) as well as the

bus company; PUTCO. The Imbizo was part of the October Transport Month during which awareness is created to promote public transport. The Deputy Minister responded to questions posed by community members during the Imbizo, where concerns were raised on issues of service delivery.

She explained that government is working tirelessly to ensure that the road carnage on the Moloto road is minimised, hence a task team has been established to conduct the study.

Mr. July Msiza told the audience that the Taxi Council has introduced programmes aimed at training taxi drivers on customer care. “The organisation is aware about the rude behaviour of some of our members and we are addressing the concerns through our training programmes. We are also running campaigns where we advocate road safety,” he added.

MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu also responded to some of the issues raised by the community. **“I want to urge you to work with government so that we address some of the problems you experience, but your contribution is pivotal”** said Mahlangu.

One of the complainants was Mr Joseph Skhosana who lived in the village complained about unroadworthy buses which transport the public on the Moloto road. He also cited the bad attitude of taxi drivers towards commuters. Ms.

Thoko Mtsweni, a 25 year old mother of one who resides in the Moloto area said that they were happy that the National Department of Transport is there to listen to their problems regarding public transport. “We have been having problems with the way taxi drivers are treating us and we are happy that officials from transport are here to address the problems” she said.

The Deputy Minister also made a call for the unemployed graduates within the field of engineering to register with the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) as plans are underway to absorb unemployed Engineering graduate into the maritime industry.

This initiative is in support of the National Growth Path (NGP) to create 5 million job opportunities over the next ten years to reduce unemployment in the country.



A community member raises questions during the Public Transport Imbizo.

MEC GETS HER HANDS DIRTY

The MEC for the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Ms Dikeledi Mahlangu kept her promise made during her Policy and Budget Speech that the Department will improve the condition of the roads in the province.

This was proven during the patching of potholes at the Lembedi Street along the Elukhanyisweni High School and Khayaletu Combined School in Middelburg on the 24th of October 2013. The Department has set aside a total of R10 million towards helping the municipality to maximise basic service.

During her address at the event, MEC Mahlangu reiterated her stance about improving the condition of the roads in the province. ***“As we continue to improve the condition of the road today, we promise to do more in order to ensure the safety of road users and provide quality roads infrastructure in the province. We are aware of the bad conditions***

of the road, but we promise to continue to work together with the municipality to improve the state of the road, despite the limited budget at our disposal” she explained.

Furthermore a donation of ten computers was made to Izodela Community Development Centre. The computers came from a good Samaritan.

The centre was established fourteen years ago, in a bid to improve the education and wellbeing of youth in the area through art and technology. When receiving the computers, the Managing Director of the centre, Mr. Dan Ndlovu was excited that the Department came to their rescue as they were desperately in need of computers. “We have a computer lab where we teach our students computer lessons, but the computers are old and malfunctioning which made it difficult for the learners to learn. So we truly appreciate the donation, as it will



MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu patches potholes.

improve our situation” he stressed. One of the students at the centre, Ms Sipiwe Vilakazi is doing Marketing in Arts. She expressed her joy over the new computers. “We were desperately

looking for computers in our class, as some of the old computers were not working, but that will soon change. The new computers will help us a lot in our studies,” she smiled.

MAHLANGU DEMANDS GOOD QUALITY ROADS

The Highveld part of Mpumalanga Province with Districts such as Nkangala and Gert Sibande is the economic hub of energy generation of South Africa. Whilst this is a positive contribution to the national economy, it has its own unique challenges hence it is a coal haulage area which has a high volume of trucks. In her 2013/ 14 Policy and Budget Speech, MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu pronounced a number of multi-year projects to be implemented by the Department. Amongst the highlighted projects was the rehabilitation of the road D1398 from Arnot Power Station to Hendrina.

The D1398 road from Arnot Power Station to Hendrina is one of the successfully completed projects that were implemented by the Department. During this year's Transport Month, the Community of Hendrina in Kwazamokuhle within the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality witnessed the official hand over of the road. About a thousand community



The completed D1398 road.



MEC congratulates the first driver on the road.



MEC opens the D1398 road.

members attended the event that was graced by MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu, the contractor of the road, representatives from Steve Tshwete Local Municipality and Management of the Department.

One of the locals, Oom Pat Sedibe who was one of the first users of the road after it was officially opened; said he was happy that the road has since been completed. “It was very difficult and risky when travelling on this road. There were very big potholes and it was even worse when it was raining. I witnessed a number of accidents along the road.”

During her key note address at the event of the handing over of the road to the community of Hendrina, the MEC continued to indicate that the Department will strive to ensure that it delivers a good quality infrastructure thus improve the live of the citizens of the Province. “As we showcase our

roads infrastructure projects during this year's Transport Month, we want to guarantee a good product at the end of each project” said MEC Mahlangu. The MEC further made a call to all contractors to deliver a world class and quality service. “As we officially open this road I do not want to see people complaining about poor quality of the road. This must be a guarantee hence a lot of people rely on roads to access various places, services and activities,” said MEC Mahlangu whilst the community applauded to her statement.

The rehabilitation of the twenty six and a half (26 1/2) kilometres project commenced in May 2011 and was completed in May 2013 at a cost of R201 million. The community did not only benefit a new road but also benefited in terms of employment opportunities and skills transfer as the project opened job opportunities to at least 191 community members.

Smile! You are on camera



Sisters doing it themselves.



Check mate.



Siyatentela! Re a itirela! Doing it ourselves.



Taking health seriously.



Women issues tackled.



My Africa My Pride.



Committed to build roads.



Enjoying a friendly chat.



Making health and wellness a part of our lives.



Doing it the right way.

The Glitz And Glamour of Kamoso Awards



We were there.



Power to the women.



Take the lessons from them - they know how.



Cool and collected.



Talk about African beauty.



This is what we call glamorous.



caught on camera.



The aim is not to sweat.



Smile you're on camera.



Could not be left out.

A SIGH OF RELIEF TO THE COMMUNITY OF NTOMBE



MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu (orange overall) opening the bridge with Executive Mayors and Councillors in Ntombe.

The community of Ntombe at Piet Retief in the Mkhondo Local Municipality will now breathe a sigh of relief after MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu officially handed over a foot bridge and two (2) graders during a ceremony held at Ntombe Sport Ground on Tuesday the 22nd of October 2013. MEC Mahlangu together with the Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality, Cllr Meshack Nhlathathi, Executive Mayor of Mkhondo Local Municipality; Cllr Bhekabantu Mtshali, Councillors and the Departmental management visited

the Ntombe village to hand over the more than R5 million foot bridge which has been constructed over a 12 month period.

Gogo Siphesihle Ngubane is a 75 year old grandmother of five (5) who reside in Ntombe. During rainy seasons she used to get worried a lot about the Ntombe River that separates the Ntombe villages. She sometimes missed her pension pay days and her grandchildren used to stay away from school because of the flooded river. "Today will remain a memorable day for me because the days of sufferings

are over. I used to worry what my grandchildren will eat because I could not go and get my pension because when the river is flooded it became dangerous to cross, but now life will be easy" said Gogo Ngubane. The construction of the bridge also created job opportunities. Sizakele Zungu is one of the 18 locals who got employed during the construction of the bridge. "I am happy because despite the short period I worked during the construction, I have gained a lot of skills. I am now selling bricks to locals as a means of surviving, thanks to the Department

of Public Works, Roads and Transport for the opportunity I got. My kids are well taken care of since I am a single parent" said Ms Zungu.

MEC Mahlangu said "We have listened to your cries about the flooded bridge and despite the limited budget we had, we decided to respond to the call. We hope that your lives will be better now". MEC Mahlangu is visiting the area for the second time as she has also donated school uniforms, sanitary towels and built houses for some locals. This was evident as the community of Mkhondo Local Municipality and a school called Moolman, handed over a certificate of appreciation to the MEC through the Executive Mayor of Mkhondo Local Municipality, Cllr Bhekabantu Mtshali.

"MEC I have been sent by the community to extend their appreciation for the wonderful work you have done here and previously. The Community cannot thank you enough for changing their lives for the better. We thank you for the graders as it will assist us a lot in fixing our access roads in the municipality" said Mayor Mtshali as he handed over the certificate to the MEC.

SERVICE DELIVERY FASTTRACKED



MEC Mahlangu (red dress) receiving a key from the service provider.

The MEC for Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Dikeledi Mahlangu left the community of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality smiling when she officially launched the 2013 October Transport month on Tuesday the 1st of October

2013. The launch which took place at Goromane Clinic Visiting Point in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality saw the roll out of 19 scholar transport buses, 5 mini taxis, a yellow fleet for municipal support and the official opening of the Goromane Bridge. The MEC was accompanied by the Acting

Executive Mayor of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, Cllr. Sasekani Manzini and Executive members from the Scholar Transport bus operator. During her keynote address, MEC Mahlangu said, **"We have come to assist the municipality and the community at large to ensure that our roads are in good condition. We are also here to bring scholar transport for our learners because we care about their education. The bridge is one of the key projects which we had to ensure that it is completed so that our people can be able to cross safely. We hope that this will ensure that service delivery is realised and benefits everyone."** After the speech, MEC Mahlangu officially unveiled the scholar transport buses and mini bus taxis for the transportation of the learners in the Bushbuckridge and Thaba Chweu Local Municipalities.

Ten (10) of the buses will transport learners from Lilydale and Hluvukani

in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, five (5) mini taxis and nine (9) buses will transport learners from Lydenburg



MEC Mahlangu opening the Goromane bridge.

in Thaba Chweu Local Municipality. MEC Mahlangu moved on to unveil the yellow fleet for municipal support. The Department purchased a total of eight (8) new graders, four (4) TLB's, eight (8) tipper trucks and four (4) water tankers for municipal support in the four districts which include Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande, Bohlabela and Nkangala Districts.

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The yellow fleet will be distributed within the four districts and each district will have two (2) graders, one (1) TLB, two (2) tipper trucks and one (1) water tanker. She closed the launch by officially cutting a ribbon as a sign

of opening the Goromane Bridge. The construction of the bridge started on the 18th of March 2011 and was completed in May 2012. A total of 68 local people have been employed and the Department spent an amount of

over R78 million in constructing the bridge. The Acting Mayor Cllr Manzini expressed her gratitude for what the Department has done. "We would like to thank MEC Mahlangu for doing such a big job. The yellow fleet and scholar

transport buses will go a long way in ensuring that our people benefit on service delivery. The handover of the bridge is a cherry on top" said Cllr Manzini.

FLOOD DAMAGED BRIDGE RESTORED



Road was closed after floods



P168/1 road after completion



Washed away road after floods

Traffic flow has been restored to normality along the P168/1 road between Ermelo and Lothair in the Gert Sibande District Municipality after the completion of the construction of the culvert bridge. The road was temporarily closed after heavy rains washed away the culvert bridge causing tragic consequence as four (4)

vehicles plummeted into the washed away bridge (culvert) leaving fourteen (14) people dead and some with injuries. This took place on the 12th of December 2012. After the devastation, the Department dispatched a team of assessors to ascertain the extend of the damage. The Department appointed a contractor to investigate the damages, recommended the remedial action in a

bid to rebuild the culvert. The culvert is a pipe or box under a road that carries storm water, thus preventing storm water from running over the road. The Department worked around the clock to complete the construction of the washed away culvert, which took at least five months to complete. The construction started in March 2013 and was completed in August 2013,

which opened job opportunities for at least fifteen (15) people. During the construction phase motorists were diverted onto a bypass route, whilst other motorists used alternative routes. The Department spent more than R8.4 million towards the replacement of the two culverts.

SIYATENTELA PROJECT CHANGING LIVES

The Siyatentela Road Maintenance Project has moved to greater heights. The project addresses the challenges of poverty and also plays a vital role in the routine maintenance of the provincial road network. It also provides ongoing and sustainable work for destitute households and also to empower rural women by providing training on road maintenance and other life skills program.

Since the project has started more than 5512 people have benefited. The programme took a new angle of also including men as it was initially aimed at women only (that includes girl child headed households). It was realised that there are households that are not headed by women yet they have no means of income and therefore those were then included in the policy.

The total number of beneficiaries per district is as follows: Ehlanzeni 1327, Bohlabela 1117, Nkangala 1585 and Gert Sibande 1165. The project has a total number of 996 men and 3081 women in the province. Beneficiaries

are identified through the involvement of community members and councillors who identify and nominate households. The identified households list is then forwarded to the Department for screening of the beneficiaries through individual home investigations and finalize a recommended list. It is important that the household beneficiary is fit, eager and willing to enter into a contract with the Department.

The duration of the contract is fixed for 12 months however the Department may renew the contract for the period of up to five years and make replacements for the beneficiaries who have left the programme. The contract is terminated if the contractor fails to perform his/her obligations to acceptable standards. Beneficiaries' salaries are reviewed every financial year.

One of the beneficiaries is Ms Gugu Mathebula, a married woman, with two kids and she hails from Newskom, Kabokweni. Ms Mathebula works as a Siyatentela Contractor and she is responsible for maintaining the



Putting efforts to ensure that the roads are user friendly are Siyatentela women.

road drainage system consisting of channels, side-drains, mitre drains, dish drains, culverts, manholes, inlets and outlets. She joined the Siyatentela Project in April 2011 after she struggled for a very long time to find a job. Ms Mathebula said she enjoys working in this project and since her employment she is able to maintain her household as she is the only bread winner.

She also said that there were many challenges that came with being a Siyatentela Contractor, which

included, maintaining the road surface in a reasonably smooth and safe condition. Part of her responsibilities as a Contractor include amongst others duties, directing rainwater away from the road surface and filling potholes and improving roadside visibility by periodically cutting of tall grass and small shrubs to a maximum height of 100 millimetres. When asked about her long time goal, Ms Mathebula said she would like to build a house for her children and becoming a Siyatentela Site Contractor Coordinator.

EXPANDING THE EDUCATION SPACE



The Thekwané Secondary School that will bring a sigh of relief to the local children of Kanyamazane and Karino area.

During in the morning in Thekwané South, a small township outside KaNyamazane in Ehlanzeni District, you are welcomed by many learners hitchhiking to nearby schools. This is the struggle that learners are faced with each day every year. They have to travel more than 5km from Thekwané South and Ntokozweni to school. However, their struggle will soon be a thing of the past

with the new construction of Thekwané High School. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport is currently busy with the construction of the new school that started in April 2013. The construction includes twenty eight (28) classrooms, a library, a laboratory, an administration block, a school hall, two computer classes, two kitchens and eight toilets.

Not only will the community of Thekwané South benefit from the construction of the school but 54 people from the community have been employed. They include twelve (12) women of which one of them is disabled. They have also been equipped with skills in pipe laying, steel fixing and building. The school

will not only benefit the community of Thekwané but also nearby communities like Entokozweni and Karino.

The Department has been hard at work with changing the lives of people of Mpumalanga in Ehlanzeni District. Various projects include amongst others, the nearly finished renovation of Mgcobaneni and Schoemansdal Primary Schools. In the two schools the Department is renovating old classrooms whilst constructing additional ones. Some of the projects also include the renovation of Gedlembane Primary School where construction of additional classrooms, a hall and an administration block is taking place.

ENSURING SAFETY ON OUR PUBLIC TRANSPORT



Transport Inspectorate unit doing what they know best.

It was Transport Month again and the transport officers were busy with road blocks to ensure that everyone abide by the rules of the road.

In all the Districts, there were operations which left tongues wagging and empty pockets for those who did not adhere to the law as traffic fines were issued.

On the 8th of October 2013 it was Standerton's turn. The operation was a success as many public transport drivers who did not obey the rules paid dearly. On the 16th October 2013 another operation was conducted in Ermelo.

During the Transport Month the Department issued seven hundred and sixteen (716) summons and impounded six hundred and ninety one (691) vehicles which had to pay fines for their cars to be released.

One motorist whose vehicle was impounded, Mr Sifiso Khoza was spitting fire after he was fined. "I am a father at home and have to provide for my family, tell me how I should provide for my family if I have to cough up the fine fee?" Unfortunately that is how the Department operate. It can never be lenient towards culprits on the road.



LIVING A NEW DREAM. Mr. Ruwel Makhubedu doing what he now enjoys the most.

SHATTERED DREAMS FIND THE LIGHT AGAIN

Mr. Moliko Ruwel transferred to the Acornhoek Cost Centre.

Mr. Makhubedu matriculated at Tladishi Secondary School in 2002 and then continued with his studies at Ekurhuleni East College where he obtained a certificate in Civil Engineering in 2006. "It has always

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been my dream to be an Engineer. My father was a building contractor and I used to assist him with his work during school holidays which inspired me to study Civil Engineering," said Makhubedu.

Unfortunately, in January 2011 Mr Makhubedu's career was cut short after he was injured while playing soccer. "On that fateful day, I was excited about the soccer match and the fact that I would be playing. I did not know that soon after, my dream as an Engineer would be shattered for good," said

Mr. Mahubedu describing the incident which left him without a leg. He later requested to be transferred to work as a Receptionist, because he was not able to perform his duties as an Engineer. "I really enjoy my current position because I get to interact with people on a daily basis. I am also responsible for controlling the daily register, capturing and filling leave forms for officials. The environment allows me to move around freely," elaborated Mr Makhubedu. Mr Makhubedu encourages people to be multi skilled because one cannot predict the future.

Mpumalanga shines at the National Kamoso Awards



The Mpumalanga team that shined at the National Kamoso Awards.

The National Department of Public Works hosted the National Annual Kamoso Awards on the 17th of October 2013 in the Gauteng Province at Emperors Palace. The event was attended by Minister Thulas Nxesi and Mpumalanga MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Ms. Dikeledi Mahlangu and other dignitaries from various provinces. The awards aim to recognise and reward Municipalities, Provinces, Departments and public bodies that have excelled in implementing the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), and in encouraging others to embrace the programme. The awards ceremony serves as a platform to enhance visibility of the EPWP and reinforce its objectives to the broader public.

The national ceremony took place after the successful Mpumalanga Provincial Kamoso Awards which took place on the 2nd of October 2013 at Steve Tshwete Local Municipality which was also attended by Minister Thulas Nxesi. Mpumalanga is the only province that organises the provincial event whereby the winners are selected to participate in the National Awards.

During his keynote address in the National Awards, the Minister of Public Works, Thulas Nxesi said

"Millions of people rely on us for a better life, we therefore want to commit ourselves that more jobs will be created through the EPWP programme. These awards have become the biggest tool to promote the EPWP awards and I commend all the projects that met the requirements of the adjudication process and I want to congratulate the winners".

The Province scooped the following Awards in the National Ceremony, Best Innovative, Best Provincial Project and Best Maintenance Programme.



LEFT: Minister Nxesi and MEC Mahlangu (Red dress) congratulating some of the winners.

OFFICIALS WITH MANY TALENTS



The Contruction Wedding Dance group doing what they know best.

The Nkangala District is abuzz with many talents. Despite being employed by the Department, some of the officials make time after working hours to take part in extra mural activities.

Meet Mr. Solomon Moraka who is a Senior Specialised Auxiliary Officer under the construction unit in the Nkangala District. In the year 2011 he started a music group called Construction Wedding Dance. The group consists of males and females who work for the Nkangala District.

The group started with 12 females and 05 males who normally practice every Wednesday. Since its inception, officials in the District have gained more interest and the number of participants has grown from 12 to 23. Mr Moroka said, "After realising that as officials we need to exercise in order to live healthy, I decided to start the group with my colleagues. We sing and dance in many ceremonies at no charge. This has benefitted the Department because whenever there is an event, we perform for free. We also perform during memorial services especially those of our colleagues in the Department."



The group perfoms in one of the Department's functions.

Mr. Moroka says that the group is not limited to officials only and encourages the public to join if they have an interest.

CREATING A BETTER WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Department recently conducted an internal audit of programmes' daily operations. The audit started at Head Office and continued to all Districts offices, which include Nkangala, Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni and the Bohlabela.

According to Mr Lucky Dlamini, Manager of Compliance Audit Section the purpose of the audit was to identify internal controls weaknesses and also to evaluate the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's current internal control systems. The section wanted to see if programmes use the procedure manuals and policies that were put in place by the Department. This will in turn assist the Department to improve internal controls. The audit was conducted over two and a half months. "It was



Internal Audit team ready to tackle compliance.

a huge audit project as we covered all programmes in the Department. It was a very successful exercise" said Mr Dlamini. The challenges they

have experienced during the audit were mainly the delaying of obtaining information in certain sections due to their filing systems. After the audit

was completed; a report on the findings and recommendations was submitted to the management of the Department.

PUTTING SHELTER OVER OFFICIALS



Service Conditions and Remunerations team always there to offer assistance.

Planning to buy a house and seeking assistance with finance? Then look no further than within your own Department. Government offers employees who seek to buy houses via financial institutions with a housing subsidy called "State Guarantee" aimed at helping officials to easily secure home loans with financial institutions. Ms. Thabiso Malebye who is an Assistant Manager in the Service Conditions and Remuneration subsection (Human Resources Management Section) said, "To apply for the state

guarantee officials need to fill a state guarantee form called the Z572 which is obtainable from the Service conditions and remuneration subsection in the Department. After filling the Z572 form the applicant's supervisor recommends the application and an authorised person from the level of an Assistant Director in the Human Resource (HR) Section must give approval. After the Z572 form has been approved, another form called the Z573 which is a government guarantee application form must be filled by an official from HR section on behalf of the

applicant and then send it to the bank for completion. After this form has been completed by the bank, it is returned to the Department for approval by the Head of Department or a delegated official. After approval it goes back to the bank for further processing and approval. After the approval by the bank, the HR section obtains a copy of the contract and register the guarantee against the applicant's persal.

EXAMPLE: Let's take that official A is an Assistant Director who earns R10 000 per month and he applies for a State Guarantee (home subsidy) from his employer. After evaluating his application, the employer informs him that he qualifies for R100 000 however he needs R200 000. The official then approaches the bank to get a home loan. The bank gives him a pre-approval of R100 000. The employer then communicates with the bank to request that he be financed with R200 000 of which the R100 000 from the employer would be payable to the bank once the official has paid 20 percent of the total loan.

Ms. Malebye further explained that if the housing loan is not granted within three months from the date of issue of the state guarantee, the guarantee lapses and the applicant have to resubmit a new application and follow the same procedure. Officials are encouraged to visit the Service Conditions and Remuneration section to get more information about this benefit. She added that officials can contact either her on 013 766 8209 or Mr. Simon Ndlovu on 013 766 6829.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LABOUR RELATIONS PRACTITIONER



Mr David Maswanganye busy at work.

Mr. Yuza David Maswanganye is a married father of four, three boys and one daughter. He hails from a village called kaMaswanganyi (Giyani) in Limpopo province. Mr. Maswanganye joined the Department as an Administration Officer (Labour Relations) in 2002. He was appointed Deputy Director (Collective Bargaining) by the Department in 2005. Before joining the Department he worked for a number of companies and government departments. Prior to his current platform, he worked for the Department of Education as an Educator whilst prior to that he was a Gas Production Operator at Sasol Limited.

Amongst some of his qualifications Mr. Maswanganye possesses both Advanced Diploma in Management (Labour Relations) and Advanced Diploma in Industrial Relations. Part of his duties as a Manager in the Collective Bargaining Unit in the Department

include investigation of grievances lodged and cases of misconduct. He also manages the dispute resolution by attending conciliation/arbitration processes and monitors the implementation of arbitration awards and settlement agreements.

He explained that when an alleged misconduct is reported or a grievance is lodged, the Head of Department appoints an investigating officer who will represent the employer during the disciplinary hearing and presiding officer to chair the hearing. After the hearing, the chairperson is required to submit the report of outcome of the disciplinary hearing containing the sanction imposed to the Head of Department.

In the case of a grievance, the chairperson is required to submit the findings and recommendations to the Head of Department for approval. The recommendations determine whether the grievance is valid or not. These processes are informed

by labour legislations and prescripts governing the public service. Mr. Maswanganye sighted that some of the processes can be avoided if Managers or Supervisors were able to deal with matters of discipline in their various sections or directorates. He added that Managers and Supervisors should also note that discipline is a management function and not a labour relations function. He added

that what he likes the most about the work that he does is that it makes one to always be up to date with global economic trends. He concluded by saying he cannot overemphasise the importance of education for one to succeed in life and particularly when a person is employed in the field of labour relations. "Knowledge is strength, if you are lazy to read you cannot succeed in this field", he said.

DEPARTMENT SUPPORTED THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE



Officials engaging on issues relating to women and children.

As South Africans celebrated the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence which started on the 25th of November 2013, female officials from the Nkangala District had already started with the campaign which was hosted on the 07th of November 2013.

The officials held a forum at the Nkangala District offices where issues such as awareness about woman abuse, domestic violence, health and social justice were discussed. Various stakeholders were invited to educate officials about their rights and responsibilities. The stakeholders included the South

African Police Services (SAPS), Department of Justice, Department of Health and Social Development and a Motivational speaker.

The Officials learnt amongst other things, processes to follow when reporting a case to the police. The Department of Health encouraged officials to live a healthy lifestyle by exercising often, eating healthy food and doing regular checkups with doctors. The Department of Justice spoke about social rights.

The campaign was also cascaded to other districts which include Ehlanzeni, Bohlabela and Gert Sibande.

REMEMBERING THE FATHER OF OUR NATION



MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu writing her condolences in a tribute to Tata Madiba.

After the announcement of the passing of the former South African President, Tata Nelson Mandela on the 5th of December 2013, the entire world mourned the death of the icon.

The Department joined the millions of people who were mourning the death of Tata. MEC Dikeledi Mahlangu who chaired the plenary meetings of the provincial

memorial services to celebrate the life of the legend, took time off from her busy schedule to pray for Tata with officials from the Department.

On the 09th of December 2013, a tribute to Tata was conducted at Head office where a book of condolences was signed by the MEC and officials. MEC Mahlangu was the first to sign the condolences book that was placed at the upper ground floor of the building.

Departmental management and officials followed suit in writing their condolences and signing the book as part of showing their gratitude thus bidding farewell to the former states man. Other condolences books were placed at all District offices and cost centres of the Department.

After President Jacob Zuma declared a ten days mourning for Madiba, the Department played its part by participating in daily prayer sessions where officials prayed during lunch as a sign of respecting the man who fought for the freedom we all enjoy today.



Officials singing in remembrance of Tata Nelson Mandela

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