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Perspective



S'HAMBA SONKE PAVES A WAY TO STIMULATE JOB CREATION

Poverty, unemployment and inequality remain the most pervasive evils of the democratic dispensation. These triple challenges have also created a launching pad for the rapid spread of COVID-19 as many fend for economic refuge to the detriment of health protocols. However, Government has been proactive in cushioning especially the most vulnerable against harsh economic effects of the pandemic.

S'hamba Sonke initiative by the Department of Transport is one of the responses implemented through the Presidential Employment Stimulus package. Transport Minister, Mr Fikile Mbalula accompanied by the Deputy Minister, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga together with Mpumalanga's Public Works, Roads and Transport MEC, Ms Mohita Latchminarain launched the S'hamba Sonke Labour Intensive Roads Construction and Maintenance programme in Marapyane, Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality on the 30th of August 2021.

The Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport took advantage of the incentive to deliver better roads and create much needed work opportunities. Road D2091 which connects Mpumalanga with Limpopo had already seen better days therefore required urgent intervention. The project which was already in the pipeline but had stalled due to budget reprioritization in response to COVID-19, was resuscitated and piloted S'hamba Sonke.

The labour intensive programme entails the use of pavers to construct roads while maintaining the same level of durability as the conventional way. As a result, the method is labour intensive which requires more labourers which in this case has benefited 103 youth, women and persons with disabilities including 14 local Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME). A special allocation of R630 million targeting maintenance of rural roads was released by National Treasury to assist provinces through the Provincial Road Maintenance Grant (PRMG).

Minister Mbalula said the launch is not only for Mpumalanga but represents



LEADERSHIP AT THE FOREFRONT: Minister of Transport, Mr Fikile Mbalula (Right), HOD Charles Morolo, MEC Mohita Latchminarain and Deputy Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga during the launch of S'hamba Sonke programme at Marapyane.

South Africa as a whole and that is symbolic by the fact that the road in question links Mpumalanga with Limpopo. **"Road D2091 is characterized by high traffic volumes between the two provinces, which the upgrade will cater for. Safety has been a primary consideration in the design to accommodate sight distances, alignments and lane widths adequate for the projected road conditions,"** emphasized the Minister.

MEC Mohita Latchminarain appreciated community members for participation and gave reassurance that phase two of

the project will commence. **"We are not only concerned about creating work opportunities but we also want to grow small businesses. The S'hamba Sonke initiative opens new doors for the local manufacturing of paving bricks and other construction material. As Government, we should be able to source these materials from local communities,"** said MEC Latchminarain.



S'HAMBA SONKE: Marapyane's D2091 road towards Limpopo border is a sight to behold.

As we wrap up the 2021/22 Financial Year, I am honored to present this installment of service delivery highlights to our valued citizens of the 'Place of the Rising Sun'. Of course, this is not a comprehensive picture of the work we have accomplished thus far but snippets of our journey towards the realization of 'A Better Life For All'.

First, I would like to thank the Honourable Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane as well as the Honourable MEC, Ms Mohita Latchminarain for the confidence bestowed upon us to drive one of the most critical mandates of this 5th administration of our democratic Government. Indeed, it is a privilege to serve at the behest of such formidable leadership, whose motherly instincts are the driving force behind Government's service delivery agenda.

As the custodian of public infrastructure in the Province, our role is underpinned by the second priority amongst the seven which is *Economic Transformation and Job Creation* in a bid to achieve the National Development Plan (NDP) goal by 2030.

Undoubtedly, we are navigating through uncharted territories yet we remain resolute that we are equal to the task. Our resilience through socio-economic hardships in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic bears testimony. As the Honourable Premier emphasized during the State of the Province Address (SOPA), failure is not an option. These are our marching orders.

Amongst other priorities, we have been given with an urgent task to deliver safe, reliable and affordable building and roads infrastructure especially in rural areas. These projects are instrumental in creating work and business opportunities for our people in particular youth, women and persons with disabilities. Again, failure is not an option.

We are leaving no stone unturned in our effort to fight corruption that seeks to undermine the integrity of our State machinery. Those implicated will face the full might of the law without fear or favour. We are strengthening our internal control measures to harness a culture of accountability, openness and transparency. Failure is not an option.

We hope you will find this publication useful in accordance with our mandate to keep our citizens informed. On behalf of Public Works, Roads and Transport family, stay safe and enjoy. Bon voyage!

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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.

“FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION” SAYS PREMIER DURING SOPA

Despite an estimated economic contraction of approximately 7% in 2020 and a high unemployment rate of 34.9% during the 3rd quarter of 2021, Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane emphasized that Government is more determined than ever to turn the corner and materially improve the quality of life for the people of Mpumalanga.

The Premier gave marching orders to implement the seven priorities of the medium term strategic framework in line with the National Development Plan. She tabled the State of the Province Address (SOPA) on the 21 of February 2022 in the City of Mbombela which marked the official opening of the Provincial Legislature after the festive season recess.

Amongst the seven priorities accentuated by Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane is Economic Transformation and Job Creation which is at the apex of the Department's service delivery agenda as the custodian of public infrastructure in the Province. She outlined several projects and investment opportunities that are aimed at boosting economic growth and job creation parallel to the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Strategy.

Mpumalanga is a hub of tourism, agriculture and mining activities amongst others and provides a gateway to two neighboring countries, Mozambique and the Kingdom of eSwatini. It is therefore without any doubt that a major investment lies on transport infrastructure as the heartbeat of the economy.



MARCHING ORDERS: Honourable Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane entering the provincial Legislature in the escorted by members of the SAPS during the State of the Province Address.



INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY: The state-of-the-Art Mpumalanga's International Fresh Produce Market is one of the key infrastructure projects aimed at driving the Province's economy.

Amongst major infrastructure projects championed by the Department, the Premier committed on the completion of some of these projects in the new financial year. "We shall accelerate the completion of infrastructure projects across, including but not limited to the Parliamentary Village, the Mpumalanga Fresh Produce Market, Tekwane South Bridge, Bethal hospital, Mapulaneng hospital and Mammethlake hospital," pledged the Premier.

She revealed that construction plans for the proposed tertiary hospital at Emalahleni are already at an advanced stage. "We shall name the hospital Linah Malatjie Tertiary Hospital in honour of the legacy of the late Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Local Municipality. We expect construction to start in the 2022/23 Financial Year," she said.

In January 2022, the Premier accompanied by MEC Mohita Latchminarain officially opened Aerorand Primary School in Middelburg in response to Government's commitment to improve the quality of education in the Province. The Department will be rolling out water and sanitation projects to 176 schools; 183 schools are already undergoing maintenance and refurbishment while 40 new classrooms in fast growing towns will be constructed. As the Premier emphasized, failure is not an option.

The Premier announced that the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) will invest R9 billion on roads infrastructure in the Province. This investment will include the upgrading of N2 between Ermelo in Mpumalanga and Kwazulu-Natal as well as R40 between Hazyview and Bushbuckridge. There is already significant work done on the N4 at Emakhazeni (Belfast-Machadodorp) and in the City of Mbombela's Karino interchange. According to SANRAL, improvements on the N4 will create massive job opportunities and empower SMMEs. The agency invested R3.7 billion for the first phase of Moloto's R573 road in Nkangala District Municipality, 30% of the project value had been earmarked to benefit SMMEs.

"We intend to pay more attention on road infrastructure network that enhance opportunities for our people in villages, townships and rural areas," said the Premier.

She explained that various strategies will be implemented to fasttrack service delivery including blading and grading of gravel roads while others will be upgraded to surfaced roads. "In collaboration with local government we will fasttrack the paving of community roads in our municipalities," she said.

The Premier acknowledged the growing concern of ageing road infrastructure which places a heavy burden on the already constrained fiscal pot. The Department has since deployed roads maintenance teams and contractors to conduct routine maintenance. While there have been reports of poor workmanship by contractors on some roads, **"We have resolved to strengthen our internal capacity as part of developing a capable State,"** said the Premier. She announced that the Province has secured mechanized pothole patching vehicles in an endeavour to improve roads conditions faster and in a cost effective manner.



WAY FORWARD: Transport infrastructure remains the heartbeat of the economy which is amongst the Province's priorities.

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE BEHIND THE DRIVING SEAT



DRIVING SEAT: HOD Charles Morolo remains resolute that the Department has what it takes to address challenges on tourism routes.

Since his appointment as the Head of Department in 2021, Mr Charles Morolo has been steering the ship amidst unfathomable socio-economic turbulences mostly perpetuated by COVID-19 pandemic. As the custodian of public infrastructure in the Province, the Department has a critical role to play as far as the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Strategy is concerned. During an interview with the HOD, tourism routes featured prominently on the agenda as one of Mpumalanga's bread baskets.

It is no secret that the Province's tourism industry went through a rough patch for the past couple of months due to COVID-19 lock-down. However, the condition of various tourism routes have worsened an already bad situation due to dwindling financial aid over the years sandwiched between rapidly aging infrastructure and fast-paced spatial developments throughout the Province.

"As a Province, tourism is one of the most critical sectors for growth. Through the maintenance and refurbishment of these facilities, we should be

in a position, first and foremost, to ensure that we create work opportunities. Secondly, we must ensure that we attract tourists, both local and international. The need for safe, reliable and affordable transport infrastructure particularly roads can never be overstated," emphasized the HOD.

"Fortunately, this industry is part and parcel of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Strategy announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa. In particular, tourism infrastructure plays a very critical role in that regard because it is an infrastructure-led economic recovery. So, we do have a number of tourism facilities in the Province that require maintenance, resuscitation and refurbishment. Roads infrastructure is very important in terms of mobility, accessibility and connectivity of goods and people. So, maintenance, upgrading and rehabilitation of tourism infrastructure is of great importance in order to attract tourists into the 'Place of the Rising Sun'. As a Department, there are a number of specific projects which are aimed at maintaining tourism routes linked to specific facilities."

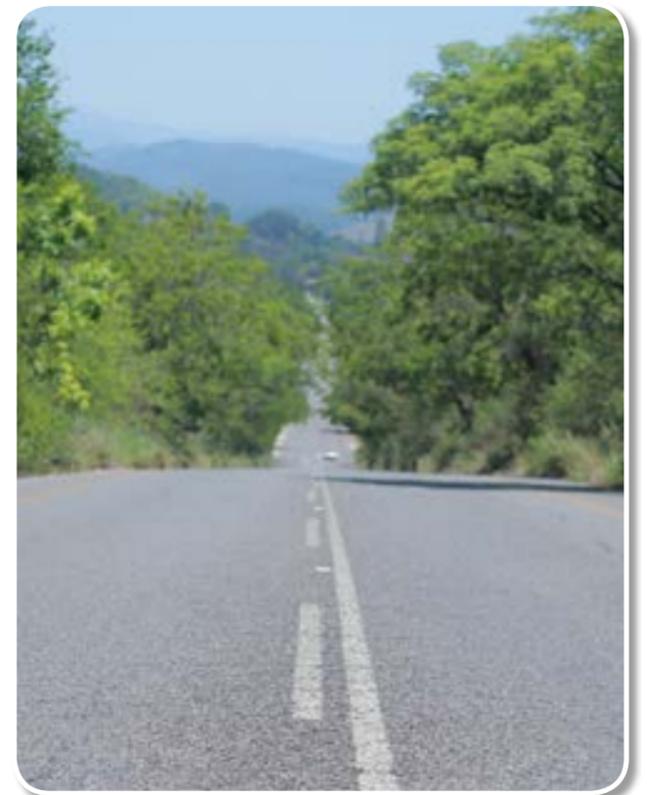
"In the previous years, we managed to identify certain tourism routes based on the tourism hubs and corridors. These corridors basically include liberation and panorama heritage as well as others that are based on these ethos. We currently have eight tourism routes that we are busy with and others which we are at different stages of implementation. We have roads such as Mashishing, Acornhoek, Dwarsloop-Thulamahashe, Matibidi and Graskop as well as Numbi-Makoko Bridge amongst others. We also have another road project we are implementing parallel with the construction of Mapulaneng Hospital in Bushbuckridge. They are all at different stages of rehabilitation.

Over and above that, we have five roads currently on design stage to be implemented as soon as budget is made available. These include Sabie, Mashishing-Limpopo, Carolina and Mkhondo-Mahlabathini border post roads. We have also identified seven roads that we must still go and assess in the next stage of planning and design. These are mainly Mkhuhlu-Oakley, Berlin Falls, Graskop, Ohrstad, Graskop-Pilgrim's Rest as well as Graskop-Hazyview roads. This is what we can call the Provincial Road Network.

"These roads need urgent attention in order to attract

tourists into the Province. However, it is essential to understand that tourism routes do not exist in isolation, but are part of a broader road network in the Province. While this is only in relation to tourism routes, we have other roads that are feeding into these tourism routes that equally need attention," elaborated Mr Morolo.

In summary, the Department is not ignorant of the condition of various roads in the Province but it requires a balancing act between budgetary constraints and competing priorities.



Verena Road Rehabilitation Ticks All Boxes Of Excellence

Another blueprint of excellence is under construction at the periphery of the "Place of the Rising Sun" in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality. Verena's P95/1 road which links Gauteng and Mpumalanga has ticked all the boxes as members of the Legislature put the 13km road rehabilitation project under microscope on Wednesday, the 10th February 2022.

The Portfolio Committee which oversees the work of the Department and others visited Nkangala District Municipality to inspect progress on various projects as part of its oversight function to ensure that Government delivers on its mandate. As the custodian of transport infrastructure in the Province, MEC Mohita Latchminarain and her entourage accompanied the delegation to dip a yardstick in the R155 million project which is due for completion end of March 2022.

Amongst its greatest successes is the creation of business, work and training opportunities for local residents including women, youth and persons with disabilities. To date, 27 SMMEs have since benefited from business opportunities while over 90 work opportunities were created which is a combined direct investment of over R44 million.

The scope of work included amongst others a major rehabilitation of the entire 13km road length comprising of pavement layers and asphalt surfacing. This entails provision of pedestrian facilities along residential areas, subsoil drainage,

culvert widening, road signs, carriageway markings and fencing. Due to the volume of heavy vehicles frequenting the road from surrounding mines, a suitable bypass had to be constructed to prevent potential accidents during the rehabilitation.

Although there were couple of challenges from its inception in 2019, including COVID-19 related delays, the project has been given thumbs up by the Honourable members as a blueprint for successful implementation of projects. Furthermore, in remembrance of the learners who were involved in a fatal accident a couple of years ago on the same stretch of road, a memorial plaque will be installed in honour of the victims.

"Even to this day, we are still mourning the demise of these youngsters to whom much has been expected by their parents and society at large. For this reason we are even more determined to provide safer roads but most importantly impose zero tolerance against reckless and negligent driving since it was the cause of the accident," said MEC Latchminarain.



UNDER REHABILITATION: Verena's P95/1 road which is currently at the final stage of rehabilitation is a living proof of Government's commitment to improve the Province's road network.

Sanral Pledges Massive Investment To Jack Up Mpumalanga's Economy

The South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) is on the fast lane shifting gears in a bid to accelerate the provision of world class road network in the Province. In the process, local residents are already reaping massive benefits from business and work opportunities that come with the investment.

During the State of the Province Address, Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane announced that the Agency has pledged R9 billion towards N2 (Ermelo-Kwazulu-Natal) and R40 (Hazyview-Bushbuckridge) roads upgrade and rehabilitation. These are expected to yield significant economic spin-offs through job creation especially since the Province is facing a steep unemployment rate.

SANRAL which is responsible for a total road network of 2 478km in the Province, has already injected R790 million for the rehabilitation of Belfast-Machado (N4) road and the new Karino N4 interchange. According to SANRAL's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Skhumbuzo Macozoma, the investment has already created over 575 job opportunities, empowered 21 SMMEs while over 50 emerging contractors have benefited. The anticipated effect of both projects is that unbearable traffic jam and road accidents previously encountered on these stretches of the N4 road particularly on the Karino interchange will soon be a distant memory.

During a ministerial visit to these projects by the Minister of Transport in April 2021, Mr Fikile Mbalula together with MEC Mohita Latchminarain, the Minister applauded SANRAL and the Province for working together to bring about transformation. "When we took office, we made a pledge and said 'Thuma Mina' to improve the lives of our people. Our electorate responded that we must 'Khawuleza'. Indeed, today our pledge has become a fruition. Not only are we developing the infrastructure but we are creating the much needed job opportunities," stated the Minister.

MEC Latchminarain highlighted Mpumalanga's strategic position as South Africa's gateway to Mozambique and the Kingdom of eSwatini but also



GREAT RELIEF: Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula and MEC Mohita Latchminarain during a site visit at the new Karino interchange (below) which is currently in progress.

a tourist destination, agriculture and mining hub as well as the country's power house. **"Roads particularly the N4 is a socio-economic asset connecting our people with critical amenities whilst facilitating the movement of goods. SANRAL is therefore a strategic partner in the realization of our priorities which amongst others is Economic Transformation and Job Creation,"** explained the MEC.

The upgrading of R573 (Moloto) road phase one at a tune of R3.7 billion bears testimony of Government's endeavour to deliver safe, reliable and affordable transport infrastructure that promotes economic growth. Phase two of the project will cost R430 million and according to the Agency's CEO, R163 million will be invested towards SMMEs. SANRAL has over the years demonstrated unparalleled capabilities to deliver beyond expectations.



OCTOBER TRANSP

“Brika Bhova – Riding the wave”

Provincial Launch of October Transport Month Programme

On Friday, 08 October 2021 early in the morning around 6am, MEC Mohita Latchminarain with Member of the Provincial Legislature (MPL), Ms Jeanet Thabethe boarded a taxi from City of Mbombela to Kanyamazane together with the leadership of SANTACO, BUSCOR, Councillors and other transport stakeholders.

This was part of the Provincial Launch of October Transport Month Programme. Along the way from Kanyamazane where she boarded a bus back to the City of Mbombela interacted with the commuters. The commuters appreciated the initiative by the MEC of boarding the bus with her so that she can be able experience the bus ride. They also commended the service rendered by the bus company and the taxi industry in the City of Mbombela.

In her address at the launch which was held at Mbombela taxi rank. The MEC said ***“This annual campaign also presents an opportunity to engage with communities and various stakeholders to address challenges facing the sector, such as the high level of road accidents and fatalities experienced on a regular basis, including the rising costs of mobility and provision of world-class infrastructure.”***

The launch was concluded by disinfecting some of the taxis and interacting with passengers that were at the taxi rank.



TRANSPORT INSPECTORATE PULLS THE BRAKES ON LAWLESSNESS

October Transport Month would not be complete without the blue lights of the men and women in uniform manning the road. Transport Inspectors in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies including the South African Police Service (SAPS), South Africa Revenue Service (SARS) as well as national, provincial and municipal traffic officers were in full swing in all major routes across the Province. These operations were also accompanied by the Department of Health as part of the vaccination campaign.

Since October preambles the Festive season which is known for increased traffic volumes, joint law enforcement operations formed the backbone of the Transport Month activities. The officers pulled every stop to bring those who break the law to book. Operations covered amongst other roads the N4, N12, N17, R25 and Moloto's R573. Other officers were patrolling alternative routes to guard against those who are attempting to bypass these operations.

According to the Director of Transport Inspectorate, Mr Mojalifa Tsoetsi, the purpose of these operations are to check compliance with the National Land Transport Act 5 of 2009. ***“The Act regulates traffic and transport operations to ensure that the safety of all road users is maintained and that everybody has a fair share of rights and responsibilities when on the road. As a result, road users particularly motorists and transport operators are compelled by law comply with specific requirements. These include amongst others ensuring that drivers and their vehicles are properly licensed and are roadworthy, sticking to loading capacity and speed limit, do not drive under the influence of intoxicating substances, adhere to road signs and respect other road users,”*** elaborated Mr Tsoetsi.

While October Transport Month places much emphasis on transport operations and infrastructure related matters more than any other month, the Department has remained resolute in its effort to upscale these operations 365 days a year since road accidents and fatalities never take a break. MEC Mohita Latchminarain has on several occasions joined the men and women in uniform in her own regalia to engage with road users face to face.

SPORT MONTH 2021

to a better Transport System”

TWEEFONTEIN-E D1875 ROAD TO EASE TRAFFIC ON MOLOTO ROAD

The Department joined the country in celebration of Transport Month through showcasing enormous progress made in transport operation and infrastructure. The Department under the leadership of MEC Mohita Latchminarain criss-crossed the Province celebrating the October Transport Month where roads were handed over to communities and bicycles donated to impoverished school learners. In one of these activations, MEC Latchminarain conducted a sod-turning ceremony of road D1875 at Tweefontein, Thembisile Local Municipality on the 14th of October 2021 in Nkangala District.

The rehabilitation of 2,1km road started on the 5th of October 2021 and is expected to finish in April 2022, with 20 local people expected to work on the project during construction phase. It is part of the provincial rural road paving programme which is set to ease traffic from Moloto road on a section between Tweefontein (E) towards ward 10 and ward 15 to Pretoria. The scope of work involves the upgrading of gravel road to surfaced road using block pavers, construction of cement layers as well as the installation of kerbs and improved drainage structures.

During her keynote address, MEC Latchminarain appealed to communities not to delay the construction of the project. **“The people of Tweefontein should guard against any disruption, which will cause delays or derail completion of project. We will further constructs the P95/1 Verena crossing to Bronkorspruit, P36/1 N12 to Delmas as well as the P182/1 R35 to Hendrina amongst others”** she added.

She further highlighted that the department is subsidizing over 400 000 commuters who are using busses on the 154 provincial route which equates to an investment of over R754 million. During the event, MEC donated 467 bicycles to 21 schools through the Shova Kalula bicycle programme aimed transport learners who walk more than 3km to school.

Upgrading of Thambokhulu-Khombaso road to bring relief to communities

On 13 October 2021, MEC Mohita Latchminarain conducted a sod turning ceremony of phase 2 of road D2952 Thambokhulu to khombaso at Junior Aces Sports ground within Nkomazi Local Municipality. The event was graced by the Speaker of Nkomazi Local Municipality Cllr Mashele, Inkosi Mlambo of Mlambo Traditional Authority, HOD Charles Morolo and members of the local community.

The upgrading of the road D2952, from gravel to surface block paving, is a 4.2 km stretch. The work consists of installation of kerbs and road marking and it costs R36 million. During her address to the community, MEC appealed to communities to safeguard public infrastructure.

Local sub contractors will be appointed with local communities employed during the implementation of the project. The MEC encouraged all contractors not to compromise but to deliver quality work.

“We thank the Department for the world class infrastructure and promise to take a good care of it,” Inkosi Mlambo said.

Phase 2 project started in September 2021 and is expected to be complete by January 2022. At least 210 work opportunities will be created with women, youth and people with disabilities benefiting.

During the implementation of the phase 1 more than R17 million was spent. The project stated in December 2020 and ended in June 2021 with 100 work opportunities being created



NOT UNTIL REAL MEN STAND UP

They say the only necessity for evil to triumph is not the noise of bad people but the silence of the good ones. Since GBV and femicide have been making headlines, the Departmental Men's Forum has vowed to take a stand against any form of abuse. The Forum hosted an induction on the 24th and 25th of February 2022 in Middelburg to sensitize members about the scourge and relevant mechanisms to deal with it and assist others.



IF YOU DON'T PLAN YOU'RE PLANNING TO FAIL

Sun Tzu once said, "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." Of course one may argue that poor service delivery is a new warfare that requires strategy and tactics especially against prevailing economic hardships. Fortunately, that is exactly what the Department did during a Strategic Planning session on the 3rd and 4th of March 2022 at Emalahleni Local Municipality.

MEC Mohita Latchminarain and HOD Charles Morolo hosted a delegation of senior management in a two day session to strategize on the way ahead. As the custodian of public transport and infrastructure, the Department received R4.9 billion for the 2022/23 Financial Year. It is therefore crucial to adjust one's priorities according to the available economic resources.

Some of the projects the Department will focus on include the Mkhondo Boarding School, Parliamentary Village and various roads throughout the Province.



MEC PUTS HER EAR ON THE GROUND

Hopes to improve service delivery in the absence of improved working conditions is an indictment to any morally conscious leadership. Fortunately, MEC Mohita Latchminarain keeps her ear on the ground to ensure that the voice of workers is heard. The Honourable has been visiting various Departmental offices across the Province to address challenges and improve staff morale in a bid to unlock service delivery.



MEC LATCHMINARAIN EMBRACES THE ROYAL CALL TO SERVICE

During the month of January 2022, MEC Mohita Latchminarain has been traveling the length and breadth of Mpumalanga, meeting with various stakeholders including uBukhosi in a bid to address service delivery challenges within the custodianship of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport.

On the 13th of January, the Honourable MEC met with Kgoshi Mokoena in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. The meeting which was graced by community headmen was centered around transport infrastructure particularly roads.

The MEC committed to fast-track plans to address roads maintenance although budgetary constraints remain the biggest challenge. She also emphasized the need to involve surrounding mines including

the Kruger National Park to make a contribution towards roads maintenance.

“The Transport Infrastructure team will in the meantime prioritize fixing damaged roads while awaiting budget allocation for the new financial year. However, I must emphasize that even the private sector needs to come on board especially the mining industry since some of the roads are damaged by heavy trucks,” she said.

The MEC also made her way to KaHoyi Traditional Authority in Nkomazi Local Municipality on the 26th. His Excellency, iNkhosi Ngomane together with the MEC conducted site inspections to some of the roads which are in need of urgent intervention.



ROYAL ENGAGEMENT: His Excellency, iNkhosi Ngomane (Right) together with MEC Latchminarain and her entourage during site visit to one of the affected roads.



PEOPLE CENTRED LEADERSHIP: MEC Mohita Latchminarain with His Excellency, Kgoshi Mokoena during a meeting with community leaders to discuss service delivery challenges pertaining to roads in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

HUMAN ERROR THRUSTS FESTIVE SEASON ROAD FATALITIES TO THE SKY BY 14%



BRAKES ON THE PADDLE: While the Department is doing its bid in terms of law enforcement, Goovernment calls upon individual road users to take responsibility for their own lives and those of others.

Despite increased law enforcement operations and road safety awareness campaigns led by the Department of Transport, road accidents and fatalities remain a headache to South Africa’s fragile socio-economic outlook. One life lost on the road is one life too many especially when one considers the dire social conditions it plunges most families as well as the economic impact it has on the country as a whole.

On the 18th of January 2022, the Minister of Transport, Mr Fikile Mbalula released the Festive season road fatalities statistics. He announced that 1 685 fatalities were recorded during the Festive season which is an increase of 14% compared to the previous year. Only two provinces (Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal) showed a decline while the rest recorded an increase. Human error continues to play a major role of up to 79% of road accidents and fatalities, 11% being road factors and 10% attributed to vehicle factors.

Minister Mbalula further revealed

that 6 169 motorists were arrested during the Festive season for various offenses of which 1 586 were nabbed for drunken driving plus 605 for excessive speed of up to 225 km per hour almost twice the maximum speed limit. He said 4 251 unroadworthy vehicles were discontinued while 4 074 were impounded.

“During the Festive season our traffic law enforcement officers conducted 651 roadblocks throughout the country and they issued 264 690 fines for various traffic offenses. Of particular interest is that 21 431 of these fines were for drivers who failed to wear seatbelts while 22 766 were for people who were driving without licences. It is our intention to ensure that the law bites and driving on our roads without a driving licence carries a heavy penalty otherwise the mooted points demerit system will make no difference on driver behavior,” accentuated the Minister. Due to these unpalatable statistics, the Department continues to strengthen its presence on the road to curb the carnage 24/7 waya-way.

KANYAMAZANE - TEKWANE BRIDGE IN PROGRESS

Construction of the long awaited bridge between Kanyamazane and Tekwane South at the outskirts of the City of Mbombela is currently under construction. The bridge which is amongst several roads in the Province that were severely damaged by Tropical Storm Eloise in January 2021, is a critical link between Kanyamazane which is one of Mpumalanga's largest townships and the City of Mbombela.

Due to the ongoing construction work of the new Karino interchange on N4 road, which could have served as an alternative route, the Department had no other alternative but to urgently erect a temporary bypass to allow traffic flow in collaboration with the local municipality.

The new bridge which is currently in progress has been commissioned at a value of R22.7 million. The work started in October 2021 and is planned for completion at the end of April 2022 although there has been several disruptions which hampered progress. It is expected that the project will create about 32 work opportunities for the locals while

SMMEs will equally reap benefits as the project progresses through the provision of various services and materials.

The scope of work mainly comprises of the construction of an in-situ concrete culvert as a replacement of the old and damaged Amcor culvert across the Rietbrook river as well as affected road formation on the D2296 road. The overall road section to be repaired is approximately 90m long and 18m wide.

After Mpumalanga was declared a national disaster due to the catastrophic damage to infrastructure and human life, President Ramaphosa and Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane visited affected areas including Kanyamazane. MEC Latchminarain and HOD Morolo have been at the forefront to ensure speedy repairs of the damaged bridge. Amongst the challenges encountered was budgetary constraints due to the extent of damages on other public infrastructure across the Province. To date, the Department has managed to attend to most of these facilities including buildings.



ON THE GROUND: Head of Department, Mr Morolo (Right) together with Mr Ntimba and Ehlanzeni Acting Head, Mr Mamaro inspecting progress of Kanyamazane bridge.



BUILDING A CAPABLE STATE BY EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS



INVESTING IN YOUNG MINDS: Some of the 150 young graduates recruited by the Department under two-year internship programme.

“We have resolved to strengthen our internal capacity as part of developing a capable State,” said Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane during the tabling of the State of the Province Address (SOPA) on the 25th of February 2022. Her statement was a direct reference to the Department’s on going drive to fill critical vacancies in a bid to strengthen service delivery.

During the 2021/22 Financial Year, the Department managed to fill 112 positions that are service delivery driven including artisans, boiler operator and road workers. As the custodian of public infrastructure, the Department provides a variety of services to client departments such as Health, Education and Social Development to keep these departments afloat. Apart from construction of State facilities, the Department also provides technical support in a form of boiler-making, welding, plumbing and electrical services amongst others. Due to the recently uplifted moratorium, skill shortage as well as retiring employees, most of these posts were left vacant which limited the State’s

capacity to deliver on its mandate.

Furthermore, the Department has taken upon its shoulders to address the escalating unemployment rate especially on youth. To this regard, 150 internship candidates were recruited aimed at providing work experience to young people plus 100 road traffic law enforcement learnership candidates.

Through another youth based programme, 42 young professionals in various disciplines within the built environment were appointed. This is a mentorship programme aimed at assisting candidates with the necessary registration to applicable professions. The programme is implemented in partnership with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure as well as the Council for the Built Environment (CBE).

The Department is exploring further partnerships to boost its capacity. The goal is to ensure that the State is fully functional and capable to address service delivery challenges.

PANKOP CLINIC OPENS DOORS TO BREATH OF FRESH AIR

As the handyman of the State, the Department has a mammoth task to ensure infrastructure delivery that enables other departments to perform their mandates. Health infrastructure is among these facilities which are central to human development especially in a democratic society where citizens enjoy the right to quality healthcare. Equally important is Government's efforts to bring social amenities within reach to curb traveling costs and time.

The long awaited Pankop Community Healthcare Centre at Masobye village in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality is without a doubt one of the best facilities recently delivered by the Provincial Government. Members of the Legislature visited the facility in September 2021 as part of their oversight function. They also had an excellent opportunity to interact with local residents who had come for medical attention in their new state-of-the-art clinic.

The project which cost the State R51.2 million commenced in October 2017 yet had its fair share of turbulences such as community unrest, site break-ins and COVID-19 lockdown however it was eventually completed in August 2021. The scope of work included the construction of a new CHC, accommodation units, guard house, palisade fence, paving and parking, electrical and associated external works. A total of 69 work opportunities were created which benefited the local community. In addition, 19 SMMEs scooped business opportunities to the value of R6.4 million.



SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED: Members of the Legislature accompanied by MEC Mohita Latchminarain and HOD Charles Morolo engaging with community members during site visit at the newly constructed Pankop Community Healthcare Centre in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality.



RACE FOR ERADICATION OF PIT TOILETS GAINS TRACTION

The standard of toilets that government is supposed to provide to public along with infrastructures is stated on the Minimum Standards for Public School Infrastructure promulgated by the Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga in November 2013. The guideline stipulates the basic level of infrastructure that every school must meet in order to function properly – that by 2016 November all schools must have had access to sanitation – and that plain pit toilets and buckets do not constitute access to sanitation.

It is against this background that National Minister for Basic Education gave an instruction that provinces should develop and implementation plan on how they would deliver the infrastructure as per the norms and standards guidelines. In Mpumalanga province, the implementation of these guidelines are progressing well since the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, an implementing agent, is working around the clock to

eradicate all pit toilets in the schools. One of the success stories in a tiny village called Dundonald at Phumulani Primary School, the upgrading and sanitation of toilets is underway.

The Department has demolished the existing 20 pit toilets and is building 20 Enviro-Loo, in addition to the work the installation of palisade fence around the tank will be done including installing 2 drinking fountains, water reticulation, soil improvement and upgrading of sewer system.

According to the project manager, Ms M Hlangwane, the more than 2 million project started in April 2021 and is expected to be complete by July 2021. **"We contracted Impisi General Construction to foresee the process and employing fifteen (15) locals during the construction process,"** she adds.



ENVIRO FRIENDLY: One of hundreds of sanitation projects that the Department is implementing in various schools across the Provinces.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR YOUNG FEMALE CONTRACTORS

The future is bright for 59 young female contractors who have been absorbed into the Sakhabakhi Contractor Development Programme for the 2021/22 financial year. These young enthusiastic entrepreneurs will undergo an intense two year classroom and practical training in a bid to nurture their skills in construction, enabling them to compete in the construction field. MEC Mohita Latchnamirain officially welcomed them during a glittering ceremony on the 03 December 2021, Friday, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, which was graced by Nkangala District Mayor, Cllr Leah Mabuza as well as the newly appointed Executive Mayor of Steve Tshwete, Cllr Mhlonishwa Masilela.

The department absorbed female contractor in the current financial year, as part of its transformation initiative aimed to empower women, youth and disabled so that they bridge the gap of inequality in an environment which is mainly male dominated. During the proceedings, MEC Mohita expressed her joy seeing that more female are venturing in the construction. **“My heart is filled with joy to know that a girl will rise and compete in a male – dominated sector such as construction. Albertina Sisulu once said women are the people who are going to relieve us from all the oppression and depression. She understood the**

importance of women in society and that female empowerment would lead to progressive society” she explained during her keynote address.

One of the recipient is a 34 year old single mother of two, Ms Nonhethelelo Maphanga from Lelo trading who has been a breadwinner for her kids. When @Work spoke to her about her participation into programme, she emotionally related her hardships she endured in her adult life which is characterized by abuse and biasness in the constructions sector which is dominated by male. “I worked as general worker in a construction company where female employee were remunerated lesser than their male counterparts” she explained. Maphanga made a brave move by quitting her day job then opened her own company, which opened doors and new opportunities for her, as she did minor maintenance work for municipalities. According to her being selected into the Sakhabakhi programme is a big step closer to competing with bigger companies, as I will nurture my skills in the construction field’ she smiled.

Sakhabakhi is an EPWP Initiative aimed to empower emerging contractors to become fully fledged contractors able to compete in an open market. They will undergo a two year classroom and practical training under the guidance of mentors.

IN PICTURES: MEC Latchminarain and HOD Morolo leading an entourage of emerging contractors ready to take the bull of the industry by its horns.



DEPUTY MINISTER RAISES A RED FLAG ON RAIL SAFETY

The Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga; MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Ms Mohita Latchminarain and Executive Mayor of the City of Mbombela, Cllr Sibongile Makushe hosted a Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) Awareness campaign to educate the public about rail safety at Matsulu on the 10th of March 2022.

The campaign focused on learners in particular from three schools in the area, Sehlulile and Takheleni Primary Schools as well as Sibusisiwe Secondary School which are in close proximity with a railway line. Two learners from two of the schools have already fallen victim to railway accidents when they were hit by a train on separate occasions on the same line. Unfortunately, one learner was fatality injured while the other lost a limb.

Matsulu which is situated at the periphery of the City of Mbombela is host to a 202km railway line called Selati operated by Transnet Freight Rail. The line traverses Matsulu from Kaapmuiden to Pharaborwa transporting mainly Magnetite to Broodsnyerplaas, Port of Richard's Bay and Port of Maputo. Approximately 18 cargo trains travel on the line in either direction on daily basis.

Although railway accident occurrences are few and far apart compared to road fatalities, the statistic still raises eyebrows. The Hectorspruit level crossing accident where 26 people perished in 2012 when a Metrorail commuter train collided with a minibus taxi is still fresh in the mind. A total of 133 level crossing occurrences were reported by RSR during the 2018/2019 reporting period. Individuals continue to die or critically injured along railway lines throughout the country. At the same time, cable theft still poses a great risk not only to the infrastructure but human life.

The Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) championed by the Deputy Minister of Transport obtains its legal mandate from the National Railway Safety Regulator Act no. 16 of 2002 as amended. The main objectives of the RSR are to oversee the safety of railway operations, promote improved safety performance in the railway industry, develop any regulations and standards required in accordance with the Act, monitor and ensure compliance with the Act, and give effect to the objectives of the Act. The protection of people, property and the environment remains paramount.

The dignitaries also handed over school uniform, stationery and sanitary towels to underprivileged learners. More so, learners also got a opportunity to understand more about career opportunities within the rail sector and transport in general.



ADDRESSING YOUNG MINDS: Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga leading the way followed by MEC Mohita Latchminarain during the Railway Safety Regulator awareness campaign in Matsulu.



SECURING THE FUTURE: Apart from the valuable information they gathered on the day, the learners also received uniform, stationery and sanitary towels amongst other items.

COVID-19 SETS BRAKES ON EPWP



Government's attempts to increase job creation through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) has been dealt a heavy blow by the Covid-19 pandemic as the Province recorded a sharp decline in job creation. In the latest report on job creation for the 2021/22 financial year, the programme has taken a serious plunge with at least 11 855 work opportunities being created which translates to only 27% overall performance against the set annual target of 44 180.

According to the Acting Chief Director in EPWP, Ms Sebenzile Shube, performance has not been good at all due to various factors mostly attributed to the pandemic. Work opportunities were reduced due to budget cuts in response to Covid-19. She further explained that Infrastructure Sector under municipalities created 1 744 work opportunities against the target of 9 913 which is 18%, topping other departments in the sector that reported a mere 388 work opportunities against the target of 13 341.

The Social Sector also declined significantly with municipalities only creating 896 against 2 367 targeted work opportunities while departments reported 2 431 against 11 690. Under Environment & Culture Sector municipalities created only 2 518 against 4 454 work opportunities while departments only scored 1 378 out of 2 415 work opportunities.

However, it is not all doom and gloom for the programme, as plans are underway to resuscitate the economy while at the same time relaxing some of the restrictions that were in place to help mitigate the impact of the coronavirus. Ms Shube explained that the recruitment of 55 women learner contractors and 350 NYS participants are some of the strategies introduced to address the challenges. "Developing and conducting data recovery strategy as well as consolidating the revised project list of all projects, will also form part of our plans to increase job opportunities," she added. As the coordinating agency of EPWP in the Province, the Department remains hopeful of the future to create more jobs than before.

MANAGING RISK TO ACHIEVE SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Employees within the Department (Integrated Planning) converged at Nkangala district Municipality on 11th of February 2022 (as from the 28 January till 11 March 2022) for the risk assessment workshop which is held annually in a bid to identify, log and track potential risks which might have negative bearing towards the implementation of the operational plan. This annual exercise was convened with all programmes to update the

risk register. Risk Management Committee Chairperson, Mr Krishen Sukdev, who graced the occasion, alluded the significance of conducting these workshops. "Risks cannot be eradicated, but can be managed. It is better to be pro-active rather than reactive by identifying, qualifying the risks so that they could be easily managed, hence we need to constantly conduct the workshops" he said.

Ms Florence Netshifhe, who presided the workshop, gave a definition of a risk. **"A risk can easily be defined as a threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its business outcomes and to execute its strategies successful. We experience the COVID pandemic which was an unexpected event with catastrophic consequences as lives were lost, planned projects were interrupted, hence the need to update the risk register"** she stressed. She further explained the significance of applying findings of Auditor General's report, Internal Audit report, Annual Performance Plans and other oversight bodies' reports, to help guide with the risk register.

During the session various sections identify risks which adversely impact negatively towards attaining their strategic objectives. The exercise is carried out so as to implement the mitigation strategies. After all the risks have been identified, the Risk Management Directorate, which oversees the monitoring of the process, will draft a Risk Assessment Report.

This would later be presented to the Risk Management Committee as well as the Head of the Department for signature and final approval. After the approval by the HOD, programs will be requested to provide progress report on monthly basis to ensure that the risks are managed/monitored. Risk registers will be monitored on monthly basis report would be sent back to all the sections in order to apply the mitigation strategies, Ms Florence Netshifhe added.



THINKING AHEAD: Mr Krishen Suhder, the Chairperson of the Risk Management Committee believes prevention is better than cure.



IN SESSION: Risk Management team holding the frontline during one of the sessions held in Middelburg.

Retired But Still Serving The People



HOLDING THE FORT: Retired Mr Andrea Ntiwane (Left) together with Phiva community members patching potholes.

According to one famous author and Jewish Rabbi, Daniel Lappin, in Jewish there is no such a word as 'retirement' for man's work on earth never ends until one 'retires' to the grave. This seems to be the same sentiment of one of the Department's recently 'retired' veterans, Mr Andrea Ntiwane.

Gone are the days when being a public servant was a calling more than just a profession. However, Mr Ntiwane, a former Manager in the Department's Security Management unit has redefined the meaning of public service. When the Department bid farewell to one of its retiring stalwarts, little did it know the extent of service engraved in Mr Ntiwane's heart as one of the most committed public servants.

Even in his retirement, not only has he become a valuable

asset to his community in Phiva, Nkomazi Local Municipality, owing to his experience of over three decades in law enforcement and security management but has become an extension of the Department's service delivery arm.

Apart from many other initiatives he has taken upon his shoulders since retirement, Mr Ntiwane recently galvanized his community, with the assistance of the Department and Buscor to repair potholes on Phiva's D2940 road. The collaboration saw Buscor donating 55 bags of cement and 10 from the community Headman. The Department's Driekopies Cost Centre provided extra muscles including a TLB, Water Tanker, Tipper Truck and a Grader. The work which started on the 2nd of November 2021 was completed on the 5th but Mr Ntiwane's batteries remain fully charged.



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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME