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Lighting of sixteen candles as a sign of renewing commitment towards relieving the plight of women and girls.

Calling for the end of violence against women and children

By Dudu Shaba: Office of the Premier

The Minister of Communications, Ms Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane together with the MEC of Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr. Petrus Ngomana, led the launch of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children Campaign in Dr JS Moroka, Mpumalanga. The community members of GaMaria Village joined the rest of South Africa and the world in commemorating the event at Moletamotse Sports Ground.

- This year, the theme for the commemoration is “Count me in: together moving a non-violent South Africa forward.” The theme continues to raise awareness among South Africans and the world about the negative impact of violence against women and children.
- Violence against women and children is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights, denying women security, dignity, self-esteem and their fundamental rights.

In the home, on the streets, at school, in the workplace or in their community, women experience physical, emotional or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.

This year’s theme presents an opportunity for the Government and all stakeholders to renew their commitment towards relieving the plight of women and girls and to consolidate efforts to end the violence against women and children.

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign also challenges South

Africa to declare a truce on violence against women and children and ultimately, to make it a permanent one.

The campaign also aims to challenge the perpetrators of violence to change their behaviour, to involve men in helping to eradicate violence and to provide survivors with information on services and organisations that can help lessen the impact of violence on their lives.

In her keynote address, the Minister for Communications, Ms Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane said that a lot of women and children have succumbed to a lot of violence and abuse in the hands of their families, guardians, brothers, men and neighbourhood. She also noted that men are also abused, she acknowledged the fact that must not be underestimated.

“According to a report from the Minister of Police, Mr. Fikile Mbalula, the statistics of crime committed against women and children in South Africa is very high. We are very unhappy about that,” she said. She called upon members of the community to report any incidents of abuse.

“If we do not report cases and protect our children, the abusers will be likely to continue perpetuating the violence and abused children who are highly affected will begin to act unruly and violently,” she said. She also called upon the South African Police Service to protect victims of abuse and to treat them with dignity when they report cases at police stations.

“They should be given their privacy so that they can be able to express themselves without any interference

and also to further avoid intimidation, stigmatization and victimization by the members of the public and perpetrators. The Department of Social Development should also assist child headed families and ensure that they are protected from any form of abuse,” she said. Meanwhile, Major General Christina Sithole, KwaMhlanga, South African Police Services Cluster Offices, added that victims of abuse should avoid withdrawing and settling cases by payments in exchange of their children’s rights.

“Do not withdraw cases so that we are able to keep to our mandate as police,” she said.

Addressing the crowd, Mr. Patrick Mahlakoane, Provincial Chairman for the Disabled People of South Africa, said that physically and mentally abused persons are highly abused and need support and protection from their families and government.

“No one applies for disability, in this launch, we need to know that mentally and physically challenged persons are sexually abused and they are defenseless. Let us all work together to move forward and to protect the disabled people,” she said.

Minister Kubayi-Ngubane, together with MEC of Community Safety, Security and Liaison Petrus Ngomana visited Pelonolo, a centre for learners with mental challenges and disabilities. Minister Kubayi-Ngubane also used the opportunity to create awareness about Broadcasting Digital Migration, she donated television sets and witnessed the installation of Set Top Boxes to beneficiaries. She also donated fully furnished houses and blankets to identified resource deprived families at the stadium.

Mpumalanga house of traditional leaders congratulates Ikosi Mahlangu as new chairperson of the national house



Newly elected National Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Ikosi Mahlangu sharing a joke with the Premier, Mr David Mabuza during a function in Mbombela.

By the Department of Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

The Mpumalanga Provincial House of Traditional Leaders (MPHTL) has congratulated the newly elected Chairperson of the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) Ikosi Sipho Mahlangu who hails from Mpumalanga Province. Ikosi Mahlangu served as the Provincial Chairperson of the House and subsequently the Deputy Chairperson.

‘We congratulate Ikosi Mahlangu of the Ndzundza Mabusa Traditional Council in his new role as the National Chairperson of the House. We have confidence in his leadership and the entire newly elected Executive. We are confident that he will steer the traditional leadership institution towards the objectives of improving the livelihoods of communities in rural areas,’ said Chairperson of MPHTL, Inkhosi Sandile Ngomane. Inkhosi Ngomane expressed the determination of the MPHTL to support Mahlangu and the new Executive.

Ikosi Mahlangu was instrumental in the initiatives to curb the loss of lives in the initiation schools. Ngomane’s compliments were echoed by the MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni. “Ikosi Mahlangu’s leadership speaks for itself in the structures of the institution of traditional leaders. We will rely on his experience which he accumulated over the years whilst serving as Chairperson of the Provincial House and in various committees of the house. He exemplifies the strategic partnership between traditional leaders and government that shares the common vision of improving the lives of communities in rural areas,” says Ms Mtshweni.

SALGA Mpumalanga Provincial Members’ Assembly hosted successfully



Clr. S Mathonsi (SALGA Mpumalanga Deputy Chairperson), Inkosi C Mahlangu (Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders Deputy Chairperson), MEC R Mtshweni (MEC for COGTA), Clr. M Chirwa (SALGA Mpumalanga Chairperson) and Clr. L Malatji (SALGA Mpumalanga Deputy Chairperson)

by SALGA

On the 5th to the 6th of October 2017, SALGA hosted its Provincial Members’ Assembly at the Protea Hotel, eMalahleni. The purpose of the event was to adopt the provincial members’ programme of action, the business plan and budget, to

consider reports from the working groups and oversight bodies and also to deal with other issues of concern emanating from the provisions applicable to provincial members. The SALGA Constitution stipulates, “SALGA shall at least annually, hold a meeting of its members. During

her keynote address, the MEC for the Department of Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Ms Refilwe Mtshweni, appreciated the participation of SALGA and the support it provides to the municipalities and departments on matters pertaining to local government.

“We note the challenges that lie ahead and the conditions under which councilors have to fulfill their obligations,” she said.

During the proceedings of the assembly, LGSETA delivered a presentation on the importance of skills development and capacity building that requires urgent intervention in the province. Two panel discussions also took place that focused on Governance and Intergovernmental Relations and Municipal Finance. The PMA also focused on commissions that looked into Community Development, Economic Development and Planning and Municipal Institutional Development issues.

The Provincial Members Assembly tabled their resolutions and appreciated the relations between SALGA, the Provincial Government, Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature and its strategic partners for continuously providing the necessary support and assistance to the member municipalities. The members also declared to continue sharing best practices in order to introduce innovative practices amongst municipalities and SALGA.

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Contributions by all sector departments / district and local municipalities



A local farm donated 50 wheel Chairs to the Tonga Hospital.

Local farm donates 50 wheel chairs to tonga hospital in the nkomazi area

By Dumisani Malamule: Department of Health

Christmas has come early for some residents in the Tonga area in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. This after a local farm donated 50 wheel Chairs to the Tonga Hospital. The donation came after the Tonga Hospital Board saw the dire need of wheel Chairs for patients and decided to approach the local farm.

Novasun Products (Pty) Ltd, as part of their social responsibility decided to open its heart and assist with the donation. The value of the donation is R85 380.56. The Tonga area is currently having a wheel chair waiting list of 165 in the current financial year of

2016/2017. The Department also made available an additional 17 wheel chairs for patients, which bring the total number to 67.

The wheel chairs will be given to the first top 67 patients in the waiting list. The Department is currently putting plans in place to ensure that the remaining 98 patients receive wheel chairs as soon as possible. MEC for Health, Mr Gillion Mashego has thanked the local farm for their good gesture. "I would like to thank our hospital board for the role that they have played in bringing the local farm on board to donating the wheel chairs. I hope that other hospital boards will learn from this and take people's needs seriously by

seeking assistance outside of government"

MEC Mashego has reiterated that health needs grow every day and that the Department in collaboration with various stakeholders from the public and private sector are joining hands to ensure that most of the health needs are met.

"Our priority as a Department is to ensure that we close the gaps where we can by working with various stakeholders. As government we cannot deliver health services alone, that is why we partner with many private companies and public entities to ensure that we deliver the best health service for the people of Mpumalanga" said Mashego.

Mpumalanga Department of Health won National Innovation Awards 2017 on emergency medical dispatch system

By Dumisani Malamule: Department of Health

On Friday the 27th of October 2017 at Birchwood hotel in Boksburg. The Minister of Public service and administration Ms Faith Muthambi awarded Mpumalanga Department of Health as the overall winner on Emergency Medical Dispatch System innovations.

The department also pocketed other awards in Innovation Enhancements of Internal Systems of Government and Special Ministerial award Recognition of trailblazers. The awards targets all three spheres of government, innovation practitioners, as well as partners from the private sector and academia. They promote and encourage best practice in public sector innovation and service delivery and celebrate the successes of individuals and teams at all spheres of government in their quest to innovatively improve service delivery.

The MEC for Health in Mpumalanga Mr Gillion Mashego commended the team for the excellent and exciting initiatives, this will go a long way in addressing the issues Ambulance delays and This initiative which came at the time that the response system of the ambulance was done manual and it was time consuming to dispatch an ambulance without the system and this solution made it possible to get an ambulance much faster and easier than before he said. Category A: Innovation Solutions Reducing the Cost of Delivering Services



The system assists the EMS Department to manage ambulances and coordinate the dispatching and the transportation of patients from hospital to hospital in a form of transfer and patient from homes or accidents scene to the designated hospital. Trophy + R 20 000. 00 + Certificate

Overall trophy + R 60 00. 00 + Certificate
Category D: Innovation Enhancements of Internal Systems of Government. (2nd runner up)
Job Application Profiling System (2nd runner up)
Huawei tablets + 2 Certificates

The developed "Job application profiling system" assists HR users to connect on one database unlike before on a manual system where they used to create different spreadsheet and consolidate at the end of the capturing which makes the process of profiling received applications long and it was difficult to

pick up duplicated applications. With the developed system now they are able to capture received candidates applications with the user friendly system, auto pickup duplicated applications during capturing, printout list of all applied candidates per post effortlessly, select candidates who meet set requirements, allocate applications a number automatically, and capturing is now faster compared to working on the manual excel spreadsheet. At the end of it all there is improvement in the time spent to receive and capture received applications.

Special Ministerial award: Optical Laboratory Certificate + award + R20 000
This is a project that won an award from establishing an optical laboratory that is

able to make spectacles in-house instead of relying on private service providers to supply. This initiative came out as a solution to the millions of people of Mpumalanga who cannot afford a pair of spectacles from private optometrists.

This is the first of its kind in the country. This project will not be a project but a program that will ensure sustainability in continuing to deliver services to promote sight thus preventing avoidable blindness. This project came as a program that will also work hand in hand with school health program in delivery sight to those kids with poor sight as well as older persons program for those older persons who will be able to read their bible, able to see their airtime, their electricity and even to continue to sew their clothes.



Chairperson of the Interpol Advisory Board Mr Calum MacDonald and HOD Sinsi Xulu at the Lekgotla.

DEA releases the 2016/17 National Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Report

By the Department of Environmental Affairs

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has released the 2016/17 National Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Report (NECER) and also unveiled the new Green Scorpions logo during the 7th biennial Environment Compliance and Enforcement Lekgotla that was held from 6th until 9th of November in White River.

The Lekgotla provided a platform for the Environmental Management Inspectorate (EMI), commonly known as the Green Scorpions, to reflect on the work done over the past two years, while also developing innovative and strategic tools to enhance environmental compliance and enforcement capacity. The Green Scorpions are a network of environmental compliance and enforcement officials from national, provincial and municipal government, who all share the same legislative powers and duties in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) and operate across the country.

As at 31 March 2017, the national EMI Register reflected a total of 2 880 EMIs, comprising 2 577 from national and provincial authorities and 303 from municipalities. Of the total 2 577 EMIs on the national register (national and provincial authorities),

1726 of them are Grade 5 EMI field rangers employed at national and provincial parks authorities. An overview of the criminal environmental enforcement activities which occurred during the period under review shows a total of 1497 criminal dockets registered by the EMIs, with a total of 1092 arrests made by the Green Scorpions during the period under review. The report also indicates an increase in the number of convictions obtained, from 52 in 2015/16 period, to 76 in the 2016/17. The report also records a total of 119 fines in terms of Section 24G of NEMA, which equated to a total sum of R 9 766 445.22. A total of 998 admission of guilt fines were issued to the value of R393 291. Admission of guilt fines are issued to minor offenders who are given an option to pay a prescribed fine instead of being tried by a court for that offence. The amount of the fine is based on the nature of the offence as well as what a court would presumably have imposed.

A significant volume of environmental compliance work was undertaken, a total of 1756 facilities were inspected by the Green Scorpions. Of these facilities, 1980 were in the green, 2058 in the brown, while 341 were in the blue sub-sector.

The compliance and enforcement work is also undertaken through the application of administrative enforcement tools such as the issuing of directives and compliance notices. It is in this regard that, for the period under review, a total of 1100 administrative enforcement notices were issued, many of which are related to restricted activities involving listed invasive species.

The HOD at the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs Ms Sindi Xulu officially opened the Lekgotla on the first day, and she applauded the Green Scorpions for their sterling work in tackling environmental contraventions. "We are very proud of the men and women who have dedicated their lives to ensure all citizens and corporates operating in South Africa adhere to the requirements of our legislation. It is through the work of the Green Scorpions, amongst others, that government is working hard to protect the integrity of the environment for the benefit of current and future generations," said Xulu.

An awards ceremony was held on the last day to recognise excellent and outstanding performance of the Green Scorpions and other key role-players in tackling environmental contraventions.

Season's Greetings

As the year draws to a close, it is an opportune time for us to assess our gains and introspect on the past year. I would like to express my gratitude for bestowing your trust in our government to provide a better life for all. I wish you and your families, a well-deserved rest during the Festive Season.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year



Premier DD Mabuza



Mr Themba Gogwane - General Manager Technical Services directing the construction of the extension 8 sewer pump station during inspection visit in Mashishing.

First phase of mashishing ext 2 sewer pump station completed

By the Ehlanzeni District Municipality

The Ehlanzeni District Municipality has officially handed over a completed Sewer Pump Station project to the community of Mashishing EXT 2, which was launched and completed in 2017.

Officially handing over the sewer pump station, Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) Cllr Musa Nkuna, said that the infrastructure will restore the dignity of the people and bring relief to the community of Mashishing EXT 2.

Previously, the community of Mashishing Extension 2, experienced sewage leakage which ended in the field and ultimately into the water

streams, currently this is going to be a thing of the past.

The sewer network was linked to a sewer pump station built during the Human Settlement project and was never put in operation, as a result, this made the operation of the ablution system in the Mashishing Extension 2 to be difficult.

“The sewer pump stations are designed to handle raw sewage that is fed from underground gravity pipelines and their main function is to move waste water to higher elevations,” explained the Contractor, Mr. M.J. Mthombeni.

In the spirit of Cooperative Governance and the Ehlanzeni District Municipality’s mandate of

providing support to local municipalities, the Ehlanzeni District Municipality has constructed two sewer gravity collector pipelines from the sewer network to the sewer sump pump station, placed a rising pumping main pipe connected to the existing main gravity pipeline leading to the Waste Water Treatment Works and installed the new sewer pump sets.

It should be noted that the total work in bringing about relief to the community of extension two in Lydenburg, will include the installation of a bigger pipe to replace the old one, which was not able to carry the anticipated load of the liquid waste from the surrounding settlement.

Gert Sibande tackles potholes through partnership

By Bongki Ka Dube: Gert Sibande District Municipality



Executive Mayor Cllr M. Chirwa and Executive Mayor Cllr S. Nkosi of GSDM and Msukaligwa Municipality during the launch of the pothole patching at Breyten.

The Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality, Cllr Muzi Chirwa and the Council has approved a budget of R5m per financial year for the past two years in order to focus on the patching of potholes.

The condition of roads and potholes in the Gert Sibande District remained a serious concern until the District and its municipalities finally decided to tackle the issue. It also remains the aim of the Gert Sibande District Municipality to engage in activities, which are directly addressing challenges that the

municipalities are facing.

Gert Sibande District is predominantly a rural district, in order to attract investment, it is important that the District, local Municipalities partner together to address areas, which are key to development and improved service delivery.

In order to address the challenge, cooperatives, local businesses and emerging small business have been utilised within each Local Municipality in the pothole-patching programme. This programme was also meant for transfer of skills, empowerment and the future capacitating of local business people. During the launch of the programme, working equipment consisting of concrete cutter, bomag/compactor, rakes, jackhammer and brooms was handed over to all the Local Municipalities for the pothole patching.

To date, the bladding and re-gravelling of roads has been successfully implemented and this programme has been conducted in partnership with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, which also financially contributed towards the programme.



Water Quality Testing Laboratory front view.

Gert Sibande District Municipality puts Mpumalanga Province on the map through its notable municipal initiatives

By Bongki Ka Dube: Gert Sibande District Municipality

Gert Sibande District Municipality continues to deliver on its promise of providing quality infrastructure and improved services. The geographically centred Water laboratory located on the N17 corner to Bethal and Nelspan Roads to ensure easy access was recently accredited by the South African National Accreditation Systems (SANAS) confirming that the facility meets the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 requirements. SANAS is the only national body responsible for carrying out internationally recognised accreditations in respect of conformity assessment as mandated through the Accreditation for Conformity Assessment, Calibration and Good Laboratory Practice Act (Act 19 of 2006). The Gert Sibande Water Quality Laboratory is the only one of its kind in the entire Mpumalanga Province which commenced its operations in 2011 and is servicing all its Local Municipalities within the Gert Sibande District and also private customers

requiring laboratory services. It ensures that the water quality services are within the provisions of Section 9 (1) of the Water Services Act 108 of 1997. It is the ultimate goal to service Mpumalanga as a whole. The services of the laboratory include the provision of analytical services to local municipalities and industries, promoting careers in science by providing opportunities to students in the form of in-service training, promotion of water quality and care for water in communities through active in awareness programs offered by the Local Municipalities.

The laboratory is staffed with a competent technical team responsible for performing microbiology, chemical and physical analysis. There is a Quality Management Section which is a custodian of the Quality Management System being implemented by the Gert Sibande Laboratory which ensures that the laboratory produces accurate, credible and defendable results and complies with the requirement of ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standards and the SANAS

regulatory requirements.

During the launch of the accreditation of the laboratory the Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality Cllr. Muzi Chirwa said “We aim at improving the quality of drinking water for our citizens and to also pick up any toxic and harmful substances that could be in our water reserves in double quick time. We also hope that Mpumalanga province as a whole and our country will also benefit from this project as well as our neighbouring countries. We are certain that finally we will, as a District, be able to reach the Blue Drop standards as set by the Department of Water and Sanitation. We are optimistic that this project will also form a pillar that will drive our economy and eradicate poverty and unemployment” All potential customers and citizens are invited to contact the laboratory to find out more about its services. We also encourage young people to acquaint themselves with the facility as it may be in line with their career paths.

Mpumalanga Provincial Municipal Health Services Summit

By SALGA

SALGA brought together all Environmental Health Practitioners in the Province in its first ever provincial MHS summit held on 26 – 27 October at Steve Tshwete Local Municipality Banquet Hall. The summit was attended by Environmental Health Practitioners from all three district municipalities as well as those from the Provincial Department of Health. PEC and Working group members were also present led by the PEC Chairperson, Cllr MG Chirwa and the Working Group Chairperson, Cllr S Nkadameng. The purpose of the summit was as follows:

- To develop a common approach to the functions of Municipal Health Services as part of basic service delivery that is critical for local government;
- To enhance co-operation, mutual assistance and sharing of resources among municipalities
- To find solutions for problems relating to Environmental Health
- To facilitate co-operative governance and Intergovernmental Relations in the Environmental Health sector
- To empower municipal officials on the legislation that governs MHS services as well as current or emerging trends in the sector, and
- To share best practices and current developments on the implementation of MHS services.

- The summit was addressed by SALGA PEC Chairperson who acknowledged that there has been developments in the sector but also acknowledged existing challenges relating to funding, human resources and capacity building. The first day of the summit dealt with operational issues where all three districts presented their status quo reports, SALGA National presented on the resolutions of the National summit held in 2016 and the National Department of Health presented on the Environmental health norms and standards for South Africa. Among other things, the aim of the norms and standards is to provide a National approach towards standardization in the delivery of Environmental Health services in the country and ultimately to ensure the attainment of the highest possible level of environmental health and environmental health services by all involved. The Department of Health also presented highlights of the audits they conducted in municipalities in 2016 and 2017. The first day concluded with Commission discussions on three topics, namely Legislation, Operational issues and Capacity Building.

The second day was focused on Training and Capacity Building. The University of Johannesburg and Tshwane University of technology provided presentations on current research topics and recommendations for local government. The

Department of Health made a presentation on Guidelines for the management of rabies. The Department of Environmental Affairs presented on Climate Change and how it affects environmental health. LG SETA presented on Funding for Community Service Positions in Municipalities. The summit concluded with recommendations for improved Environmental Health Services in the province which include capacity building for municipalities, information sharing on legislation and current case law as well as standardization of operational procedures in the province. The recommendations will be considered in the Municipal Health Managers Forum as well as the Provincial Working Group for implementation.



SALGA brought together all Environmental Health Practitioners in the Province.

MEC for Education Reginah Mhaule applauds class of 2017

By the Department of Education



The MEC for Education, Mrs. Reginah Mhaule

MEC for Education, Ms Reginah Mhaule has congratulated the class of 2017 for their great work and making the Province proud during their Matriculation examination. In 2017, the Mpumalanga Province obtained a 74,8% pass rate for its Matriculation results. “The 2017 Grade 12 results represents 12 Years of hard work, dreams, hopes and aspirations of the learners, parents and their communities they live in,”

said MEC Mhaule.

The number of full time learners who wrote all seven subjects in 2017 are 48 483 and of this number, 36 273 have passed the National Senior Certificate Examination. MEC Mhaule said that though the statistics regrettably depicts a 2.3% decrease from the 2016 grade 12 pass rate, the number of distinctions in the Province has increased from 8084 in 2016 to 8941 in 2017.

“This means that there are 857 more distinctions

this time around. There is also a recorded slight improvement in bachelor passes from 22,9% to 23,4% in 2017. 4315 progressed learners wrote all subjects and out of this number 2433 passed,” she said. She also noted that programmes aimed at empowering the girl child are beginning to yield satisfactory results in the Province.

“We must continue to work hard together with our communities to create an enabling platform for the emancipation of the girl child and the Department will intensify the implementation of the Caring4 girls programmes to ensure that this positive trend is sustained,” she commented.

The school which obtained its first position in the Province for the academic year, passing all 231 learners that wrote is Hoerskool Nelspruit. The school also obtained the most distinctions with a total of 295. The most improved school in 2017 is Hlelimfundo Secondary School from Volkrust Circuit in Gert Sibande. This registered an improvement of 64.45% from 2016 and obtained 86.55%.

“We wish to reiterate our position that we don’t expect any school to perform below 70%. Going forward, we should hold our children accountable for this performance. It is our desire that every learner who is in our system to mark at the end of the year of 12 year’s schooling,” she said.

“We will work with teachers to increase efforts on time through a differentiated approach of providing support to schools. My wish for the New Year is that Mpumalanga must rise to the occasion,” she concluded.



From left to right: William Mthombhozi (Head: Community Safety, Security and Liaison), Lt. Gen. Mondli Zuma (SAPS Provincial Commissioner), MEC Pat Ngomane Kevin Pillay (Provincial CPF Board Chairperson) during the presentation of crime statistics in Komatipoort.

Communities should help the police to eradicate crime - MEC Ngomane

By the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison

At a media briefing that was held towards the end of October on the release of crime statistics for 2016/2017 financial year, Mpumalanga Community Safety, Security and Liaison MEC, Pat Ngomane has continued to encourage the communities to work with the police to eradicate crime.

During his remarks, the MEC concurred with Police Minister, Fikile Mbalula that “Behind the numbers are real killings, real lives, real hate, real harm, real losses, real deaths. These statistics represent the memory of that gruesome rape or murder, the fearful home invasion and loss of property.”

With regard to contact crimes, the MEC says they most happen behind closed and as such it is difficult to police such crimes. Which is why, the MEC insists that communities should work with the police. The other issue that contribute to most contact crimes is abuse of alcohol and drugs that often takes place over

the weekend.

Illegal mining and rhino poaching were also to blame for increased numbers of attempted murder and murder.

What also emerged is that contact crimes have gone up by 2%. Contact crimes include crimes such as murder, attempted murder, sexual offences, assault and robbery. Murder in the province has gone up by 11% with 954 cases recorded for the period under review. Attempted murder and aggravated robbery have increased by 19,3% and 11,8% respectively. Sexual offences and assault decreased by 3,5% and 4,1% in that order.

The briefing also noted that crimes which are detected as result of police action went up. They include apprehension of suspects in connection with the illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, drug-related crimes, driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs and sexual offences detected as a result of police operations.

Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs cases have also increased by 15,2 % and sexual offences detected as a result of police action have decreased by 55.9% compared to the same period last year. Car and truck hijacking, house robberies and business robberies have increased by 12,3 per cent.

As part of supporting SAPS’ crime prevention initiatives, the department continues to implement awareness campaigns aimed at enhancing Rural Safety, Border Security and eradicating Gender Based Violence among others.

Stolen goods worth around R40 million were recovered in the previous financial year. Illegal goods, including cigarettes and clothing to the value of more than R27, 4 million were confiscated along the border line. SANDF members arrested 4319 people during patrols.

Ngomane thanked the community policing forums and community members for their assistance in the fight against crime.

Patrons Xperience fun at department's event

By the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation

The Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience came. It entertained and it captured the imagination of the people of Mpumalanga – that was evident at Soulful Xperience at Casambo Lodge on December 3.

The Soulful Xperience was the closing event of this year's Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience and locals came in large numbers to enjoy soothing sounds of Princess Indlovukazi, Blue Lamp, Espresso, Samthing Soweto, Ringo, Jaziel Brothers, Sweet Mike, DJ Man, Amon Mokoena. The Soulful Xperience was compered by Lungile Mhango and Somizi "Somgaga" Mhlongo. Wuuu shem! It was fun and Mduduzi Mbambo of KaNyamazane gave it thumps up. "What a blissful event the department of Culture, Sport and Recreation has organized. It brought an opportunity for young and old to mingle with soul soothing sounds providing the soundtrack. It was great fun and I can't wait for next year's edition."

As per usual, the Cultural Xperience started with a Carnival Street Parade on December 1, which was a cultural explosion of the diverse cultures of the country. Clowns, puppets, floats and cultural groupings brought the capital city of the province to a standstill as they made their way to Hoërskool Bergvlam for the Traditional Music Xperience where Culture, Sport and Recreation MEC, Norah Mahlangu opened the Cultural Xperience. After the opening ceremony, Ihashi Elimhlophe, Nothembi Mkhwebane, Make Shelangubo, General Muzka entertained the crowd, including chairman of Mpumalanga House Traditional Leaders, Inkhosi Ngomane. The Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders (MHTL) partnered with the department to deliver a bigger and better Cultural Xperience. "The presence of the MHTL went a long way in showing that culture is "cool" and that Traditional Leaders have a major role to play in building a better country. Having the MHTL on board ensured that matters of culture are reflected on the Xperience activities as we celebrate the rich cultural traditions and customs that define us a nation," said the MEC.

Tribal Authorities from all corners of the province were invited to be part of the Carnival Street Parade and their presence was a big boost to the event. "We respect our Traditional Leaders as they are entrusted with grounding our communities with the values of our culture," added the MEC.

After Bergvlam, all roads led to Nelspruit Rugby Stadium where men of the cloth took to the stage to pray for prosperity of the country. The prayer sessions were washed down with the music of Sipho Makhabane, Donny, Mpumalanga Praise, Joyous Celebration, Lebo Sekgobela, Bathabile and Rebecca Malope.

Day two (on December 2) of the event was all about the Music Xperience at Mbombela Stadium. A strong lineup - Sands, Nathi, Dr Malinga, Mr Bow, Zonke, Afrotraction, Mr Snake, DJ Sentle, Jay Spitter and DJ Ocean - kept the city dancing until the next day.

"We are grateful for the support and love the people of Mpumalanga showed the Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience. Our aim was to use it to start the summer celebrations and also add excitement to the entertainment scene and a bit fun in the city's nightlife. We are encouraged that we managed to deliver on that promise," said the spokesperson for the department, Sibongile Nkosi.



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