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Sod turning event at the Verena accident scene

On behalf of the Mpumalanga Premier, Ms. Refilwe Mtsweni, MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mr. Gilleon Mashego, planted a tree and laid a wreath at a scene of the incident where 20 people died and seven injured during the tragic crash in Wolvenkop, on the R25 road between Verena and Bronkhorspruit on the 21st of April 2017. MEC Mashego has done this work during the Sod Turning Event, which was held at Verena where more than two thousand people attended. He was accompanied by the Acting Director-General of the Office of the Premier, Mr. Mathews Mohlasedi,

the Executive Mayor of Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, Honourable Ms. Nomsa Mtsweni, the SAPS Chaplain, Mr. Mathews Sibanyoni, traditional leaders, the traffic officers, government officials and the members of the community. The attendees at the scene jointly prayed against the supposed evil spirits that causes accidents continually on that road.

MEC Mashego said that the visit to the scene collared with the commemoration of the struggle stalwarts, Solomon Mahlangu who was brutally murdered and Mama Winnie Mandela, who passed on last year in April. In remembrance of the

deceased, who died on the road, MEC Mashego said that a tombstone will be erected and that the road will be reconstructed. MEC told the attendees at the Sod turning event that the 141 Million project will address the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. "Members of the community should celebrate because local business people, small entrepreneurs, emerging contractors, unemployed people and the youth will be empowered from the project. To the families who lost their loved ones, May God lift His hands and do you well and let us be united as Thembisile Hani people," he concluded.

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MEC Mashilo appoints municipal valuation appeal boards

The Department has appointed 18 members to serve in the Municipal Valuation Appeal Boards for a period of four years. The boards were appointed in line with the Municipal Property Rates Act and are expected to preside over appeals submitted by property owners in the three District Municipalities, namely Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibande.

The MEC, Mr Speed Mashilo handed over certificates of appointment to the members during a function in eMalahleni's Council Chamber. Mr Mashilo appealed to members of the boards to perform their function with due diligence. "Municipalities are expected to collect revenue through payment of property rates. Through this revenue they pay their debtors such as Eskom and other financial obligations including the installation and maintenance of streets and roads. Your role as members of the appeal boards is crucial to resolve complaints that emanate from disputes between the municipalities and property owners," Mr Mashilo said. Rates are determined by municipalities after undertaking a process of valuation of properties. Municipalities adopt rates policies and property rates by-laws to implement the collection of rates. Mr Mashilo encouraged property owners with concern about their rates to submit their objections and appeals to their local municipalities and to accept the outcomes of the appeal boards.



DARDLEA launch "Zonda Insila Programme"

The Zonda Insila Programme in short called ZIP which is a waste management initiative was launched by the MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs Mr Vusi Shongwe at Breyten, Ermelo in the Gert Sibande District on the 12th March 2019.

This programme aims to raise awareness at enhancing and increasing the knowledge of good waste management principles in communities and that waste is not just waste hence it can be turned into business thus the theme "Collect, Recycle for environmental protection and economic upliftment, "Zonda Insila Ucebe".

The programme has adopted the Msukaligwa river stream which the MEC requested that it be kept alive and protected. "This place is not a dumping site, it should be well looked after" he said during the site visit. Members of the community made a promise in the presence of all stakeholders to keep away waste from the stream and requested the MEC to come back and evaluate the initial project. One of the ZIP beneficiaries a young graduate

Nhlakanipho Shabalala from Breyten who holds a BSc in Community Water Services and Sanitation obtained from the University of Limpopo, has been encouraging the people to prevent waste and stated that he wants to implement this project to public schools so as to create awareness.

The Head of Department Mr Lucky Monareng indicated that this programme has so far created job opportunities as it has already employed more than 300 Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants. This initiative implemented a tire recycling process which is in partnership with China to provide good quality machines to recycle waste to ensure that every Municipality in Mpumalanga is clean, he said.

MEC Shongwe declared that as a Department we believe in the theme "Good Green Deeds" which has been launched by the President Cyril Ramaphosa in support with the Thuma Mina campaign thus as a province we started the "Zonda Insila Programme". He then encouraged the community to take part in this program because everyone has a right to live in a clean environment.





Minister restore dignity to the girls and woman of Mpumalanga

Girls and women from across the province converged in numbers to attend the National Sanitary Dignity Launch under the theme, restoring the dignity of young women led by the Minister in the Presidency for Women, Bathabile Dlamini and Premier of Mpumalanga Refilwe Mtshweni held at Mkhondo Local Municipality at the Piet Retief Stadium on 28 February 2019.

The initiative was part of the government's efforts through the Department of Women to ensure that the dignity of the girl child is protected by rolling out free sanitary pads to learners from no fee paying schools. The Minister in the Presidency Bathabile Dlamini said, "There is nothing this government treasures more than the dignity of women and girls".

"Government wants to ensure that these learners attend school without the constraints or hindrance due

to a biological phenomenon which is a natural part of life", said minister.

She further said, the government wants these learners to reach their fullest potential and compete with boy learners on an equal footing so that women can finally and maximally occupy boardrooms of companies, government institutions and other sectors of society and be part of building of a truly diverse and non-sexist society and be leaders in their own right.

"Very few countries in the world supply free sanitary pads to women and girls that cannot afford to access these products. South Africa is one of the leaders in this quest to ensure that women empowerment and gender equality is realised", said the minister.

"If sanitary pads are not made available to women and girls, that would have an impact in the academic progress of girl learners in particular at school while

boys would progress without hindrance and that would perpetuate the prevailing feature of an unequal society", she said.

She said, "The Department of Women has developed a national implementation framework that shall guide provinces in implementation because the framework sets out the values, norms and methodologies so that programme implementation is standardised and no province conducts itself differently from the other and most importantly, to ensure that the learner is able to receive the product on time and that there is a consistent distribution process".

She concluded that women and some critical departments at National, Provincial and Local level because this programme is not just about giving access to these products but also to ensure that the infrastructure at schools is compatible with the aspect of dignity that has been raised already.



Provincial Indaba for older persons

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government held a Provincial Older Persons Indaba (POPI) at Khulisile Palace, KwaMhlanga, Thembisile Hani Local Municipality. The aim of the Indaba was to promote and encourage active ageing and a healthy lifestyle for older persons. The event kick started with a healthy life style walk where the Premier took part joined by the MEC for Health, Ms Sasekani Manzini, Director-General, Office of The Premier, Mr. Kgopana Mohlasedi, Head of Department, Social Development, Mr Xoli Mahlalela, the Executive Mayor of Nkangala District, and Executive Mayor of Thembisile Hani Municipality.

Mpumalanga Premier Mtsweni told the older persons that the POPI was to create a platform to engage, raise awareness on issues affecting older persons and to encourage active ageing and a healthy lifestyle. Premier Mtsweni together with the members of the cabinet signed a pledge to care for older persons in the Province. The pledge also stipulates that older persons from Mpumalanga will live a quality life and enjoy their rights. It further commits to ensure that progressive programmes advancing the care of older persons are included in operational plans of departments or municipalities are fulfilled accordingly and allocated adequate budgets for older persons programmes.

Premier Mtsweni committed that she will do anything in her power to positively contribute to the betterment of older persons in the Mpumalanga Province. During the Indaba session, the older persons engaged in discussions that were pertaining to the theme. An older persons representative from Nkangala District said that they were very much happy for the Indaba to take place as they have been anticipating for a long time. Premier Mtsweni not only signed a pledge, but also donated ten wheel chairs for the elder persons and distributed gifts such as t-shirts, bags, umbrellas, face towels, toothpastes, body lotions and a flasks to the elder persons.