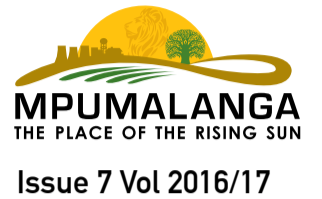


WHEN THE SUN RISES
WE WORK HARD TO DELIVER



INHLABAMKHOSI



Class of 2016 hoist Mpumalanga's flag high



Celebrating Mpumalanga's top 40 Matric result achievers.

Mpumalanga's 2016 matric pass rate has surpassed the national performance rate by far. The Province has achieved an average of 77.1% compared to the national's 72.5% pass rate.

This was revealed when the 2016 top 40 matric learner achievers from the Province were recognised through various awards, at the prestigious event held at Marapyane Agricultural College this month.

The top achievers received awards in the categories of Mathematics, Physical Science,

Accountancy, Life Sciences, SiSwati, Zulu, English and Afrikaans which were awarded by the MEC for Education, Ms Reginah Mhaule.

This saw the first place being claimed by Nomaan Mulla, a learner from Hoerskool Rob Ferreira, White River, who passed all of his seven subjects with seven distinctions. Excited about his achievements, Nomaan Mulla, who was accompanied by his parents, Mr Shoukat Mulla and Ms Samira Mulla, told the crowd that he spent most of his time sacrificing for his studies.

"I sacrificed my television, games, and even holidays. Most of the time when I was free I would just take my books and study," he said. MEC Mhaule congratulated all the top 40 achievers learners and stated that all the four districts in the Mpumalanga Province performed and achieved above seventy per cent, which is more than the national average. She further encouraged the 2017 matriculants to put more effort from the beginning of the year so that they will be able to achieve more than what is expected of them, and also to make the Mpumalanga Province Proud.



Some of the young graduates who are currently enrolled by the Department in the Internship Programme.

Unemployed young graduates offered a new lease of life

About 190 young people in Mpumalanga stand a chance to receive a new lease of life as the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport rolls out internship and learnership programmes to recruit unemployed graduates and matriculants respectively.

The Department is offering at least one hundred and twenty (120) unemployed graduates with diploma or degree within various fields a twelve month internship opportunity. The fields include amongst others, Electrical, Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Real Estate, Public Management, Financial Accounting, Legal Services, Human Resources Administration, Labour Relations, Information Technology as well as Transport and Security Management.

The Graduates will be deployed in various departmental offices within the Province which include Bohlabela, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts as well as Head Office. Eligible candidates will enter into a one year contract with the Department and receive a monthly stipend depending on their qualifications.

On the other hand, young people between 18 and 35 years old with matriculation certificates will also have an opportunity to improve their technical skills through a twelve month learnership programme. The Department is offering at least seventy (70) learnership opportunities where successful candidates will receive training in various artisanship fields such as bricklaying, electrical, plumbing and carpentry. Youth unemployment is a worrying factor in the country and is estimated to be around

70% in the Province. In this regard, such programmes are a welcoming relief to many unemployed and inexperienced young people who are battling to make ends meet. Through the internship and learnership programmes, young people will not only acquire the much needed experience but will be able to put food on the table.

Ms Rose Mahlalela, Director: Human Resource Planning and Development within the Department emphasised the importance of such initiatives in assisting the youth. "This programme is a life-changer to many young people. They do not only work and get stipend but also build new relationships and create networks which will assist them in future. The job market is highly saturated to a point where if you do not have experience, you will not make it," said Ms Mahlalela

Manzini rekindles the flame of learning and teaching



MEC Sasekani Manzini addressing learners from Manyangana Secondary School at Manyeleti village where she donated school uniform during School Re-opening Programme.

The MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Ms Sasekani Manzini visited learners at Manyangana Secondary School in Bohlabela District as part of the Provincial School Re-opening Programme which is aimed at ensuring that the academic year runs smoothly from the very beginning without any hindrances.

During the visit MEC Manzini donated 20 pairs of school shoes and sanitary towels to needy learners at the school. One of the recipients of the gracious gesture by the MEC was Gloria Mabunda from Hluvukani village, who had this to say: "I did not have any school shoes. With this gift from the MEC, I cannot help but look forward to coming to school every day." Manyangana Secondary School which is situated at Manyeleti village scored a pass rate of 85.5 in 2015 and 97.9 in 2016. This

motivated the MEC to visit the school in order to encourage learners and educators to work even harder. "Let us prioritise education and not make excuses for having been born poor. Government is playing a critical role to ensure that every child attends school. It is therefore your decision to make use of this opportunity. Remember a year only comes once so make sure that every time, as each hour passes, you have done something positive," said MEC Manzini.

Since the Department plays a vital role in the provision of scholar transport, in this regard, the MEC also took time to conduct inspection of the buses and also travelled together with the learners on their way to school in order to get a first-hand experience of challenges experienced by learners. The MEC had the opportunity to interact with both the learners and educators from the school.



MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Mr Vusi Shongwe (in the green jacket) during a walk-about at a protected wetland seen with him is HOD, Ms Sindi Xulu (also in a green jacket).

Communities must preserve wetlands

The MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Mr Vusi Shongwe braved the scorching heat at MP Stream near Thulamashashe in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality on 09 February 2017, for a walk-about at a protected wetland. This, happened during the annual provincial commemoration of both Wetlands Day and Grasslands Week, celebrated internationally on the first week of February. Dubbed Mpumalanga's Twin Treasures, this year's message focused on the threatened species that survive on Wetlands and Grasslands as their habitats. MEC Shongwe called on local people at MP

Stream to look after the Wetland and play their role in preserving it. He also donated whillie-bins to local schools to use for recyclable items.

The entourage touring the Wetland, which included the Head of the Department Ms Sindiwe Xulu, was taken from one type of tree to another, including grass, with valuable information shared on them by a guide, who also pointed at unwanted trees that are not good for wetlands. "Protecting our Twin Treasures mean we are protecting birds, mammals, plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates from possible extinction. The neighbouring households here must play their role in protecting this natural habitat",

said MEC Shongwe.

Meanwhile, an informative Environmental Capacity Building Workshop took place at the Lydenburg Waterfocus Centre on 26 January 2017, as a build-up towards the Wetlands Day commemoration, and it focused mainly on the threats posed on the species that live and survive on Wetlands and Grasslands. Presentations at the workshop were specifically on what is under threat in Mpumalanga's Twin Treasures, like Cranes, Larger Carnivores, Moles and Bats, Cycads, and Invertebrates. "Wetlands and Grasslands are worryingly under threat, and it is never too late for all of us to play our part to salvage whatever little that is left", concluded Shongwe.

Renovation of municipal offices in Balfour gets underway

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in Mpumalanga has undertaken to renovate the Dipaleseng Municipal offices in Balfour. The renovation of the offices is one of the municipal supporting measures undertaken by COGTA during the 2016/17 financial year.

Improvement of the efficiency of the municipality to manage its affairs is at the core of the renovation. "This multi-million rand project is aimed at facelifting and expanding the office facility of the Dipaleseng Local Municipality in order to improve its institutional capability to deliver proper and satisfactory services to the local community,"

MEC for COGTA, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni explained.

Municipalities, as the third sphere of government, are central to the delivery of basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, roads construction, processing of vehicle licenses, registration of property and indigents, and so forth. The renovation will also improve office space. Currently, the offices are constrained to accommodate fifty-two officials (52) instead of eighty two (82) in line with the requirements of the municipality.

Ms Mtshweni says by renovating the offices, the municipality's capability to deal with cleanliness of the town, improvement of proper community amenities and roll



Dipaleseng Executive Mayor, Cllr Mafunda Makhubu inspecting the building under renovation.

out of services, will be enhanced. "We are convinced that once the renovation project is completed, the municipality will be in a stronger position to manage its own affairs," she said.

Dipaleseng Executive Mayor, Cllr Mafunda Makhubu says the renovation project has stimulated economic activities for the locals as short term job opportunities have been created. "Sixty-five (65) short term job opportunities have been created. This goes a long way for our people faced with unfavourable economic conditions," he said. The renovation project will be completed in March 2017.



MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr Sikhumbuzo Kholwane welcomed the work done by the Municipal Finance units.

Provincial Treasuries share best practices on municipal finance support

Mpumalanga Provincial Treasury held intergovernmental engagement session with the aim to share information with their counterparts from KwaZulu Natal and to learn best practices on municipal finance support programme.

The intergovernmental meeting which was held on Wednesday, 01 February 2017, brought together the officials from Municipal Finance units, all who are determined to improve the quality of support to the municipalities in their respective Provinces.

In his opening remarks, the MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr Sikhumbuzo Kholwane welcomed the work done by the Municipal Finance units but indicated that more still needs to be done to capacitate the municipalities to improve on their

management of finances.

He said the Province is eager to take the best practices and implement them in order to improve the quality of support to our municipalities.

The Head of Municipal Finance in KZN Treasury, Mr Farhad Cassimjee welcomed the opportunity to meet the Municipal Finance team of Mpumalanga and hinted that the two units will have continuous engagements in the quest to address matters of mutual concerns.

Mr Cassimjee said KwaZulu Natal Treasury is currently implementing various initiatives in the areas of municipal finance, cash flow management, infrastructure grants and single accounting system amongst others. “The purpose of these initiatives is to put in place a disciplined approach to the management of municipalities’ cash, and timely identify and address any shortfalls in order to support the liquidity of the

municipalities.

“We have a simple philosophy. We prefer to prevent the illness, rather than trying to resuscitate a dying patient”, said Mr Cassimjee.

He added “training of officials in the budget office is critical to address many challenges that are currently being experienced by the municipalities”.

The meeting ended with a consensus that the initiatives around infrastructure grant, contracting of expert support services, training on VAT reconciliation and assets management should be replicated in the Province in order to improve the financial management in municipalities.

The Province is currently implementing the Municipal Support Programme (MSP) which is designed to complement and add value to the work done by the municipalities in the areas of service delivery and financial administration.

Acornhoek Community Library ready to impart knowledge

The democratic government has taken upon itself the massive social responsibility of providing improved public infrastructure such as schools, roads and hospitals to mention just a few. Libraries are on the list of critical amenities that play a major role in disseminating information particularly to improve the quality of life through education. Many learners as well as the community at large in rural areas have found another source of information through several community libraries that have recently been constructed by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport on behalf of the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR).

The Department recently handed over the Acornhoek Community Library to

DCSR which was constructed at a tune of R10 million. The project which started in September 2015 saw the creation of 35 work opportunities which benefited the locals. Ms Pinky Khoza, a resident from Acornhoek said: “I am very happy about the construction of this community library because it will open opportunities for community members to gain access to information such as daily newspapers and the Internet to search for employment opportunities. I will personally use it to do research for my assignments since I am currently studying. I used to travel as far as White River just to get information for my assignments and that cost me a lot of money.” Evidently, the Mpumalanga Government is making strides towards a brighter future. Community members at Acornhoek and

many parts of the Province are already enjoying the fruits of the struggle waged by stalwarts like the late Dr Nelson Mandela, Oliver Reginald Tambo and many others.



New Acornhoek Library.



Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Cllr GM Chirwa, Chief Albert Luthuli Mayor Cllr DP Nkosi and District Municipal Manager during the Sod-turning of a water project at Bettysgoed.

Extending Access to Water in Traditional Leadership areas

For years Inkosi Mnisi of Duma Traditional Council and Inkosi Nhlapho of Mpisikazi Traditional Council and their communities at Bettysgoed and Dundonald respectively around Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality, has been longing for clean drinkable water and year after year they kept their hope up that a better life will arrive at their villages.

As part of District Mayor first 100 days projects in office, Cllr Chirwa and his leadership has endeavoured to deliver and to implement promises made during August 3, 2016 election.

On the 28 September 2016, Cllr GM Chirwa and Chief Albert Luthuli Executive Mayor Cllr DP Nkosi visited the Duma Traditional Council with good news at a packed community hall, that the District will construct and refurbish Lusushwane Bulk water treatment plant.

After engaging with the community of Bettysgoed about the long awaited projects, the Executive Mayor, Councillors and Tradition-

al Council went on to the project site, and conducted a small Sod turning ceremony of a new Water treatment plant at ward 16.

“We are implementing it now, the plant will be built at total cost of R95 million and it will be completed in three phases of which the first phase will be completed by October 2017 at a total budget of R29 million, said the Mayor”.

Chirwa said, the implementation of the project is calling for public participation and partnership with local communities. The District mayor has called on local communities to register Cooperative businesses because is the only way to help develop township economy and a new government approach in LED.

About 21933 beneficiaries will benefit from the construction of the new water pump station which it will supply potable water to the communities and villages such as Robinsdale, Bettysgoed, Smithfield, Aankomst, Pampoen, Lochiel, Hartbeeskop, Houtbosch, and Oshoek.

Meanwhile the upgrading of the Dundonald – Mpuluzi road at the cost of R6 million have been received with excitement by local communities. Fifteen (15) people will benefit from EPWP employment.

The projects are implemented by Gert Sibande District municipality on behalf of Chief Albert Luthuli municipality, to assist the local municipality to meet its objectives of eradicating service delivery backlogs. Addressing the community at Dundonald, Cllr GM Chirwa said the government of Mpumalanga and the District will introduce community participatory work services. “I encourage communities to register Cooperatives because as the district we are committed to promote local township economy and this will involve more community groupings when we implement local projects such as this one”, concluded the mayor.

The Induna of Duma Traditional Council welcomed the project and said it will create jobs and alleviate poverty.

All hands on deck for projects delivery



MONITORING: MEC SK Mashilo (middle) in discussion with Msukaligwa's MMC, Clr Nkosi (L) and Executive Mayor, Cllr Solomon Nkosi (R) at one of the construction sites.

Constant monitoring and effective systems by municipalities ought to be paramount at ensuring smooth roll-out of human settlements projects in communities. This was an appeal made by Mpumalanga MEC for Human Settlements, Speedy Mashilo to councillors and officials during his recent municipal outreach programme. His visit at Msukaligwa, Govan Mbeki and Thaba Chweu Local Municipalities discovered bottle-necks on the construction of houses and other services such as Community Residential Units and servicing of sites. The programme engages municipal councillors and government officials from both the Department and the municipalities to present progress reports on projects in their respective areas. "I recently held a meeting with contractors and told them that

our main responsibility is to settle people, but not to empower them, off course they will benefit in the process", highlighted MEC Mashilo. The sessions demand answers from officials and some ward councillors who are believed to be contributing to slow delivery of projects.

A briefing on the state of housing delivery at Msukaligwa showed that some projects could no start on time owing to public protests, poor beneficiary coordination, and demands by the community to distribute the over 600 allocated units throughout the sections at Extension 6 and 7 in Wesselson. After a lengthy debate in presenting the challenges, it was agreed that the council through the Executive Mayor must engage the affected communities to come up with amicable solutions on the persisting matters. "I must say that there is a need

by councillors and officials to be more proactive so as to detect challenges on time", implored Mashilo.

In Govan Mbeki, the construction of 100 CRU units at Extension 9 has stalled owing to challenges raised by a certain eMbalenhle Contractor's Forum that is demanding employment from the main contractor. The current occupants also refuse to occupy the newly built units saying they are small, and some enrolled local sub-contractors are demanding better allocation of projects and payments from the main contractor. A series of stakeholder's meeting are ongoing to address the impasse at the project. Also in the municipality, there is slow pace by the contractor in delivering 204 of the 289 low cost houses at Extension 22 in eMbalenhle. The municipal outreach programme is continuing to other municipalities.

Mkhizeville community benefits from a R12 million rural housing project

A R11.6 million rural and farm worker assistance programme has brought a new leaf of life for the rural and farm dwellers of Saul Mkhizeville in the Mkhondo Local Municipality, Mpumalanga. The 100 housing units' project delivered by the Department of Human Settlements has 86 units at an advanced stage with three families already having taken occupation. This development was observed by a task team from the provincial House of Traditional Leadership under the guidance of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

Project Manager, Mr Mandla Magagula reported that the project started late last year with the projection to build 100 units in the area for beneficiaries in dire need. "The project has seen a remarkable progress and we are confident that the contractor will be done by the end of the quarter," explained Magagula. He outlined that 86 units are almost complete and in the remaining 14 sites, the Department is assessing the state of

habitability before putting up structures. Leading the traditional delegation and Chairperson of the Committee, Chief Sicelo Nkosi from Empakeni, conveyed his satisfaction about the project and declared that it was one of his best based on the previous visits. "If we could all move with this very same pace I believe that we can deliver only the best our province can be proud of. I am pleased with the work of the contractor and we can only hope that he finishes the project in time since so many beneficiaries are waiting out there," appreciated Chief Nkosi.

After assessing the project, the committee visited the three beneficiaries to check whether their conditions were conducive and that there were no snags in their newly built houses. One of the beneficiaries, 57 year-old Ms Nompoti Shongwe was stunned and thanked the committee together with the Department for affording her a house to occupy before it was too late.

"We were suffering not knowing what to do, where to go especially when it rains.

Water would emerge from the floor while we were still sleeping and the entire shack would be waterlogged leaving us stranded as a family," recounted Shongwe of her plight. The Department has recently held a stock-taking meeting with contractors to urge them to finish their work before the quarter has lapsed or else risk termination of their contracts. The farm worker assistance programme has been designed to assist residents/people who are residing on farms to access housing.



PERFECT: One of the houses delivered by Human Settlements at Saul Mkhize Villlage, Mkhondo Local Municipality.



PRAGMATIC: MEC Mtshweni (middle) and the cast of Ligwalagwala FM's radio drama team preparing to record safety awareness episodes. Drama Producer, Mr Mfundo Khoza (left) and Ms Emelinah Hleko who plays LaMabuza.

Mtshweni takes floods awareness campaign to radio dramas

The Nkomazi, City of Mbombela and Bushbuckridge Local municipalities may have survived tropical cyclone, Dineo as predicted by meteorologists. However, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Leaders (COGTA) in Mpumalanga remains on high alert. Relief material stockpiled in the storage room of the Provincial Disaster Management Centre is evidence enough for the high level of the state of readiness by COGTA to support communities in distress in the event of potential disasters. Pursuant to the goal of reducing fatalities in the rivers and dams, MEC for COGTA, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni has taken the floods

awareness campaign to radio dramas on Ligwalagwala FM and Ikwekwezi FM. Both drama series draw large audiences that are a target for the awareness campaign in an attempt to save lives.

The first episode was recorded on Ligwalagwala FM's 'Walitfota Lelimanti' drama, aired daily on the radio station from 19h15 until 19h30. The storyline for the drama focused on safety measures in which the MEC cautioned communities not to cross bridges in over flowing rivers and dams by foot or vehicles, to stay on higher ground and avoid flooded areas, to keep children away from flooded streams, dams and rivers, to avoid walking under power lines to prevent

lightning, to report emergencies to the Provincial Disaster Management on the toll free number: 0800 202 507 and to save water by fixing leaking pipes and taps. The second episodes will be aired on Ikwekwezi FM's 'Osemsamo' drama. Ms Mtshweni adopted the radio drama approach as a radical measure to prevent loss of lives and to complement the traditional public platforms during departmental, municipal and cultural functions. She has also mobilised traditional leaders, councillors, Community Development Workers (CDWs) to participate in the awareness campaign by conveying the message of safety in their local communities.

Municipal service delivery arm strengthened by deployment of graduate technical experts

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in Mpumalanga welcomes the deployment of fourteen (14) officials, amongst them four (4) young graduates and ten (10) experiential learners with technical knowledge, to various municipalities in the Province. The municipalities are: Emakhazeni, Nkomazi, Emalahleni, Bushbuckridge, Thaba Chweu and Ehlanzeni District. These officials are trained in the fields of Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Construction Management, Town and Regional Planning by the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA).

MEC for COGTA, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni says the deployment of these officials

will strengthen the capacity of municipal technical services in an effort to deliver the much needed basic services such as water and electricity. "This deployment is a major intervention for the effectiveness of municipal technical services that are central to the delivery of water and electrification. It will advance our cause in the delivery of basic services and capacity building as these two areas are amongst the five (5) pillars set out in the implementation of the Integrated Municipal Support Plan (IMSP)," Ms Mtshweni said.

Municipalities in Mpumalanga are struggling to attract scarce skills such as engineers due to their location in rural areas. Ms Mtshweni says the officials are a solution to municipalities that are rurally-based

in pursuit of the service delivery goal to increase the number of people with access to water and electricity.



Graduates deployed to the municipalities by MISA



Mpumalanga Cycle Tour 2017 won by Willie Smith.

Smith wins second MP cycle tour on the bounce

The 2017 Mpumalanga Cycle Tour, is the second of its kind. The first tour was held in January 2016 following a directive by Premier, Mr. D.D. Mabuza. This tour is ground breaking and is one of the biggest sporting events to be held annually in Mpumalanga. It has become an international event in only two years. This year's tour attracted cyclists from Europe and the United States of America. The tour is a catalyst for economic and social change and will contribute to the transformation of cycling. An increase in black participants was noted this year but we are still far from the transformed cycling community that was envisaged by Premier

Mabuza in his call for cycling to be prioritised in the Province. Through its six stages which included Swadini Forever Resort for the first time this year, the tour also brought about economic spin offs for the Province of the Rising Sun.

It may still be in its infancy, but it looks like Willie Smith will dominate the tour for a longtime, following another big win. Smith, who rides for Road Cover, was the biggest winner at this year's tour after claiming the top prize to cement his place as the most successful rider in the history of the two-year old race. "I want to thank my team and fellow riders for helping me win the tour," said the Mashishing (formerly Lydenburg)

born rider, attributing his victory to being familiar with the route and training hard. "As a provincial government, we are excited that we hosted yet another successful edition of the Mpumalanga Cycle Tour. Hosting an event of this magnitude afforded us with a platform to promote social cohesion. 2018 will be bigger and better," said MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation, Norah Mahlangu.

The Mpumalanga Cycle Tour is a six-stage race that starts in Loskopdam outside Middelburg and finishes at Blyde Canyon. The tour was sponsored by the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, Forever Resorts, Europcar and Dischem.

One million school shoes for the youth of the Nkangala district

During the Mayoral Academic Awards held at the Banquet Hall of Nkangala District Municipality, Councillor Linah Malatjie, Executive Mayor of the Nkangala District said that "no learner shall be barred from going to school because he or she does not have shoes or uniform". She launched the One Million School shoes project which undoubtedly warmed the hearts of everyone who attended the Awards ceremony.

As human beings, we all yearn for a purpose and a reason to exist. Corporate giving provides employees with an opportunity to champion a cause for positive change and give back to their communities.

The initiative was welcomed by the Department of Education as well as Eskom Kusile Power Station who also donated uniform packages. About 1500 school shoes, uniforms and stationary packs were donated to learners from 6 municipalities of the District.



The One Million School shoes project, over the next 5 years was launched and undoubtedly this warmed the hearts of everyone.