

Local News



cogta

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Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



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- **MEC Mokoena tables the 2010/11 Policy and Budget Speech**

- **Minister Nyanda and MEC Mokoena switch on TV/Radio signal for Ekulindeni**

- **Chief Mnisi signs developmental pact with forestry industry**

- **MEC Mokoena donates school uniforms to needy learners**

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Editorial Comment

Our department has offered a number of students from Mpumalanga, bursaries to further their studies. Students who are in careers which are crucial for service delivery, such as Financial Management, Spatial Planning, Financial Management and Graphic Design will benefit immensely in the department's noble initiative. This initiative will go a long way to address both the skills shortage and skills development in Mpumalanga. This form of support is coherent with MEC Norman Mokoena's message whenever he addresses learners at schools to consider careers which are crucial for the country's development.

The Cabinet Outreach Programmes have taken a new shape. The new approach is such that Members of the Executive visit every ward of all municipalities, leaving no stone unturned. The new approach rhymes well with President Jacob Zuma's call, when he delivered his State of the Nation address earlier this year when he said 'the defining feature of this administration will be that it knows where the people live, understands their needs and responds faster. Government must work faster, harder and smarter'. This approach is yielding positive results. The needs of the people are identified on the spot before they attend community gatherings and use the public platforms to tell government about their plight. This is how MEC Mokoena discovered the plight of four learners who have given up school in two schools in Thaba Chweu Municipality. They had no school uniforms and saw no need to attend. Through the intervention of the MEC, the learners are now back at school with new uniforms.

The outreach programmes are conducted in a manner that government intervention is now recognised. But it also shows that more work still has to be done to make our communities aware about the services that are available to take them out of the poverty quagmire. The challenge for us as a department is to use our new mandate, as a co-ordinator of government business to bring Home Affairs, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and other sector departments to assist our communi-

ties still trapped in poverty by providing them with the necessary sources of livelihoods.

What has become even more evident is the lack of information of government services. Many communities are not even aware of what government has to offer them. To close the information gap, government is rolling out Thusong Service Centres in rural areas. To date the province has 14 Thusong Service Centres. The recent one to have services launched was the Casteel Thusong Centre in Bushbuckridge.

The hosting of the FIFA Soccer World Cup in South Africa has not only improved the infrastructure. It has also created a platform for our people to gain experience in hosting major events. A number of officials from our department have been recruited to assist in the logistics of the world cup as volunteers, in the Mbombela Stadium, Disaster Management Centre and in the Fan Park. As a department we pride ourselves for the valuable contribution that our officials have made to the success of the games. In the same breath, we hope the experience gained will be vital to help our country moving forward.

The awarding of MEC Mokoena the highest honour by the Mantjolo Tribal Authority should be commended by us all. The honour serves as testimony to the MEC's commitment to accord Amakhosi the dignity they deserve. As a department, we will continue to support him in his endeavour to restore the dignity of Amakhosi and other initiatives aimed at improving the lives of our people.

The department's Netball team has done us proud by winning a trophy during the inter-departmental games. They defeated the Premier's office in the finals played at the Lowveld Agricultural sports field. Their formidable level of play, when pitted against equally strong teams gives us a sense of a galaxy of stars that we have in our midst. Sporting activities such as this, forms part of the department's Wellness Programme and we will continue to promote it. Physical fitness enhances our better performance.

We would like to hear from you

Send your comments and suggestions to the Editor on the following e-mail address: gpmthethwa@mpg.gov.za or contact us telephonically. Visit our Website on: <http://cgta.mpg.gov.za>

MEC's Foreword

The 2010/11 Financial Year started with earnest. While our eyes are fixed on the FIFA World Cup, however, we need not lose sight of the fact that soon afterwards our people will be watching the space to see how far we have gone in terms of service delivery. As we celebrate South Africa's glory to be the first African country to host the Soccer World Cup, we are also mindful of the fact that our municipalities need our support to deliver services. Just as our people have been optimistic about a successful World Cup, we need to keep the optimism high even in the area of service delivery.

Through our interaction with communities, during Community meetings, Cabinet Outreach Programmes, IDP Consultation Forums and other Public Participation Forums, our people have spoken. They have told us that they want water, electricity, proper roads, jobs, anti-corrupt practices and other amenities. We are a government that listens. We have moved swiftly to address some of these challenges. In my Policy and Budget speech, I have indicated that we have put five municipalities under Administration, so that they can be put back on track to be able to provide our people with the necessary services. The Administrators that we have appointed are doing a good job and I can assure our people that the municipalities will be returned to their former glory. In the Pixley Ka Seme Municipality, we are preparing to pull out soon. Stability has been restored, and the election of the Mayor, the Speaker and the Mayoral Committee give us hope that the municipality can run on its own and execute its mandate. We are now in the process of appointing a Municipal Manager.

In all the municipalities, in cases where corruption has been detected, we have zoomed in to deal with it without fear or favour. Propelled by the desire to root it out, some officials have been suspended and others have been dismissed. Where fraud has been committed, we have put systems in place to get back the money. The message should inspire our people that we are committed to deal vigorously with corrupt tendencies. We also want to put the message across that those involved in corrupt practices, will never find friendship in us.

The province had to intervene in five municipalities. These municipalities, namely : Pixley Ka Seme, Mkhondo, Lekwa, Thaba Chweu and Thembisile Hani have all been placed under Administration. Significant progress has been made in these municipalities and public confidence is being restored. We appreciate the support provided by Mondi, SASOL, DBSA, Xstrata and other government departments in assisting us improve our municipalities.

I would like to thank our esteemed Executive Mayors and all other structures of our municipalities for their dedication when we engaged them regarding the implementation of the resolutions taken during the Local Government Indaba and the 10 Point Turn Around Strategy. Municipalities have demonstrated their willingness to make this strategy work. Our desire to accord our esteemed Amakhosi their right-



MEC, Mr N Mokoena

ful position remains unshaken. Since the House of Traditional Leaders was integrated with the department, we have moved swiftly to ensure that they get the necessary support they need. They are the pillars of the rural development plan, as espoused by President Jacob Zuma. The need for them to be provided with vehicles, as tools for trade, cannot be over-emphasised. We are working towards that direction. We have already started with the refurbishment of the Traditional Councils. The projects have already created job opportunities for our people, and are in compliance with the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

As the MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, I have gazetted the names of 76 Traditional Leaders who will participate in the proceedings of Municipal Councils. These Traditional Leaders will, as from 01 July 2010 participate in Municipal Councils in terms of Section 81 of the Local Government Municipal Structures' Act, 1998. This will ensure that the voice of Traditional Leaders in the rural areas find expression to the decision-making processes of development in the rural areas. We urge Executive Mayors, Speakers, Councillors and officials in the municipalities to work in unison with Amakhosi to make this a success.

I wish to thank the management of the Department led by the Head of Department, Mr David Mahlobo for their continuous support to my office. It is through his dedication and the entire staff members that the department continues to fulfil its mandate. We also thank the Bafana Bafana team for bringing the nation together during the World Cup games. We remain committed to supporting them and other sporting codes, as a symbol of unity in our country.

Message from the Office of the HOD

We all cherish the momentous opportunity that FIFA has given us: That of hosting the first Soccer World Cup on the African soil. Our excitement is propelled by the fact that the World Cup was hosted during our time so that we can share the success story with generations to come. Many lessons have been learnt in the process of hosting it. One of them is that never underestimate the ability of Africans in hosting major events, such as this. We have proved our detractors wrong, and we hope to do the same even in the future. Bafana Bafana has done us proud by their performance. They have demonstrated the spirit of resilience in all their games. They have united us all.

The construction of the necessary infrastructure in Mpumalanga would have been meaningless if all of us would have flocked to the magnificent Mbombela Stadium in Nelspruit, when in fact elsewhere in the same province, people had no access to television signal. It was therefore befitting for MEC Mokoena, Minister of Communications, General (Retired) Siphwe Nyanda and his Deputy, Ms Dinah Pule, the SABC, SENTECH and the Albert Luthuli Municipality to switch on the Lower Power Transmitter to enable the Ekulindeni community, outside Badplaas to watch the games on television. After visiting that area a number of times, MEC Mokoena was very keen to push the matter to realization. We thank all stakeholders involved in the project for making it successful.

The Honourable MEC, Mr Norman Mokoena has already given us all the marching orders when he delivered the 2010/11 Policy and Budget Speech in the Legislature recently. The speech outlines what the department is expected to do in response to the service delivery challenges in municipalities and the support for the Traditional Leadership. The department is working tirelessly to ensure and strengthen the pillars that are required for the success of the departmental plans. We have already finalized the five year Strategic Plan and the Annual Performance Plan for the department. We have already presented the two documents to the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlement and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs in the Legislature, and they were approved.

Our work as a department is premised on the mandate given by the ANC through its election manifesto. This plan is aligned to government's Medium Term Strategic Framework priorities and outcomes. In order to achieve the government's objectives of building on effective, efficient and responsive local government, the department will implement the resolutions of the Provincial Local Government Indaba, guided by the Local Government Turn Around Strategy and the Local Government 10 Point Plan. Expectations are already high and therefore we cannot afford to fail.

It is also encouraging that all municipalities have developed their Municipal Turn Around Strategy (MTAS). The MTAS will ensure that challenges inhibiting delivery of services to the communities are identified and addressed and that the necessary resources are allocated accordingly. In terms of the MTAS, municipalities have identified clear deliverables with targets and the necessary resources. People have told us, during the Cabinet Outreach Pro-



HOD, Mr MD Mahlobo

grammes we have attended with the Premier, the Honourable David Mabuza, that they need water. The Department is responding positively to that. In this financial year, we are putting R20 million for the construction of the Delmas Water Pipeline in the Victor Khanye Local Municipality. Through this project, we are determined to put to an end the cycle of people drinking what has always been referred to as contaminated water, following a spiral of reports about a typhoid outbreak. We have put aside R25 million for the installation of Water Boreholes in a number of areas.

Once this has been finalized, MEC Mokoena will soon roll them out to the targeted areas facing acute shortages of water. In the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality, we are funding the Bethal electricity project. R10 million has been set aside for this project. We want to boost the electricity supply which is in high demand due to the industrial sites. With R9 million set aside for the establishment of four Thusong Service centers, we want to bring to an end an era of people in the rural areas travelling long distances to access services. These are some of the projects the department will be undertaking with the view to deliver services to our people.

The department has successfully completed the task of integrating in its fold, the House of Traditional Leaders without any challenge. I am deeply indebted to the Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Ikosi Siphohle Mhlangu, the Secretary of the House, Mr Jacques Modipane and officials of the Department, especially the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and his team as well as the Office of the MEC, Mr Norman Mokoena for ensuring that the integration process becomes successful. We have lived up to the slogan: "Working together, we can do more".

Our people deserve better services. We are poised to live up to the Batho Pele Principles. With MEC Mokoena at the helm of this programme within the department, we dare not fail. We are poised to turn things around. We are also determined to reward good performers and assist poor performers. As a province, we shall spare no effort in instilling a new culture and new value systems among those working for the Provincial Administration, Local Government and State Owned Enterprises. MEC Mokoena has already spelled it out that there is no place for corruption in the department. We join him in the call that people with corrupt tendencies will never be tolerated.

PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA'S SECOND VISIT TO DIPALESENG MUNICIPALITY BRINGS HOPE



IN TUNE: President Jacob Zuma sings the National Anthem before the start of proceedings in Balfour. He is flanked by MEC Norman Mokoena and Minister Edna Molewa (left) and Dipaleseng Municipality's Mayor, Cllr Mabalane Tsotetsi.

A visit for the second time to Siyathemba Township, in the Dipaleseng Municipality, by President Jacob Zuma was met with high expectations by local residents. Last year, the township was plunged into flames when residents embarked on protest marches. Poor roads, lack of job opportunities, lack of houses and the demand for incorporation into Gauteng, were some of the issues raised. Accompanied by a high powered delegation of Ministers and MECs, Councillors and Senior Government officials, President Zuma told the residents that the purpose of the visit was to report back on the issues that were raised during his first visit. A number of milestones in the area of infrastructure development, education, job opportunities and service delivery have been achieved.

Public Works Minister, Mr Geoff Doidge told the packed stadium: "Government has 33 properties in the Dipaleseng Municipality. In addition, we will purchase two farms with the view to build low cost houses on it. We will use these projects to create the much needed job opportunities and fight poverty in this area". MEC for Education, Ms Regina Mhaule told residents about the school nutrition plan and tertiary education. "All Primary Schools in this area are now provided with food. No learner will go hungry at school. We are aware that the closest FET College here is in Evander, and that is quite far. However, we urge all those willing to attend, to register their names in the municipal offices. This will determine the need to establish a satellite office of the FET College here," she said.

The Department of Social Development has also made strides in the welfare of Siyathemba residents.

Minister Edna Molewa told residents: "We have trained 10 Social Workers. We have also established two foster care

centers. These centers have created job opportunities for fifteen youths as care-givers," she reported. Roads have been improved, with the completion of road construction in Ward 4. MEC Norman Mokoena reported that the construction of the road in Ward 6 is still in progress. Siyathemba is a stone thrown away from the Gauteng Province. And as such residents depend entirely on Gauteng Health facilities. MEC Mokoena says the Provincial Government has negotiated with the Gauteng Provincial Government for the locals to be treated in Heidelberg Hospital. He added: "The clinic in Nthoroane will operate for 24 hours." Mokoena says other land mark projects such as a Disaster Management Centre, Offices for Social Services and a Community Hall are in progress. He says 20 projects have been initiated during the past 12 months in the Dipaleseng Municipality.

The proximity of the Dipaleseng Municipality to Gauteng Province, has given residents the impetus to the call for their incorporation into that province. Even the progress reports by the various Ministers and MECs did little to change their minds. The message was sent loud through the placards displayed in the stadium. In his remarks, President Zuma gave hope to the residents that the matter has been referred to the relevant authorities to deal with and that a decision will be taken soon.

Although the situation was tense inside the stadium, as residents disputed the achievements, however, the President's signature tune, 'Awulethe umshini Wami, brought relief and created an atmosphere of trust between the government and the local residents.



GREAT ANTICIPATION: Throngs of residents of Siyathemba Township converged at the local stadium to be briefed by President Zuma and his entourage.

MEC MOKOENA TABLES THE 2010/2011 POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH IN THE LEGISLATURE



READY TO DELIVER: MEC Norman Mokoena walks into the Legislature Chamber to present the Budget Speech.

MEC Norman Mokoena has tabled an amount of R404,093 million for the Financial year 2010/11 in the Legislature. Support for municipalities and Traditional Leaders was the main thrust of the speech. Mokoena committed the department to provide Amakhosi with tools of the trade and deployment of staff to the Traditional Councils. "The department will spend approximately R20 million in the purchasing of 59 vehicles for the 59 Traditional Councils. Accordingly, I have instructed the department to proceed with the necessary paperwork through Exco to ensure that the vehicles are handed over later this year," Mokoena said. He added that the traditional councils will be provided with the necessary training and support to empower them.

The department's commitment to improve water service delivery by municipalities was evident in the MEC's speech. R47 million has been set aside for this purpose. "In the next few weeks we shall conclude the construction of the Delmas Water Treatment Plant and the installation of the of five boreholes to ensure adequate water supply to the plant," promised Mokoena. As he puts it, 'the intervention by the department in five municipalities is yielding positive results'. Through these interventions, five municipalities, namely: Thaba Chweu, Pixley Ka Seme, Thembisile, Mkhondo and Lekwa, have been put under curatorship. Says Mokoena: "Out of R3,2 million siphoned out of Thaba Chweu Municipality, we have now recovered R2,3 million and the SAPS and the banks are assisting us to recover the outstanding R900 000."

The two days Local Government Indaba, held in February in Secunda received a major boost when Mokoena told Members of the Legislature that the department will implement resolutions crafted. He says by implementing these resolutions, the department will achieve the objective of building an effective, efficient and responsive local government system.

Mokoena seized the opportunity to warn officials against poor performance. "As government we need to take bold decisions to enforce the culture of performance management by rewarding those who are excelling in their duties and equally, ensure that there will be consequences for poor performance. The new culture to be instilled by MEC Mokoena found expression when he committed himself to champion the revival of the Batho Pele/ Bantu Phambili/ People First/ Mense Eerste programme. Mokoena says the programme is aimed at capacitating those individuals at the forefront of service delivery.

As the department gets into top gear to make Local Government Everybody's Business, the internal staff will have its work cut out to make the commitment a reality before the end of the Financial year.



TEAM EFFORT: COGTA's officials, Ms Buhle Mkhonza, Ms Mantshodi Rankweteke and Ms Hellen Mokotedi prepare gifts for dignitaries at the Legislature.

Access to basic services a must for Casteel residents

Travelling long distances in search of basic services is a thing of the past for communities residing in Casteel and surrounding areas in the Bushbuckridge Municipality. Thanks to the Casteel Thusong Service Centre. The centre is situated outside Bushbuckridge and is one of the fourteen centres in Mpumalanga, established to provide crucial basic services for rural communities.

The centre is home to the Department of Home Affairs, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), Department of Education, Department of Labour, Department of Social Services and the South African Police Services. As a result, residents are able to apply without restriction, for ID documents, Passports, Birth and Death Certificates and Social Grants. The center also provides residents with Postal, internet, and ATM services. A youth development centre, Computer School and the Government Communication Information Service (GCIS) are also on offer. A site visit by a delegation led by MEC Norman Mokoena, which included MEC Madala Masuku, Bushbuckridge Municipality's Mayor, Cllr Milton Morema and Senior Government officials, marveled at the types of services provided by the centre. "Not only do we provide postal services, but banking services as well. The challenge is that most of the people cannot write. So as a result we always experience long queues," said Mr Wilfred Chiloane, Branch Manager for the Post Office.

The center also boasts an information hub, provided by the GCIS. MEC Madala Masuku said there is also a need to appoint a Web Master to bolster the system that feeds the website with information. "There are so many developmental issues that are taking place around this area. Government is rolling out projects aimed at improving the lives of our people, but those issues do not find their way into the mainstream stories because they are not available in the website.

The Web Master will ensure that people are informed about these issues by filing such information in the website," said Mr Masuku.

MEC Mokoena says the centre rhymes well with government's objectives of bringing services where people are. "We urge you to utilize this centre for the betterment of your lives. Let there be no one without an ID here because you can now apply for it here without any hassle. ID's are an essential part of our lives. For you to access the Social Grants that are offered by government, you need it," Mr Mokoena said. His concern though is that the centre is vulnerable to criminal elements. He urged the community to look after it. "We must not allow criminals to steal the computers here. We must guard the centre jealously," he urged them. His sentiments come in the wake of a recent bombing of the ATM. The ATM has since been fixed and security has been increased.



DANCING FOR SERVICES: Senior citizens of Casteel welcome the launch of services in style.



BENEFICIARIES: MEC Norman Mokoena accompanied by Bushbuckridge Mayor, Cllr Milton Morema, Speaker, Cllr Lerato Theko, MEC Madala Masuku and Cogta's Mr Sifiso Nxumalo visit a Home Affairs office at the centre.



CUSTOMER CARE: Post Office Branch Manager, Mr Wilfred Chiloane shares information with MEC Norman Mokoena and Bushbuckridge Mayor, Cllr Milton Morema at the Casteel Centre.

COGTA



PLEASANTRIES: HOD, Mr David Mahlobo (grey suit) exchanges greetings with President Jacob Zuma at the Siyathemba Stadium during the President's visit. Dipaleseng Mayor, Cllr Mabalane Tsotetsi (Left) and MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Dr Clifford Mkasi look on.



IN TOUCH: MEC Norman Mokoena made a surprise visit to a family in Piet Retief during a Cabinet Outreach Programme, where he handed over some battery operated lights.



POST-MORTEM: House of Traditional Leader's Mr Jacques Modipane and Chairperson, Ikosi Sipho Mahlangu share a moment with Cogta's Chief Director, Mr Sam Ngubane at the Legislature.



FRIENDSHIP: Thaba Chweu's Administrator, Mr Terrence Mokale exchange pleasantries with Municipal Finance's Mr Izak Strauss during the tabling of the Budget Speech.



EXPERIMENT: Cogta's officials, Mr Jabulani Maduma and the CFO, Mr Dumisani Shipalana check the quality of the food during the Budget Speech.



REPRESENTATION: NEHAWU Branch leadership, attended the Policy and Budget Speech function in the Legislature.

in Action



WATER FOR LIFE: Siyathemba residents witness MEC Mokoena as he drinks water pumped from a borehole to a tap in Balfour



INFORMATION SHARING: A Community Development Worker (CDW) from Ehlanzeni shares information during a meeting with the MEC Norman Mokoena outside Nelspruit.



LIGHTER MOMENT: Generations Star, Dumisani shares a joke with MEC Mokoena at Ekulindeni during the function to switch a transmitter.



CONVERSATION: HOD, Mr David Mahlobo talks to the SABC's Siphso Motha about the Local Government Indaba during a talk show.



COUNT DOWN: COGTA official do the Diski dance during a competition in the Lowveld Show Ground.



TRIUMPH: Cogta Netball Team celebrates victory after winning the annual Inter-Departmental games by beating the Premier's Office Netball team.

Chief Mnisi signs a development pact with forest industry

History was recorded when Chief Bheki Mnisi of the Mantjolo Traditional Council signed a social accord which will see KomatiLands Forests contributing towards the development of the Enkonjaneni Tribal area. Komatilands Forests, one of South Africa's Timber Manufacturing Industries boasts vast tract of land in the Badplaas area, which borders the Mantjolo tribal community. The deal was signed by Chief Mnisi and Komatilands Forests' Senior Executive for Corporate Communications and Liaison, Mr Leslie Mudimeli at Enkonjaneni. Witnesses of the deal included MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Norman Mokoena, MEC for Culture, Sport, Art and Creation, Mr Vusi Shongwe, MEC for Economic, Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Jabu Mahlangu and Chief Mlambo II of Mbuzini.



DONE DEAL: Komatiland Forest's Senior Representative, Mr Leslie Mudimeli and Chief Bheki Mnisi sign a Social Accord at Enkonjaneni Tribal Authority.

Chief Mnisi says the local community will reap the benefits of the social accord. "The Komatilands Forests have already committed itself to building a road in our area as well as a creche. This accord will also pave the way for our people here to be given priority when jobs are available in the company," says Chief Mnisi. By signing the agreement, both parties support the following values:

- People can live in safety and peace preferably in a family based society,
- Access to quality education, training and development will be promoted as a priority,
- Health, social and spiritual well being are encouraged,
- Economic growth and development can be shared on a sustainable basis,
- Natural resources and the environment will be used efficiently and also for the benefit of future generations.

The social accord is set to put the tribal area on a developmental path. The signing ceremony coincided with the traditional ceremony of ummemo of the Mantjolo tribe. Buoyed by the commitment of the signatories, MEC Mokoena urged other traditional authorities to forge similar partnerships. "We consider this accord a birth of partnerships required for the development of rural areas, as espoused by President Jacob Zuma", he said. He further suggested the review of all agreements signed previously by traditional leaders and industrial conglomerates, in which Amakhosi have been exploited. "In some instances, you find that some conglomerates are making huge profits by mining mineral products in areas belonging to Amakhosi, while the local Chief has only been bought a car. This must come to an end," Mr Mokoena said.



MELODY-MAKER: Stimela's lead singer, Mr Ray Phiri entertains the crowd much to the delight of Chief Mnisi.

COGTA Awards Students with Bursaries

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) has awarded 23 students from Mpumalanga with bursaries to further their studies at several tertiary institutions. The students from disadvantaged backgrounds were offered the bursaries to pursue studies in various fields with a short supply of expertise, namely:

- Civil Engineering;
- Electrical Engineering;
- Graphic Design;
- Environmental Science;
- Town and Regional Planning;
- Maths and Science;
- Accounting.

During a function to congratulate them by MEC Norman Mokoena, the students could not contain their excitement. Ms Boitumelo Phatlane, studying for a Bachelor of Science Degree (Maths and Stats) at the University of Johannesburg, told MEC Mokoena that the group is elated by the prospect of studying with the support of the department. "We are committed to do well in our studies so that you can be proud of us. This support will go a long way to help us finish our studies," Ms Phatlane said.

Skills shortage is cited as one of the impediments of economic growth in South Africa. For this reason, government

has placed education in the top five priorities, as one of the interventions to deal with the problem. The decision by Cogta feeds into the bigger plan of government's intervention, while at the same time assists the previously marginalized communities whose impoverished background prevents them from pursuing studies at tertiary institutions. This was further supplemented by MEC Mokoena, in his address. "We have placed education and skills development at the core of our work. We are very cognizant of the fact that education and skills development are critical for us to achieve the rest of the priorities including the millennium development goals," he remarked.

The awarding of the bursaries forms part of Cogta's concerted efforts to improve the economic outlook of the province, especially municipalities. However, these efforts may go to waste if the students do not come back. Coupled by lack of a fully fledged University, Mpumalanga is losing potential skilled people, who on completion of their training at tertiary institutions based in other provinces, become reluctant to return to help improve the situation. The skills shortage is hitting government in general, however, municipalities are bearing the brunt. Says MEC Mokoena: "Many of our municipalities have been and still continue to be faced with haemorrhaging of skills, and we have not been able to replace these. Our province is considered very rural and as a result is not able to attract the required skills as many of the young people are attracted by the bright city lights." To turn the tide against this tendency, the students have signed a three year contract to work in Mpumalanga once they complete their studies.



IN CLASS: The successful students meet MEC Norman Mokoena during a session to congratulate them

SALGA Provincial Excellence Awards in 2010

The annual Provincial South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Awards for 2010 were held in Secunda, in the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality. The awards seek to encourage municipalities to improve performance on issues of service delivery. During the 2010 Awards, Nkomazi Local Municipality dominated the categories. MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Norman Mokoena, accompanied by MEC for Finance, Ms Pinky Phosa, Chairperson of the SALGA, Mpumalanga, Mr Speedo Mashilo and Chairperson for Select Committee: Human Settlements and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Simon Skhosana presented the awards:

NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

- Best municipality for the Implementation of Batho Pele Principles.
- Best Municipality for the Implementation of Electrification Programme.
- Best Municipality for the utilization of Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG).
- Most improved Municipality for the Promotion of Staff Development.



EHLANZENI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

- Most improved Municipality on Financial Viability.
- Best Municipality on Local Economic Development (LED).
- Best municipality for the Implementation of Transversal Programmes.



MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

- Best Municipality on Capacity Development.
- Best Municipality on Public Participation.



Dr J.S MOROKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

- Best municipality on Municipal Transformation and Organisational Development.



BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

- Received Special Award for Most Improved Municipality on Financial Management.



Municipalities complete process of Developing Municipal Turn Around Strategies

The MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Norman Mokoena has congratulated all municipalities in the province for their dedication and commitment in developing their Municipal Turn Around Strategies (MTAS). These MTAS follows the development of the Local Government Turn Strategy and its adoption at Provincial Local Government Indaba held on 25-26 February 2010. The MTAS will ensure that challenges inhibiting the delivery of services to the communities are identified and addressed, and that the necessary expertise and resources are allocated appropriately.



ELATION: MEC Norman Mokoena congratulates municipalities for the implementation of the Turn Around Strategies.

A Task Team comprising of officials from the National and Provincial Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs working with relevant sector departments visited all municipalities to assist them develop their own MTAS. During these visits they engaged with the Mayors, Speakers and Members of the Mayoral Committees, Municipal Managers and Section 57 Managers of the municipalities. In each municipality, commissions were set up to address the 5 key priority areas which include the following:

- a) Basic Service delivery and Infrastructure,
- b) Public participation,
- c) Governance, Transformation and Institutional Capacity,
- d) Financial Management and viability, and
- e) IDP's which include Spatial Planning and LED's.

To date all municipalities have finalised their MTAS and 19 of them have been endorsed by their respective Municipal Councils. These were signed off by the respective Municipal Managers and the Mayors. In cases where the municipalities are placed under Administration, the Administrators signed them off.

These MTAS will ensure that each municipality has a specific intervention plan aimed at addressing its challenges rather than the "one size fits all" approach. It will assist municipalities to achieve the following:

- Ensure that municipalities meet the basic service needs of communities
- Build a clean, effective, efficient, responsive and accountable local government
- Improve performance and professionalism in municipalities
- Improve national and provincial oversight and support
- Strengthen partnerships between communities, civil society and local government

In terms of the MTAS, municipalities have identified clear deliverables, with targets and the necessary resources. The process that will unfold now will be the integration of these MTAS into the respective Integrated Development Plans of municipalities. MEC Mokoena has pointed out that the MTAS will not just be a document of compliance. "The Department will ensure that these strategies are worked into Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plans as well as performance contracts of Municipal Managers and Section 57 Managers. The Department will continuously monitor progress" said Mokoena.



IMPLEMENTATION: Cogta's Senior officials, Mr Aron Mkhabela and Mr Pat Nkosi provided support for municipalities during the implementation of the Turn Around Strategies.

MEC Norman Mokoena donates school uniforms to needy students



INTERVENTION: Mr Godfrey Mgiba of the Department of education, Chief Mahlangu of Draaikraal and Mr John Sikhosana of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs hand over school uniforms to Nelson Monate of Houtenbek Primary school.

The MEC for the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Norman Mokoena, has donated school uniforms to 5 needy students in the Draaikraal area under the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality. MEC Mokoena noticed the plight of the students when he visited the area during the outreach programme by the Provincial Executive Council to the Thaba Chweu municipality in April this year.

When the MEC conducted a walk about in the area he came across a child headed household where two children did not have any school uniforms, and two families where the Children did not have any uniforms and as a result were reluctant to attend school. MEC Mokoena was touched by the conditions that the children were living in and immediately requested the local social workers from the Department of Social Services to do an assessment and look into the possibilities of providing those families with food parcels and also look into how they can be assisted to access government grants. He further made a commitment that he will purchase the school uniforms for the children. "It is very sad to find children still living in such conditions. What is more painful is that government has got programmes to assist such children such as social grants, but they are not accessing them. This means we must intensify our education and awareness programmes so that people are aware of what services they can receive from government." said Mokoena.

MEC Mokoena said even though the uniforms will not address all the children needs, he hopes that they will go a long way in improving their conditions and importantly it will motivate them to do well at school. "You are the future leaders of our country, so please study hard and be committed to your education" said Mokoena. He further wished all students well in their mid year exams.

The uniforms included two sets for each child of school shoes, shirts, jerseys, socks, skirts and trousers were handed over to two high school students from Tonteldoos Secondary School and three from Houtenbek Primary school.



HOPEFUL: Learners at the Houtenbek Primary school waited patiently for the delivery of the uniforms for their under privileged school mates.

TV Signal for Ekulindeni community



DIGITAL DIVIDE: Minister S'phiwe Nyanda switches on a TV set to mark the functionality of the transmitter.

The residents of Ekulindeni, in the Albert Luthuli Municipality were digitally connected to the rest of the world hours before the start of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. For many years, residents of the impoverished area, situated about 50 kms outside Badplaas, had no access to television and the radio signal was poor. Now, the residents enjoy unlimited access to television programmes like all other communities in South Africa, thanks to the installation of a Low Power Transmitter. The installation forms part of the Department of Communications' programme to roll out such facilities to communities that had no access to television and radio due to the digital divide, in collaboration with the SABC, SENTECH and ICASA. Minister of Communications, General (retired) Siphwe Nyanda told the communities that the switching on of the transmitter marks the reduction of communities without access to television. "Statistically, we have 3,6 million people in the country without access to television. You were part of that number. Now that 20 000 of you have access, it means the number has been reduced. However, we as a department still have a long way to go," Nyanda said. He pleaded with communities not to put pressure on government for the installation of the transmitters. "The department has to roll out 300 more transmitters to connect the outstanding communities," he added.

The installation of the transmitters is one of the many interventions that the department has embarked on to reduce the digital divide in the country. These include the digitalization of Post Offices in the country. The Department has committed itself to give the Ekulindeni Post office a facelift so that it can provide local residents with a comprehensive service, which includes internet service.

Nyanda's Deputy, Ms Dinah Pule, MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, (Cogta) Mr Norman Mokoena and the Executive Mayor of Albert Luthuli, Cllr S'nana Dlamini were full of praise for the installation of the transmitter at Ekulindeni. For Mr Mokoena, the switch on was a realization of a commitment which he made when he delivered his Policy and Budget Speech a month earlier. He praised the Ekulindeni community for using proper communication channels to request for the installation of the signal "It is very important that we acknowledge the

positive spirit and the commitment that has been shown by the people of Ekulindeni. When faced with adversity, they have never given up neither have they turned despondent or violent. They have always sought to raise their concerns, which were often genuine in a very peaceful and constructive manner," said Mr Mokoena.



BLACK OUT: Residents waited patiently for the installation of a TV/Radio transmitter at Ekulindeni.

With so many information and educational programmes on offer in the television space, Mr Mokoena urged the locals to use the access for their benefit. "Today's event marks a new beginning for the people of Ekulindeni. The information, educative and entertainment gap that you had to endure with for so long, will be a thing of the past. You will no longer suffer the brunt of not being able to receive information via television. I believe this means more improved opportunities especially for the students as they will to benefit from the educational programmes. It also means access to information that will enable you to make more informed decisions," he told them.

The function was marked by the presence of Generations stars and Ligwalagwala FM Presenters. The switching on of the transmitters will also benefit residents of Josephsdaal, Nhlaba, Sternsdorp and Bossiville.



SUPPORTING ACT: Generations stars graced the occasion.



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