

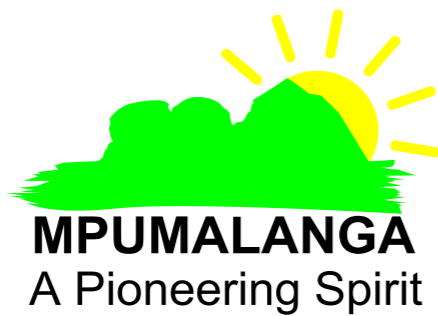
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Provincial Government



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Local Government

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Local News



Official Newsletter for the Department of Local Government

Third and Fourth Quarters

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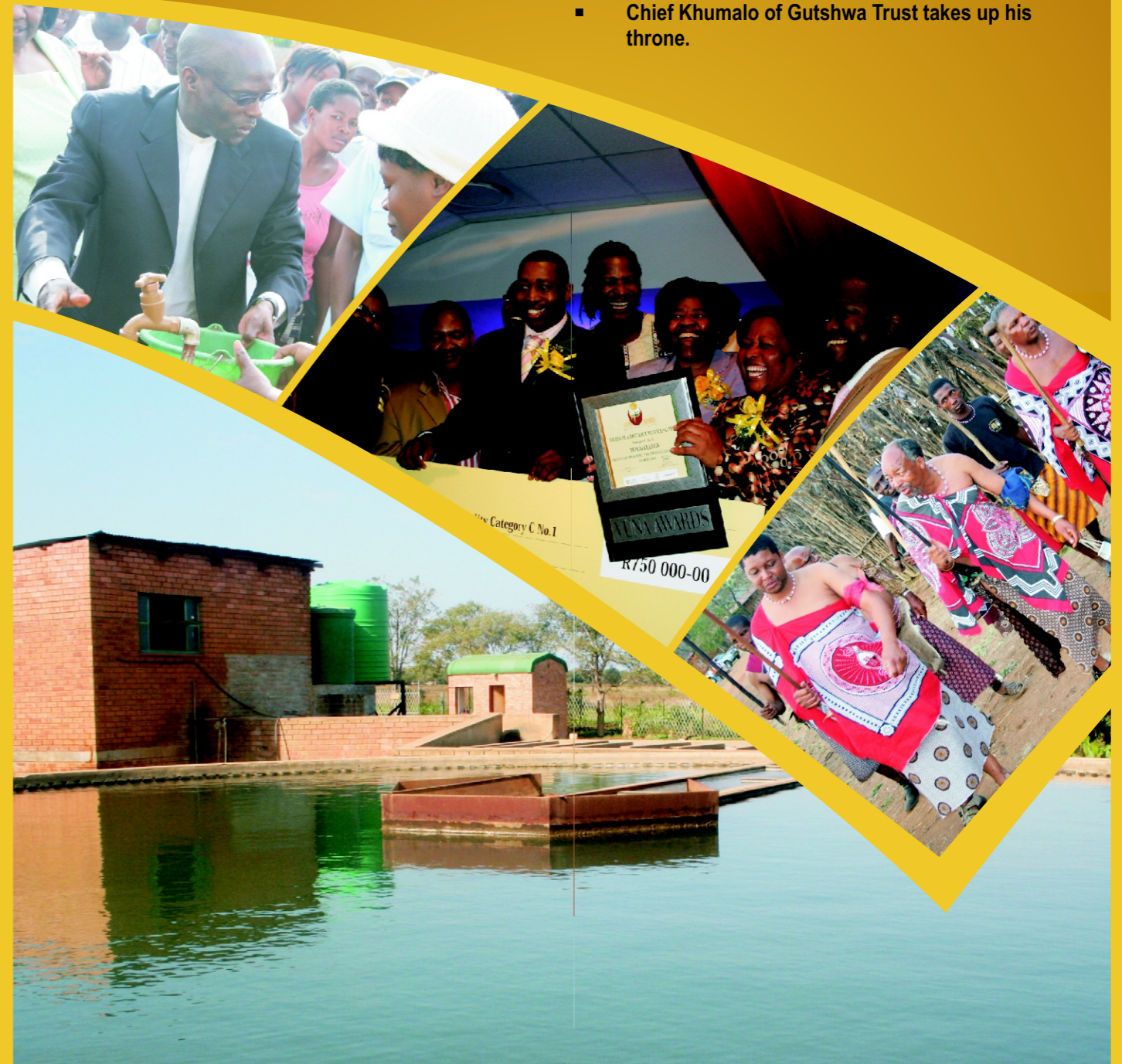


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DEPARTMENT PIONEERS THE INTRODUCTION OF LED TRAINING PROGRAMME



ACADEMIC WORK: MEC Candith Mashego-Dlamini presents Mr Bonga Buthelezi a certificate during the graduation ceremony.



READY TO CELEBRATE: Graduates share lighter moments with MEC Mashego-Dlamini after receiving their certificates.

Mpumalanga has become the first province in the country to introduce a training of Local Economic Development (LED) programme. The Department of Local Government was the driving force behind the pilot project in conjunction with a German NGO, GTZ, and Wits University. 47 Students, among them Councillors from the District and Local municipalities and officials who work on LED matters, enrolled for the training for a period of eight months. During the academic period, the students studied the following modules:

- Approaches to Regional and Local Economic Development.
- Policy and Legislative Contexts.
- Economic and Financial Aspects of Local Economic Development.
- Location Determinants in Regional and Local Development.
- Trade and Industry in Local Economy.
- LED Management and Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Case Study Development and Presentation.

The training came at the time when Mpumalanga was on a high drive to fight poverty. The recent Provincial Economic Development Summit which took place in Nelspruit highlighted the need for Mpumalanga to create jobs, eliminate poverty, reduce inequality, and the overall growth of the wealth. The LED training is seen as one of the strategic tools that fit well in the objectives of the summit. On completion of the programme, graduates were presented with NQ-7 level certificates equivalent to an Honours degree during a glittering graduation ceremony which took place outside White River. In her speech, MEC for Local Government, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini said the graduates will be expected to be soldiers on the ground in advancing the course of local economy. "We commend the drivers and authors of Wits LED programme and other LED courses and hope such interventions give significance to Local Economic Development in the broader South African context", Mashego-Dlamini said.

As the government is poised to achieve the millennium goals, of which one of them is to reduce poverty by half, by the year 2014,

stimulation of the local economy is seen as one of the interventions. However, MEC Mashego-Dlamini laments lack of skills as an impediment in the realization of the Millenium goals. "It is a fact that current skills in the Province are inadequate to meet the demands of the new economy that is service and knowledge driven. How will we achieve economic prosperity if people lack proper skills (illiteracy) to drive all the governmental programmes like Local Economic Development, Expanded Public Works Programs and Municipal Infrastructure Grant, to proper manage ties programmes skills development plays a vital role?" she asked. She believes that the skills acquired from the training programme and the training of Senior Managers at Mapulaneng College in Bushbuckridge, will serve as an intervention to address the shortage of skills in Mpumalanga.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENES IN THE PIXLEY KA SEME MUNICIPALITY SAGA

Calam and stability has been restored in Volkrust and neighbouring township, Vukuzakhe following a nine month period of protests in the Pixley Ka Seme Municipality. This situation was caused by allegations of failure to consult with the community on matters of rates' adjustments, leveled against the Municipality. Local residents accused the municipality for increasing water and electricity tariffs without consulting them. Residents further accused the municipality of approving the budget without consulting them. Several residents were arrested by the local police on allegations of destroying property and causing public violence. People were prevented from going to work as protesters used all measures to fight their battle.

In a bid to save the situation, the Department of Local Government intervened by invoking Section 139 of Act 108 of the South African constitution. The act confers powers of running the municipality to the MEC for Local Government and Housing, Mrs Candith Mashego-Dlamini. By invoking the Act, the MEC then appoints an Administrator to perform the functions of the Executive Mayor and the Municipal Manager. MEC Mashego-Dlamini appointed Mr Meshack Nkosi and Mr Isak Strauss as an Administrator and Assistant Administrator respectively. During the introduction of the two, MEC Mashego-Dlamini tasked them with the following functions:

- Develop a recovery plan for the municipality.
- Institutional audit, which will look at the organizational structure of the municipality to ensure that they have the required expertise and that staff is placed correctly.
- Service delivery audit of current status quo to identify shortfalls and address them.
- Draft budget compilation and ensure that the necessary steps were followed and that the correct process was followed in developing the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).
- Conduct an audit of the progress of the Implementation of the Municipal Property Rates Act.
- Implementation plan for the Section 106 investigation report.

Mr Nkosi played a pivotal role last year in the stabilization of the Mbombela Municipality. He and other eminent officials, Mr Khaya Mpungose, the former Municipal Manager of Ugu District Municipality and Mr Dumisani Shipalana, formerly with Treasury, were tasked to restore proper functionality of the Mbombela Municipality, following a decision by the Department to place it under Administration. The two Administrators are appointed for a six month period, after which progress will be reviewed.

Pixley Ka Seme Municipality is the third municipality in Mpumalanga to be placed under Administration by the Department of Local Government after Thaba Chweu and Mbombela Local Municipalities. The decision by the Department of Local Government to place Pixley Ka Seme Municipality under curatorship enjoys the support of the local community. MEC Mashego-Dlamini has urged both the Council and the community to support the administrators to restore Pixley Ka Seme Local Municipality to its former glory.



CURATORSHIP: Acting chief director for Local Governance, Mr Isak Strauss, has been appointed as assistant administrator for Pixley Ka Seme Municipality

MUNICIPALITIES UNDER PRESSURE TO FILL IN VACANCIES

Lack of retention strategies to keep municipal employees for longer periods has seen employees leaving municipalities high and dry. This emerged during a workshop aimed at assessing whether municipalities in Mpumalanga comply with the 2007 Cabinet Resolutions, known as APEX Project. The resolutions seek to capacitate municipalities to execute their mandate as enshrined in the Constitution. In terms of the resolutions, Municipalities are expected to comply with the following:

- Sign Performance Agreements with Municipal Managers and Section 57 Managers,
- Link performance to the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs),
- Equity legislation,

In Mpumalanga, there are 21 municipalities including the three Districts, i.e Nkangala, Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni. Although remarkable progress has been recorded in the filling of Senior Management positions, however, there are glaring discrepancies caused by the failure of some municipalities to implement the resolutions. According to a report presented by the Department of Local Government, the following were noted:

- All 21 positions of Municipal Managers have been filled. However at the time of going to press, two Municipal Managers were on suspension in Nkomazi and Mbombela.

- 18 of them have signed performance agreements,
- There are 122 positions for Section 57 Managers. However 113 have been filled and 9 remain vacant.

The report noted that Mpumalanga is 98% compliant to the resolutions.

The report by DPLG indicates that lack of the recruitment strategy, render municipalities dysfunctional in retaining the best skills. In the Nkangala District for example, highly skilled employees in key positions are lost to highly paying institutions. Ms Gloria Nkadameng of the Human Resource section says the district is compelled to advertise positions all the time due to resignations. "Nkangala is like a school of excellence where in we train people and no sooner they leave. Every application from our district to prospective employers is absorbed, hence we have to start afresh and look for people to fill in those vacancies," she said.

The report also noted that municipalities are not compliant with the Employment Equity. The majority of municipalities are dominated by males at the Senior Management level. In a bid to address the situation, the DPLG's Mr Jackie Maepa told the workshop that the department is in the process of finalizing a recruitment and retention strategy which must be adopted by March (2009) for municipalities. He cautioned: "This does not stop municipalities to develop their own as the process might take long." Mr

Maepa says the intervention is complicated by the grading system of municipalities due to disparity of budgets and responsibilities. He said Metropolitan have a huge budget and their responsibilities go as far as controlling water systems, which is a different case with your Category C municipalities. He told the workshop: "We need to establish Human Resource Forums where best practices will be shared and further discuss intervention strategies."



VACANCY RATE: DPLG's Mr Jackie Maepa tackles employment strategies for municipalities.



NOTED: Nkangala District's Ms Gloria Nkadameng paints a picture of challenges facing her district.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

2008 has been a remarkable year in many respects. The Steve Tshwete Municipality will always flag it as the year in which it scooped the Vuna Awards for the fourth time in succession in Category B Municipalities. The victory by Nkangala District Municipality as the winner in Category C Municipalities at national level, was like a cherry on top of the cake. The success of these municipalities sends a strong message that municipalities in Mpumalanga are heeding the clarion call of improving the lives of our people. The success of the two is a challenge to other municipalities to catch up too. It all boils down to co-operation between the Council, Management, Staff members and the communities, for municipalities to claim victory in the annual competition.

The department is going all out in full force to use every available opportunity that will help improve its functionality. The recent study tour undertaken by the newly appointed Director of Municipal Support, Mr Pat Nkosi is a case in point. He was part of a delegation which visited India to study its success. The knowledge which he gained there will help the department in its effort to assist municipalities in the area of service delivery. The department is already reaping the fruits of his visit, as he embarked on an assignment of organizing training for municipalities in the area of Supply, Chain Management. So far, municipalities in both Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni District have benefited. Municipalities in

the Nkangala District are next on the line. Mr Nkosi had a stint at the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) at national level, before joining the department. Therefore his knowledge, coupled with the knowledge he acquired recently in India will come in handy for the department in its quest to assist municipalities.

Mr Godrich Gardee also undertook an international study tour to Germany as part of an Executive Development Programme. The tour is an offshoot of the capacity building programme, one of the five flagship programmes announced by the Premier in 2007. Mr Gardee visited Germany, the host city of the last soccer world cup. He visited centres that coordinate disaster management, events and tourism.

Ms Refilwe Jones, Director of Legal Services and her counterpart, Ms Nomzi Masawa-Dlamini, Director of Planning and Programme Management, are among the growing list of officials who went overseas to improve their knowledge for the benefit of the department. Both Ms Jones and Ms Masawa-Dlamini enrolled with London's Thames University to study Programme Management.

Our sporting heroes have done us proud when they participated in the Inter-Governmental Games which took place in Richards Bay recently. Our teams participated in the various sporting codes in the games that

were hosted by KwaZulu-Natal. The teams selected from the three districts, matched against the best from the host province, Eastern Cape, Free State, Swaziland, Mozambique and Lesotho, represented us well. With just one year away from the 2010 Soccer World Cup, the games could not have come at a better time than this. Remember, Mpumalanga has set for itself a target of producing at least two players that will be drafted into the Bafana Bafana line up that will play against the World's best in 2010.

Sadly, the department mourns the death of three of its employees. Our condolences to the families of the late Ms Sibongile Mashego, Mr Moshe Mashego and Mr Sandile Kunter Nkosi. Ms Mashego was an official in the Human Resource Management Section. She died after a short illness. Mr Mashego was the Center Manager for the Moremele Thusong Service Center. He also served as the first Executive Mayor of Thaba Chweu Municipality. Mr Nkosi was an employee in the Public Participation Section and a Branch Chairperson of NEHAWU. Their death came at the time when the department was in top gear to strengthen its functionality after the split. It was a befitting send off for them as staff members came out in droves to support the bereaved families. May their souls rest in peace.

FOREWORD BY THE MEC

The recent launch of the Water for All Flagship Project at Kamhlushwa, in the Nkomazi Municipality is a major milestone for our department. The launch adds impetus to our commitment as Department of Local Government to one of the millennium goals, i.e reduction of water backlog by 2014. It was a perfect setting for the launch to take place in the Nkomazi Municipality, one of the areas hit hard by the water shortage backlog. The project got a short in the arm by the injection of the R87 million grant by our provincial government. The boost serves as a lubricant to our water service delivery system in order to attain our goal. We hope that our communities will support this initiative by not damaging the water pipes, the taps and purification plants that are under construction.

Nkangala District Municipality has done us all proud by winning the Vuna Awards Nationally in the Category C. This triumph is a reflection of the improvements taking place in our municipalities in Mpumalanga. I would like to congratulate the Executive Mayor, Councillors, the Management and officials of the district for the victory and for staking a claim in the history of the Vuna Awards.

Nkangala's victory will go a long way in improving the image of our municipalities in Mpumalanga. It comes hot on the heels of the steady improvement shown by our municipalities on areas such as financial management which has been so elusive for some time. I am waiting in great anticipation the outcome of the Auditor-General's report as municipalities will be submitting their financial

statements for the last financial year. Apart from the glaring financial reports, our municipalities have in the past been associated with corrupt practices. We can take advantage of Nkangala's victory and brand our municipalities as institution of good service delivery. We still have a long way to go. However, the victory should inspire us to rise to the occasion and reclaim our position in the historical echelons of our country. Remember a journey of a thousand kilometers starts with one step. I must also add that some of our municipalities are still besieged with challenges. We will continue to provide the necessary support to ensure that they meet their Constitutional Mandate. We have moved in to the Pixley Ka Seme Municipality to also assist them deal with their challenges.

Our department is a signatory to a working relationship that will see Umsobomvu Youth Fund using Thusong Service Centers as a working base. We view this partnership, which was signed in the offices of the House of Traditional Leaders seriously because we believe that it will bring closer the services of the Youth Fund to our people. In this era, where government is hard at work in developing entrepreneurship skills amongst young people, I urge the young lions to take advantage of the services that will be accessible in the Thusong Service Centres and start making businesses. The commitment by government to reduce poverty and unemployment can only happen if people use these services for their benefit. This service will also be extended to the offices of Amakhosi. We are in the process



MEC K.C Mashego-Dlamini

of exploring ways and means of ensuring that Umsobomvu operates effectively even in the offices of Amakhosi. I urge Amakhosi to co-operate with us so that communities in the rural periphery can enjoy equal access to this service.

On a sad note, I would like to send my deepest condolences to the family of the late Mbombela Municipality Speaker, Cllr Jimmy Mohlala. His brutal death, robbed us a committed cadre who contributed immensely to the local Government fraternity. We will always remember him for his role when the department put the Mbombela Municipality under Curatorship. His involvement in local government could be traced back from the transition of local government in the pre interim stages of municipalities to the current period. May his soul rest in peace.

DEPARTMENT IN ACTION



VICTORY: Umjindi Local Municipality celebrates their success during the Vuna Awards.



SOJOURN: Local Government's Director of Planning and Programme Management, Ms Nomzikayise Masawa-Dlamini and Director of Legal Services, Ms Refilwe Jones attended training in London's Thames University recently.



BUDGETARY CALCULATIONS: Security Manager, Mr Petros Sandleni (Right), and Ms Rachel Maputu share information about the budget during a strategic workshop at the Crocodile Inn.



ON THE PLATFORM: Local communities in Msukaligwa Municipality attended the Imbizo in droves at the Lothair Sportsfield.



MILESTONE: MEC, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini caucuses with the Acting HOD, Mr Sam Ngubane during a partnership signing agreement to work with Umsobomvu at the Thusong Service Centers. Chief Dlamini (Pink Shirt and Ikosi Siphahlangu (extreme right) were there too.



WATER SOLUTIONS: Premier Makwetla and MEC Mashego-Dlamini present plaques to contractors during the launch of the water for all project at Kamhlushwa.

DEPARTMENT IN ACTION



ON THE THRONE: Chief Dlamini (Left) of Umjindi Royal Kraal in Barberton, dances to the traditional tunes during an ummemento regiment.



HEREDITY: Chief Majaji Mbuyane of Hlau-Hlau inherits the throne. His inauguration was attended by MEC for Roads and Transport, Mr Jackson Mthembu (far left) and MEC for Local Government and Housing, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini.



EMPOWERED: MEC, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini, hands over an NQ-7 Certificate to Ms Sakhile Lekhuleni of the LED training graduates at the Greenway Wood.



PUBLIC COMMENTS: Officials from the public participation unit prepare a register for participants during a workshop.



SAFETY MATTERS: Delegates from the Health and Local Government fraternity attended a symposium in Ermelo, to discuss preventative measures of health disasters in hospitals.



INTERVENTION: MEC Mashego-Dlamini visits residents at Brondal outside Nelspruit to determine the extent of damage caused by a veld fire to their property.

MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING HOD

Now that we have come to the end of the 2008/09 Financial Year, it is worth mentioning that the Department of Local Government has made great strides in its area of responsibility, not withstanding the challenges that we had to deal with. One of our successes administratively has been to fill in critical positions in order to execute our mandate. The split of the Department of Local Government and Housing into two separate departments precipitated the need for us to beef up our human resource. As a result we have appointed the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), (Mr Dumisani Shipalana) and the Director for Human Resource Management (Ms Koekie Ngema). We also elevated our internal staff members to the level Senior positions:

- Ms Nonhlanhla Chibi - Director for Supply, Chain Management
- Mr Pat Nkosi - Director for Municipal Support
- Mr Slykie Dhludhlu - Director for Disaster Management
- Ms Refilwe Jones - Director for Legal Services
- Ms Nomizi Masawa-Dlamini – Director for Planning and Programme Management

A number of appointments and promotions have also been made at other levels as well. The process is on going. Due diligence, based on the competencies, skills and experience of the appointees, was taken into consideration in the appointment of the incumbents.

Staff members in Human Resource Directorates have gone an extra mile in assisting us in this regard. Their dedication is highly appreciated.

The appointment of the CFO came at the right time. The department is expected to produce Financial Statements on time. During the last Financial year, the former department operated on a single budget which had to be separated during the split. Staff members from the Budget

section went beyond the call of duty in the process of separating the budget for the two departments. As a result, producing a balance sheet that will be translated into a Financial Statement to the Auditor-General will be a tough call for our department. We all have to support him. We are in this together.

The accolade bestowed on our Honourable MEC, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini as the Best Female leader in the Public Sector by the First National Bank, could not have come at a better time. Ms Mashego-Dlamini as political head of both the Department of Local Government and the Department of Housing has demonstrated her leadership qualities. Steering the splitting process of the two departments, as per the mandate of the Provincial Executive Council, was not a mean feat, considering the fact that both departments have complex issues to deal with. Take the Department of Local Government for example, it is responsible for:

- The 21 Municipalities, which are at the fore front of service delivery. The department has to ensure that their functionality is proper,
- Disaster Management. Mpumalanga is prone to all sorts of disasters, and veld fires being the most prominent one due to high temperatures,
- Eradication of the water provision backlog, etc.

The MEC has to deal with all these issues and be available at all times to provide leadership when they emanate anytime. She has done these at ease. In fact the accolade was long overdue, considering her CV which speaks volume about experience in working for the public. Before taking over the stewardship of both departments, she previously headed the Department of Agriculture and Land Administration and the Department of Public Works. She epitomizes women quality leadership



Acting HOD Mr. S. Ngubane

which the ruling party espouses. As a result we congratulate her for the award and believe that more are coming her way in recognition of her contribution to the configuration of the public service as a point of service delivery. We end the financial year on a very sad note, after losing three of our colleagues in a very short time. We again send our condolences to the families of Ms Sibongile Mashego, Mr Sandile Kunter Nkosi and Mr Moshe Mashego. May their souls rest in peace.

I am convinced that we will approach the new 2009/10 with vigour. As a department we are equipped to deal with all the challenges. Much as we have made great strides during the last financial year, we also take stock of our failures. As we do so, I would like to share with you a courageous statement from an unknown writer who once said: "Strength and courage aren't always measured in medals and victories. They are measured in the struggles we overcome. The strongest people aren't always the people who win but the people who don't give up when they lose."

CHIEF KHUMALO OF GUTSHWA TRUST TAKES UP HIS THRONE

The Khumalo clan in Mpumalanga has introduced its Head officially to the local community, Chief Khumalo of Gutshwa Trust near Kabokweni. Amakhosi, MEC for Local Government and Housing, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini, members of the local community, Councillors, Senior Government officials all came out in droves to witness Chief Khumalo taking up his position in public. In her address, MEC Mashego-Dlamini urged Chief Khumalo to play a role in the preservation of African languages. "One important and critical characteristic of any traditional and cultural society which is located within a democratic dispensation, is the manner in which it uses its language to express itself. It is through the African spoken languages that democracy can be understood and transcended to various communities. It is through African languages that democracy and improved service delivery can be understood and sustained by communities. Traditional Leaders therefore should enrich our democracy by promoting various languages," Ms. Mashego-Dlamini said. She also threw the gauntlet to the community and institutions that promote indigenous languages, such as the Pan South African Language Board to work hand-in-gloves in the preservation of indigeneous languages.

During the function, MEC Mashego-Dlamini presented Chief Khumalo with a certificate of acknowledgement. During the presentation, MEC Mashego-Dlamini said that the role of traditional leaders in working as a moral compass cannot be over emphasized. "Traditional Leaders as custodians of culture



ON THE THRONE: Chief Khumalo of Gutshwa Trust takes up his throne.

and traditions are faced with a challenge of contributing to the nurturing of our democracy by revisiting the moral fibre within our society. Morals and values are the cornerstone of a developing nation and are the building blocks of a sound community. Traditional Leaders and government have to do extra efforts in regenerating the morals of our society," she said.

The Mbuyane Royal Council at Hlau-Hlau inaugurated Chief Mbuyane recently.



TRADITIONAL DANCE: Chief Khumalo (with a blue Lynette) is accompanied by libutfo during his inauguration.

DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES A PROJECT TO ACCELERATE PROVISION OF WATER

Mpumalanga Premier, Mr. Thabang Makwetla has launched the Water for all flagship project officially. The launch took place at Kamhushwa Stadium, in the Nkomazi Municipality and was attended by amongst others MEC for Local Government and Housing, Ms. Candith Mashego-Dlamini and some members of the Provincial Cabinet, Executive Mayors, Senior Managers and the local community.

Prior to the launch, Premier Makwetla and the entourage visited a water switch and switched it on to allow water to flow to the local households at Block B, near Tonga, which had no water before. Premier Makwetla also opened a tap in a household belonging to Ms Phumzile Themba. In her remarks, Ms Themba told the entourage that the availability of water will bring to an end a period of scuffle for water which saw people in the neighborhood fighting each for access to drinking water.

The official launch of the Water for all Flagship Project, is the culmination of a process to reduce the water backlog in Mpumalanga, after the announcement of the five flagship projects in 2007 by Premier Makwetla during the State of the Province address. The project is aimed at accelerating the provision of clean water to all communities in Mpumalanga by 2010. So far, of the 945,394 households, 72.7% have access to water at RDP level and above. The backlog of the number of households with inadequate access to water has been reduced to 257, 912, constituting 27.3% of the households in the Province. Of this amount, 3.5% households have no access to infrastructure at all. According to Premier Makwetla, these are the

households that have been prioritized urgently for the provision of water infrastructure and services. Premier Makwetla says an amount of R87 Million has been injected in the project to address the shortage of water in Nkomazi. "The amount of money has commenced to address problems hampering the delivery of clean water to the impoverished and deprived areas of Nkomazi. This intervention will benefit 54,081 households this year," he said. Elsewhere in the province, a water treatment plant is currently under construction in Delmas to alleviate clean water challenges and provide 15 million litres of clean water a day to affected communities. The plant will be operational by the end of 2009. The collaboration between the Provincial Government, Delmas Local Municipality, Rand Water and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry will deliver the construction of a Water Pipeline valued at R85 million to Delmas from Bloemendal in Gauteng to provide 25 million litres of water per day to the Delmas Municipality. Construction will commence in December this year. MEC for Local Government and Housing, Ms. Candith Mashego-Dlamini warned the local community during the launch about the dangers of damaging the water infrastructure. "The top part of the taps that we have installed here is made out of plastic. The reason to install the plastics is to prevent vandalism against them. We cannot afford to spend such a huge amount of money in the installation of the taps and spend more money for maintenance because some amongst you cause damage to them," she warned. She urged the locals to mobilize for the protection of the taps and the pipes.



WATER FOR ALL: Premier Thabang Makwetla and MEC Candith Mashego-Dlamini lead an entourage to the opening of a water tap at Block B.

STEVE TSHWETE AND NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES SCOOP VUNA AWARDS FOR THE FOURTH TIME

The Nkangala District Municipality and one of its six municipalities, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality have won the annual Provincial Vuna Awards for the fourth time in a row, making them the only municipalities in Mpumalanga to win it in that sequence. The winners were announced during the glittering function which took place in the Nkangala District offices in Middleburg. The district was pocketed R750 000 while the Steve Tshwete Municipality earned R175 000 for winning the award.

Municipalities participate by filling in forms that are subsequently evaluated by a team of experts. For the first time, all 21 municipalities in Mpumalanga, including the three districts participated. Buoyed by the municipality's domination of the award since its inception, Executive Mayor, Cllr Manthlakeng Mahlangu shared her secret with struggling municipalities. "I think the stability of leadership within the municipality is the secret of our municipality to win the award consistently. Since the second local government elections, Steve Tshwete Municipality has never changed its leadership from the Mayor to the Municipal Manager, from the Speaker to the Chief-Whip," she declared. Her sentiments were echoed by the MEC for Local Government and Housing, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini. "One thing that I have learnt from the Vuna Award Process is the fact that all the municipalities that are performing well are those who have both the Executive Mayor and the Municipal Manager fully supporting and being involved in the

processes of participating in the Vuna awards, and I would like to thank them for the commitment that they have demonstrated. In most cases the municipalities that do not do well you find that it is only the IDP Manager alone who was driving the process- and that reflects also in the credibility of the IDP process", she told the audience. In recent months, the Steve Tshwete Municipality raked in awards, to widen the gap. The municipality recently won the Best Municipality in the construction of houses, during the Govan Mbeki Awards held in Secunda. Its name featured prominently during the SALGA Awards in Nelspruit. Apart from winning in the provincial awards, the Nkangala District Municipality also won in the National Awards in Category C Municipalities. The winners of the awards were as follows:

- Umjindi Municipality won the second prize.
- Emakhazeni won the third prize of the competition.
- Nkangala District Municipality won in the Category C Municipalities.
- Gert Sibande District came second.
- Ehlanzeni District came third.

Despite her reservations about poor management of some of the municipalities, MEC Mashego-Dlamini was impressed about the level of commitment of the municipalities. She told the audience: "Last year (2007) on 23 November at the Kruger Gate, when we held our Vuna Awards, I

made a special plea that municipalities must not view these awards as exposing their weaknesses, but that it must be viewed as a tool to help you gauge yourselves in terms of your performance. It is encouraging that you have all heeded the call and allowed yourselves to be scrutinized and be judged. I am also encouraged that you are willing to compete and learn from other municipalities".

For the first time, the competition was expanded to add five more categories. Acting HOD for Local Government, Mr Sam Ngubane told the audience the objective was to encourage municipalities to work harder in discharging their responsibilities in a wide range of issues. Mr Ngubane was referring to the improvement in the MIG expenditure. Municipalities were also awarded for:

- 100% Expenditure on Municipal Infrastructure Grant - Dipaleseng Municipality.
- Most Improved Municipality on MIG - Thaba Chweu Municipality.
- Best Planned on MIG projects – Umjindi Municipality.
- Best Municipality on Infrastructure Project Executed – Steve Tshwete.
- Best District Co-ordinator on MIG – Gert Sibande District.

WINNERS

CATEGORY	NAME OF MUNICIPALITY	POSITION
B	Steve Tshwete Municipality	Winner
B	Umjindi Municipality	1st Runner Up
B	Emakhazeni	2nd Runner Up
C	Nkangala District	Winner
C	Gert Sibande	1st Runner Up
C	Ehlanzeni District	2nd Runner Up
MEC's SPECIAL AWARD	Dr J.S Moroka	Best Turn Around Municipality
B	Dipaleseng	100% Expenditure on MIG
B	Thaba Chweu	Most Improved Municipality on MIG
B	Umjindi	Best Planned on MIG
B	Steve Tshwete	Best Municipality on Infrastructure Project Executed
C	Gert Sibande District	Best District Co-ordinator on MIG



TRIUMPH: Nkangala District's Mayor, Cllr Speedy Mashilo, congratulates Steve Tshwete's Mayor, Cllr Manthlakeng Mahlangu for scooping the Vuna Award.