

## ABOUT US

The eZasegagasini Metro is the official eThekweni Municipality publication through which ratepayers and residents are kept informed about news, entertainment and perspectives in the greater Durban region. It is also a forum for readers' views. It hits the streets fortnightly on a Friday, with 450 000 copies distributed throughout the region. To contact us: eZasegagasini Metro, PO Box 5588, Durban, 4000 Newsroom: 311 2290/81/84 Fax: 306 4603 Communications: 311 2279 naidoothrusha@durban.gov.za eThekweni Info Centre 0800 331 011 (toll-free) sizakala@durban.gov.za

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## SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

THE recent floor crossing period has caused no major upsets in the municipality.

The little movement that did occur was by councillors from smaller parties.

Of the 200-member council, only three councillors found new political homes.

Council Speaker James Nxumalo announced the crossings by Arumugum Chetty, Nkosinathi Mkhize and Pooh Govender at a full council seating last month.

Chetty, who joined the Independent Democrats, had earlier indicated that he would definitely "consider crossing" after his party the United Democratic Move-

## Few councillors cross the floor

ment (UDM) had tried to oust him ahead of the opening of the floor-crossing period last month.

The UDM had suspended Chetty on alleged fraud charges but later reinstated him after being instructed to do so by the courts.

Nkosinathi Mkhize jumped the National Democratic Convention (Nadeco) ship in favour of the newly-formed South African Democratic Congress. The move by

Mkhize is seen as staying loyal to former Nadeco president and IFP national chairman Ziba Jiyane.

Jiyane recently formed Fecosa following irreparable rifts between himself and current Nadeco president Rev Hawu Mbatha.

Nadeco now has a single seat in the eThekweni council.

The move by Pooh Govender from the Shallcross Civic and Ratepayers Association (SCARA) to the ANC

also sounded the death knell for the Shallcross party.

Govender's choice of becoming bedfellows with the ruling party means SCARA will no longer have a seat in the eThekweni council.

The DA and IFP, who are both vociferous opponents to the floor-crossing system, neither gained nor lost members in the 15-day period in eThekweni.

DA chief whip Cllr Collin Gaillard had earlier spoken out against floor crossing saying it contradicted the proportional representation system.

The party had expressed confidence that it would not be hard-hit by the process.

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## Tavern talk irks majority

### SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

THE ANC in eThekweni says it is aware of the excessive number of liquor outlets in residential areas and is working to end the problem.

The party was responding to a motion raised by the DA at a recent full council expressing concern "about the proliferation of taverns and shebeens".

ANC councillors said the move by the DA was an attempt at grandstanding as the party was aware of programmes in place to cut down on taverns in residential areas.

"The matter is already being handled by the Health and Safety committee. It is surprising the DA wants to bring it up at council level," said ANC Cllr Siphon Mthethwa. He said the author of the motion Cllr Collin Gaillard was fully aware of this as he was also part of this committee.

"Alcoholism is a scourge, but put programmes in place to fight it instead of using it to gain political mileage," said Mthethwa.

The DA called for an audit of taverns, tighter by-laws and town planning schemes being enforced, particularly against illegal establishments and the discontinuation of (council) approvals for taverns in residential areas.

"Many of these establishments contributed to the disruption to the lives of residents," the DA said.

The ANC's Cllr Nomvuzo Shabalala said it was not council but the provincial government, which granted liquor licenses.

Shabalala, who also chairs the Health and Safety Committee, said the Metro Police and the SAPS had organised a major blitz on liquor outlets in eThekweni.

"In one month alone, 71 illegal alcohol traders were arrested," she said.

Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo said that regardless of the council's regulations, "the provincial government could issue liquor licenses, sometimes without consulting with council".

The ACDP voted for the motion to be considered, but the ANC and smaller parties voted for its scrapping. The IFP was quiet on the matter and abstained from voting.

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## Fire station opened

### FINOLA QUARSINGH

AFTER what has been a long wait, the new Umhlanga Fire Station was officially opened recently – well sited to protect some of the region's most valuable properties including Gateway shopping centre.

City Manager Michael Sutcliffe said at the opening ceremony, "This much-needed facility will play a critical role in protecting the area's high-rise infrastructure.

"I am extremely proud of our fire department and the work they have done and I know they will use this resource to service the community well.

"It is important to say thank you to the team of firefighters who have been patiently waiting for a station – you have reaped the rewards of your wait."

The original site of the Umhlanga fire station formed part of a land swap agreement between the now disestablished North Local Council and Moreland Estates.

The fire department was initially advised by Moreland of their intention to develop that site in May 2001. This request was then supported by an eviction notice served on the department ordering removal of "all occupants and activities" from the site by October 2003.

The fire station was then demolished and the staff were temporarily located in the basement of the Metro Water facility at Umhlanga.

Lance Ravidutt, Manager Support Services, said: "This was not an ideal arrangement and the fire personnel had to submit to a range of problems, including a lack of



**ACTION STATIONS: Firefighters Reagan Gunkel, Siphon Gumedede, Bongani Mthiyane and Khulekani Cele on duty at the Umhlanga Fire Station** Picture: KEN MCHUNU

resources and criticisms."

The City Council then approved the development of the new fire station which was built at a cost of about R13-million.

Raj Sewsunker, Regional Commander for the area, said the new fire station would serve Umhlanga, La Lucia, Glen Ashley, Sunningdale, Mount Edgecombe Estate, Waterloo Estate, Blackburn Village, Ottawa,

Verulam and Umhloti and would provide back up for Durban North, Phoenix and Tongaat Fire Stations.

The station has a rescue pump vehicle, an aerial appliance vehicle, one water carrier, and one control vehicle.

Mark Te Water, Chief Fire Officer, said: "The new aerial ladder firefighting platform is a multifunctioning piece of equipment that extends to

37m, with a turntable rotates 45 degrees horizontally from centre position in both directions and can be used to rescue people from high buildings, and help fire fighters gain access or spray water from the cannon.

"We have a good location here, and the positioning of the station was critical in safeguarding billions in infrastructure," he said.

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## ANC councillors drum up support for Zuma

### SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

IF ETHEKWINI ANC councillors had their way, Jacob Zuma would not only ascend to the highest office in the land but would also have the support of all nine provinces in doing so.

This was made clear at a recent full council meeting when the ruling party councillors made overtures to a visiting delegation from the

Eastern Cape's Buffalo City municipality to rally behind Zuma at the party's national conference in two month's time.

The delegation, which consisted of the executive mayor and councillors had been observing the proceedings at the meeting as part of a visit to eThekweni.

Although the presidential succession issue was not on the agenda, ANC councillors

managed to briefly break into chants of "Zuma" and also sang "sohlangana eLimpopo", (we will meet in Limpopo) in reference to the ANC national conference.

It is at this conference where the ruling party will elect its next president.

Some reminded the visitors not to forget "uMsholozzi" (at the conference).

The visitors seemed to get the message as they danced

and sang along, albeit softly with their comrades.

Zuma sympathisers are viewing the Limpopo conference as the place where his detractors will be forced to eat humble pie.

KwaZulu-Natal is perceived to be a Zuma stronghold and the province, along with the pro-Zuma ANC Youth League and affiliate Cosatu, constitute a powerful voting bloc.

The issue of who will lead the country when Thabo Mbeki's second term of office expires has placed the ruling party in a tight corner with some ANC structures calling for Mbeki to stand for a third term as president.

It has also given rise to perceived conspiracy theories and factions within the ANC either aligned to Mbeki or Zuma.

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