

How city cleaned up

An initiative by the Cleansing and Solid Waste Unit is improving our environment, creating jobs . . . and helping win awards. **Ken Mchunu** reports

ETHEKWINI recently won the Vuna award for South Africa's best-run metro.

When the judges did their decision making they considered the projects and initiatives underway in the competing cities.

And one of the projects that helped swing it for eThekweni is the buy-back centres, community drop-off centres and garden refuse sites that have been running in the metro for the past eight years.

Established by the Cleansing and Solid Waste Unit of eThekweni (DSW), this project has involved setting up centres where residents can bring recyclable materials in exchange for money.

DSW also buys back recyclable waste from identified sites throughout eThekweni.

Sipho Xaba, supervisor of the Escom Road Buy-back Centre, explains the process of buying back recyclable waste: People bring in waste; it is weighed, and a price is paid per kilogram.

Plastic is by far the most valuable material for recycling, said Xaba. "You get many different types of plastic and people know exactly which types pay slightly more," he said.

The project, said Xaba, has helped many people earn a living. And there are even people who come from beyond Durban to exchange waste for money.

"We have a regular customer from Ladysmith, who drives down every Tuesday with a bakkie full of recycle material," he said.

Xaba did, however, highlight the misuse of the centre by certain individuals. "We sometimes get people using this place as a dumping site for even non-recyclable waste."



BAGS OF OPPORTUNITY: Escom Road Buy-back Centre workers Buyi Mokoena and Vuyiswa Mngangwa separate materials for recycling Pictures: KEN MCHUNU

Waste not ...

BUY-BACK and drop-off centres helped divert the following volumes of recyclables in 2005:

- 600 tons of glass
- 1 536 tons of metal
- 365 tons of plastic
- 6 925 litres of oil
- 1 690 tons of paper
- 65 tons of cans

Source: DSW

This made life hard for Xaba who would then have to separate the recyclable from non-recyclable waste, and take the latter to dumping sites.

Buy-back and drop-off centres, as well as garden refuse sites all form part of DSW's integrated waste management strategy, which

promotes recycling in communities.

The centres are managed by the Education and Waste Minimisation division of the city's Association of Clean Communities Trust, an arm of DSW that was formerly known as the Keep Durban Beautiful Committee. The trust runs beautification programmes and educational campaigns. Its efforts helped the city win a Vuna award for cleanest city in 2005.

DSW Head Raymond Rampersad said 23 buy-back centres have been established across eThekweni. "Items such as waste paper, cans, glass and plastic are collected at the centres."

The initiative fulfils a mandate from the national government, encouraging waste reduction.

Rampersad said:

"There is a new law, due to come into effect towards the end of this year, that orders all cities to recycle half of their waste."

But buy-back and drop-off centres not only help the city meet its mandate through diverting recyclables from landfill sites, it also helps the communities in which the centres are situated.

"These benefits are a cleaner environment; waste is being recycled; and permanent job opportunities created," said Rampersad.

The centres employ 48 people, however, DSW predicts that number is likely to increase in the future.

Although some of the project's objectives have been partly met, "there is still a long way to go", said Rampersad. With this in



WEIGH TO GO: Sipho Xaba, supervisor of the Escom Road Buy-back Centre, puts plastic on the scale



mind, DSW has begun training residents on waste management and recycling, using funding from the national Department of Trade and Industry. "The training educates people on environmental awareness and the importance of recycling. We also, through this training, encourage entrepreneurship by equipping people with skills to run their own recycle centres as viable businesses," said Rampersad.

The department was involved in many educational campaigns that "reach out to people in their settlements, schools and community centres, and encourage recycling and waste minimisation".

He said DSW was facing a lack of municipal land on which to establish more recycling sites, but were in talks with city officials to secure more land and establish new sites.

The most recently established buy-back and drop-off centres are the Escom Road Buy-back Centre, Westville Community Drop-off Centre and the Pinetown Football Club Community Drop-off Centre, which all opened in 2005.

Escom Road collects 30-35 tons of recyclables a month, 60% of which is waste paper, 25% plastic, 10% glass and 5% cans.

Westville collects about 15 tons in total a month, with 70% of this being waste paper, 25% glass and 5% cans.

Kloof collects about 15 tons a month, with 70% being waste paper, 20% glass, 5% plastic and 5% cans.

Pinetown collects about five tons a month: three tons are waste paper, 1.5 tons are glass, and the other half-ton are cans.

Rampersad said other buy-back and drop-off centres were at a pilot stage.

"There is a pilot recycling project at the Marianhill landfill.

"At the Bisasar landfill site there is also a recovery of recyclables and a pilot-composting project," he said.

Progress so far has been encouraging.

There have been problems along the way, but DSW has tackled them.

For example, in response to an increase in complaints against cardboard collectors who litter, DSW has put task teams at identified spots to formalise the activities of the informal collectors.

A buy-back centre or a formally demarcated point for informal collectors will be established.

A1 GP: which roads to use, where to park

Continued from page 3

Duration of closure: 15 February to 10 March.

Effective from 20 February

□ The northern carriageway of Argyle Road between the M4 and the eastern ramps of NMR Avenue will be closed from 10pm. The alternative routes are along NMR Avenue. Duration of closure: 20 - 26 February.

□ The eastern carriageway of NMR Avenue southbound between Battery Beach Road and Argyle Road will be closed from 10pm. The western carriageway on NMR Avenue will be converted into a two-way road, with the middle lane being converted into a contra-flow lane.

In the morning peak there will be two lanes townbound

and one lane outbound. From about 10am, there will be two lanes outbound and one lane townbound.

Duration of closure: 20 - 25 February.

□ Battery Beach Road between NMR Avenue and Suncoast Boulevard will be closed from 10pm.

Vehicular access to the casino will be through Snell Parade and the Blue Lagoon interchange (two lanes southbound) between 6am and 8pm.

Thereafter motorists may use the intersection of NMR Avenue and Battery Beach Road to access the casino between 8pm and 6am.

For the traffic leaving the casino and parkings along northern Snell Parade, vehicular access to the M4

will be available from Snell Parade (exit only) opposite Walter Gilbert Road.

Duration of closure: 20 - 26 February.

□ The western carriageway of Suncoast Boulevard will be closed from 10pm. The eastern carriageway will be converted into a two-way road.

Duration of closure: 20 - 26 February.

□ Northern Freeway (M4) between Walter Gilbert Road Interchange and Argyle Road will be closed from 10pm.

Alternative routes are: Inbound traffic will be detoured at Walter Gilbert Road onto NMR Avenue, Umgeni Road; and outbound traffic will be detoured along Ordinance Road, NMR Avenue, and Walter Gilbert Road. Only emergency vehicles,

authorised traffic and traffic to Natal Command will be permitted to enter Northern Freeway inbound at Walter Gilbert Road from 20 to 26 February. Motorists and heavy vehicles that normally use the M4 should re-route along the N2 and N3.

Duration of closure: 20 to 26 February.

Effective from 24 - 25 February

□ NMR Avenue between Walter Gilbert Road and Argyle Road will be closed from 9am to 5pm on 24 February and from 6am to 5:30pm on 25 February.

No pedestrian or vehicular traffic will be permitted on this section of roadway during these times.

Alternative routes are Goble, Walter Gilbert and

Umgeni Roads.

On Sunday, 25 February, after the race, traffic will only be permitted to travel northbound along NMR Avenue in the section between Argyle and Walter Gilbert Roads.

□ Argyle Road (northern carriageway) between Umgeni Road and NMR Avenue will be closed during race times.

The following parking venues will be available

□ Willow Tree Parking - Snell Parade for VVIP and VIP parking.

□ Drive Inn site - entrance from Stanger Street only for disabled parking, hospitality and officials.

□ George Campbell School - Brickhill Road for general access parking.

□ Unisa - Stanger Street for

general access parking.

□ Hoy Park - Somtseu Road for general access parking.

□ Pavilion Site - Old Fort Road for general access parking.

□ Absa Stadium parking - NMR Avenue for general access parking.

□ Sahara Stadium - Kingsmead Close for general access parking.

□ Magistrates Court - Stanger Street for general access parking.

□ International Convention Centre - Walnut Road.

□ Centrum Parking - Aliwal Street (next to the Workshop).

Spectators are advised to scrutinise the recommended parking arrangements relative to seating and gate entrance in the sleeve attached to their ticket.