

ABOUT US

The eZasegasini Metro is the official eThekweni Municipality publication through which ratepayers and residents are informed of news, entertainment and perspectives in greater Durban. It is also a forum for readers' views. It hits the streets fortnightly on a Friday, with 400 000 copies distributed throughout the region. To contact us: eZasegasini Metro, PO Box 5588, Durban, 4000 Newsroom: 031 311 2290/81/84 Fax: 031 306 4603 Reception: 031 311 2279 naidoothrusha@durban.gov.za eThekweni Info Centre 0800 331 011 (toll-free) sizakala@durban.gov.za

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Electricity Tampering: 080 131 3111
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Robot Faults: 0800 333 467
Emergencies: 031 361 0000
Ambulance: 101 77
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Inner West: 031 311 6286
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Inner West: 031 311 6916
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Outer West: 031 767 3908
South: 031 311 5573
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Electricity thieves to face heat

KEN MCHUNU

THE City's Electricity Department has issued a stern warning to electricity thieves: Quit making illegal connections or face the law.

This followed a crackdown last week by the department in the Uganda informal settlement, near Isipingo, where many illegal connections were discovered.

The department's Manager of Revenue Protection, South Region, Bongani Mbuyisa, said the City had been robbed of R50-million in electricity-related crimes in the past financial year.

He said electricity valued at R3.2-million had been stolen in Uganda and its surrounds in the past five years.

Mbuyisa said illegal electricity connections in eThekweni had forced higher tariffs on law-abiding residents.

Such connections also accounted for much of the uncatereed-for load on conductors, which led to power outages.

"People who steal electricity do not have transformers to moderate the flow of power. This results in more power being channelled to illegal destinations, leaving less power for paying customers.

"It also brings the city close to load shedding," he said.

Department staff raided Uganda and dismantled illegal connections, after residents of a nearby suburb complained to Ward 89 Councillor Bhekukhule Mkhize about shack dwellers making connections to roadside power lines.

Mbuyisa said the department now made random patrols of prime target areas.

These include Tongaat, La Mercy, Verulam, KwaMashu, Sea Cow Lake, Mpumalanga township, Cato Crest, Umlazi, Isipingo, KwaNdengezi, Klaarwater, Inanda, Phoenix and Chatsworth.

Mbuyisa urged the public to blow the whistle on illegal connections in their areas.

The department has planned a series of awareness campaigns for townships and informal settlements. Officials hope these will reduce crime and encourage energy saving.

Risk

"Electricity theft hinders the roll-out of electricity to under-developed areas. Funds spent on maintenance because of these crimes, means less money to build new electricity reticulation stations and other facilities."

"Because of this, the department also risks running a deficit," he said.

"All residents found with illegal connections and those who use electricity illegally will be charged for theft," said Mbuyisa.

He urged residents to take care and treat every electrical wire as live. Mbuyisa said five deaths had been reported this year which were related to electricity thefts and illegal connections.

Illegal connections, theft and bare cables can be reported to the department. Call 080 1313 111 (toll-free).

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ROMITA HANUMAN

THE City's swimming pools are getting a make-over.

Preggie Moodley, North Western Parks Manager, said: "We evaluate each pool, looking at pumps and filters, the chlorine system, pool surface, and damage. It is an

City splashes out on fixing pools

ongoing maintenance task." Many of the City's 52 pools have already been upgraded, with the replacement of broken tiles, expansion joints, and repairs to water pipes



SILK ROUTE: Eric Apelgren, Head of eThekweni's International and Governance Relations Unit, and Jacqui Subban, Head of the Geographic Information and Policy Unit, were in South Korea on City business recently

Friendships forged in East

SAMANTHA MOODLEY

DURBAN is close to concluding a sister city agreement with Chennai in India, said Eric Apelgren, Head of eThekweni's International and Governance Relations Unit.

He and other City officials have just returned from a trip to India and South Korea. Apelgren said he expected the sister city partnership to be formalised within three months.

"The partnership will build on existing trade and investment, as well as technological and skills exchange programmes between India and South Africa," he said.

In Korea, the officials attended the sixth World Technopolis Association General Assembly in Daejeon. It brings together leaders of governments, international organisations, universities and technology-based industries.

Apelgren said the eThekweni delegation had gathered a list of potential partners in the fields of information technology, robotics, medical equipment and 3D technology. All would be invited to next year's Smart City conference.

He said headway was made towards concluding a sister city partnership with Daejeon and that relations

with the Korean city could prove fruitful for eThekweni. "Daejeon is home to the research and development projects of Samsung, Hyundai, Kia Motors and other global companies. Daejeon hosted one of the 2002 Fifa World Cup semi-finals. They have a strong volunteer and technological support system for large events and agreed to consider a request to send a team of Korean volunteers to Durban for the 2010 World Cup," said Apelgren.

He said the two cities could learn a lot from each other, as both had vibrant conventions and exhibitions cultures.

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New pilot project gives poor pupils wings

THEMBA KHUMALO and NOMBUSO MASUKU

PROMISING pupils from some of eThekweni's poorest schools could soon see their dreams of becoming pilots take off, thanks to an innovative, City-backed training programme.

The Aviation Learnership Outreach Programme is a partnership between the Virginia Flight School and the eThekweni Municipality.

Programme co-ordinator Innocent Chamane said cadets had been recruited from several previously disadvantaged schools

adopted by the City. "We started with about 80 learners and as the initiative progressed and got difficult, most fell by the wayside.

"But, five have remained and are now ready to receive funding from the Airports Company of South Africa to further their studies to become qualified pilots," Chamane said.

The project also caters for cadets who want work in aircraft communication and navigation, flight control and other flight-related industries

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HIGH-FLYING: Members of the the Aviation Learnership Outreach Programme are, back row from left, Programme co-ordinator Innocent Chamane, Siyethaba Maphumulo, Thanda Majola, Njabulo Shezi, Pilot Instructor Tasha Naidu, and front row, Mbongeni Mdletshe and Nsikelelo Mncwabe

Picture: THEMBA KHUMALO