

Property debts: new tough line

**THEMBA NYATHIKAZI
and ROMITA HANUMAN**

PROPERTY owners have been warned to settle rates timeously and make sure their tenants were up to date with lights and water bills.

Fathima Khan, the City Treasury's Manager of Policy and Compliance, said debts would now be attached to properties and not the actual debtor – effectively shifting responsibility to property owners.

She said that this was in line with the Municipal Systems Act, which was implemented in eThekweni last year.

"Property debts would no longer follow the customer, but are going to remain as a charge against the property," said Khan.

"The Municipality now insists that all debts on properties must be paid on time or payment arrangements must be made with the Treasury

before a customer is registered for Municipal services," she said.

Tenants should be made aware of this initiative.

Khan said: "If a landlord leases a property to a new tenant, the Municipality will not register the new tenant until the previous tenant's debt has been paid."

Control

Khan encouraged customers to register for services in their own names, to improve control over their properties.

She said: "Since the owner is ultimately responsible for the debts on his property, if the tenant registers for services, the owner must give his written authority to do so."

The same principle applies when the tenant requires an extension of time to pay for services – written authority is necessary.

hanumanR@durban.gov.za



THINK PINK: Mayor Obed Mlaba officially opens the City's Adams Mission clinic

Picture: SANE SHANDU

Joy as clinic opens

SANE SHANDU

RESIDENTS of Adams Mission South of Durban could not hide their excitement when Mayor Obed Mlaba opened a new clinic in the area recently.

Mlaba said the Municipality was committed to ensuring people received proper, affordable health service.

"I encourage the community to make use of this facility and to protect it from vandalism," he said.

Mlaba thanked the Makhanya family for donating the land for the clinic.

The clinic fills a serious health care gap in the area. Until now, locals have had to pay to attend the private McCord clinic, or make the trip to the Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital in Umlazi.

The Council's Executive Committee, encouraged by the area's late ward councillor, Flora Mkhize, recognised this

gap and proposed a clinic be built.

The City's Deputy Head of Social Development, Themba Mdluli, said: "The clinic provides a range of primary health care services that people can afford."

Nosipho Hlophe, who is in charge of City Health's South Area 2, commended the good service provided by the McCord clinic, while the new clinic was being planned and built.

Demand

"We are grateful for what the McCord clinic has done for our people and the good relationship we have with them."

She said the new clinic, which has seven nurses, was bracing for a "huge demand from the community and we intend, eventually, to provide a 24-hour service".

They work with Zoë Life, a

non-profit organisation which provides counselling and anti-retroviral services, and assists with educational programmes

A 60-year-old resident of the area, Muriel Gabela, thanked the Municipality and the nurses. "I am grateful. This will make it easier for us to receive free services and it is much closer to where we live.

I have arthritis and asthma, but because I was unable to pay for the clinic services, my condition got worse. Now I believe I will get the service I need," she said.

Ward Councillor Zokhula Cele said: "The dream has come true.

"Now I can arrange meetings with health professionals about education campaigns that will inform people, particularly the young, about the clinic and programmes available."

shandusanelisiwe@durban.gov.za

IN BRIEF

Free bus to writers' fest

The City's Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK) Area Based Management initiative is co-sponsoring free transport and tickets to the evening sessions of the Time of the Writer festival, at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, until 14 March (tomorrow). A festival bus will leave the INK area office in KwaMashu E-section (near the police station) at 5.30pm and will drop people at the bus stops closest to their homes at the end of the evening. To reserve a ticket, call 031 311 4600.

Gardening for the pot

A COURSE on gardening for the kitchen will be held at the Botanic Gardens Permaculture Training Centre on the following Saturdays: 28 March, 25 April, 23 May, and 20 June.

The course, which will be run by Bharathi Tugh, covers soil conditioning; compost; designing and setting up a garden; plant selection; pest management; and creative container gardening.

It costs R280. For details, call 031 309 1170 or e-mail clementm@durban.gov.za.

New plan for Verulam

VERULAM'S town centre is being rejuvenated.

The City's Economic Development Unit has appointed consultants to draft a revised precinct plan for the area to guide future projects in the area.

A public meeting was held last month to present and get comments on the draft situation analysis.

World Cup road closure

ISIAH Ntshangase (Walter Gilbert) Road will be closed to traffic between

Masabalala Yengwa (NMR) Avenue and the Ruth First Highway (M4) from 16 March. The closure, to allow 2010 work, will last about six months. For inquiries, call 031 311 7648.

Karate indaba

COUNCILLOR Khanyisile Mthembu, who also represents Karate KwaZulu-Natal, is inviting Kyokushin dojo heads to a meeting on 15 March at the museum, at the City Hall, from 1pm.

Full Council

A SPECIAL meeting of the eThekweni Council will be held at the City Hall on Tuesday, 31 March, at 10am.

Thriller in manilla

ELECTRICITY bills will come in a new envelope this month, bearing an energy saving message.

The envelopes, which will be used until June, are part of a Municipal campaign to encourage households and businesses to reduce electricity consumption.

The envelopes contain a leaflet detailing which appliances use the most energy and a formula to help

consumers determine the amount of electricity they use.

The 10 best ways to save electricity and the energy saving pledge – "Switch off, Unplug and Save!", is also on the leaflet.

For information on how to save, visit www.durban.gov.za and click on the energy saving logo, or call 0801 313 111.

To share energy saving tips, email dsm@durban.gov.za.

– Sohana Singh

Library fines amnesty

FROM tomorrow, if you have any overdue library books, CDs or DVDs you can return them and not be fined.

Rajen Govender, a City Libraries official, said many books and other library material were overdue.

"We encourage people to return these materials and have made it easy for them by offering a fines amnesty".

Those taking advantage of the amnesty will have their borrowing privileges restored.

"Materials returned which are still in good condition can be made available to other users," said Govender. The amnesty will run for the duration of South African library week, until 20 March. – Themba Khumalo

Pipe replacement project now in Westville

KEN MCHUNU

CONTRACTORS working on a multi-million rand asbestos cement pipe replacement project have moved into Westville's central business district.

The pipeline is being laid in the Jan Hofmeyer Road area, with one pipe running in front of Westville Boys High School to Technology House. Another pipeline would be laid to run parallel to it on the

opposite side of the road, starting from the Village Market Mall to the same point but on the opposite side of the road to Technology House.

Project spokesman Jochen Dedekind said it was anticipated that digging the trenches, laying the new modified polyvinyl chloride pipes and restoring the area would take until the end of May.

Where possible, trenches

would be dug by hand to create jobs for locals.

Dedekind said roads and verges would be excavated and sometimes planned water supply disruptions would occur.

"Residents can expect some inconvenience while pipes are being re-laid. These could include electricity and Telkom interruptions because of the proximity of these cables to the pipeline," he said.

He said efforts would be made to minimise disruptions, and posters alerting the community to water cuts would be put up, and flyers handed out.

The project aims to replace 2 800km of undipped asbestos cement secondary water mains of 100mm and 150mm diameter from Tongaat to Umkomaas and Cato Ridge to the tune of R850-million. This investment should save the City R248-million a

year, lost to water leaks due to ageing infrastructure across eThekweni.

Dedekind said the contractor was treating the Westville CBD as a priority and all businesses in the area had been kept informed.

He said roads and verges would be restored to their original condition once pipe laying had been completed.

Complaints can be reported toll-free at 080 131 3013.

mchunuk@durban.gov.za