

New town centre set for launch

Millions for Mpumalanga project

METRO REPORTERS

THE R275-million Mpumalanga New Town Centre project starts tomorrow, 28 March, with a sod-turning ceremony at the Township's Elangeni FET College.

Mayor Obed Mlaba and KZN MEC for Finance and Economic Development, Zweli Mkhize top a list of dignitaries invited to attend.

Some 5 000 local people are expected and DJs will be on hand to entertain the crowds. The event begins at 9am.

A National Treasury Neighbourhood Development Grant has made possible the new town centre, on eThekweni's Outer West border.

It will serve the greater Mpumalanga area, which includes the settlements of Mpumalanga Township, Shongweni, Geogedale, San-khontshe, Mophela, Malangeneni, Mini Town and Hammarsdale industrial hub.

The area is home to some 120 000 people, many of whom have long endured poverty, neglect and high levels of unemployment.

Last year funding was allocated for a precinct plan.

The purpose of the plan was to provide a framework to guide the development of the new town centre.

The 30ha site identified for the town centre development falls under the ownership of the Ingonyama Trust Board and will be developed by the Municipality in partnership with the ERIS Property Group and a consortium of First

National Bank and Group Five Motlekar.

For phase one of the project, the National Treasury has made available R30 million for service and transport infrastructure, and landscaping. ERIS will invest R200-million for an 18 000-square metre shopping centre.

Infrastructure work will begin in August, once environmental impact assessments have been completed.

Work on the shopping centre is expected to start in November, subject to its business plan being achieved.

Housing

Phase two is expected to begin in 2010, with a further investment of R45-million, which will make land available for further business and retail development, public and social facilities and housing development over three to five years.

Houses will be developed and funded by First National Bank and Group Five Motlekar, and will comprise 1 000 bondable units and 500 RDP units.

Public investment includes a new Metro Police station, government departments, a library, municipal customer care centre, a social development centre, public park with sports and recreation facilities, a new railway station and transport hub, health facilities and small trader facilities.

For more details, call Peter Gilmore at 031 261 6640.

Development drive

MACK MAKHATHINI

MORE than 500 people attended a Local Economic Development Open Day workshop at Mpumalanga's Elangeni FET College hall last week.

It was organised by the City and the KZN Department of Economic Development.

Residents of Mpumalanga

and Hammarsdale were taught bricklaying, basic tailoring, upholstery and other skills.

Residents spoke of vacant buildings in the area that could be used to run projects and asked the authorities to make these available to them.

They asked for a swimming pool to be built in the area.

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GROOVY: Health Minister Barbara Hogan, Health MEC Peggy Nkonyeni, and former eThekweni Council Speaker Nomsa Dube celebrate Human Rights Day at a City Hall function

Picture: THEMBA KHUMALO

Hogan urges patriotism

METRO REPORTERS

HEALTH Minister Barbara Hogan has urged South Africans, particularly women, to have pride in their country.

"We have come a long way and achieved a lot since 1960. I'm proud to speak about my country because of where we come from," she said.

Hogan was speaking at a Human Rights Day event at the City Hall last Saturday. She said: "We want our daughters to be free of Aids and achieve what we could not, and much more out of life."

Human Rights Day is celebrated in South Africa on 21 March to honour the 69 people killed at Sharpeville by apartheid era police on that day in 1960.

"We need to ensure people are aware of their rights and that such abuses never happen again," said Hogan.

She warned officials who abused public office for personal gain. "When you go to public office it should be to serve people and not make your life better, or prominent."

She admitted there were areas where the government

could do better. "We cannot as women say we feel safer while there is domestic violence. However, the good thing is we can do something about it; there is space to improve."

"People need to remember we are a young democracy, which is only 15 years. That means we are in a puberty stage. Let us not have high expectations that we defeat ourselves and let us not have low expectations that we do not improve."

Strides

Hogan said strides have been made to empower women. She pointed out that many women were now in the professions and the country has had two women deputy presidents "in a very short space of time".

KwaZulu-Natal Finance and Economic Development MEC, Dr Zweli Mkhize, said: "South Africa is made of various racial groups, but we are all children of South Africa. Let us spread the message of respect for human rights. We must make sure that we tell our children that they will contribute to this democracy irrespective of colour or creed."

At the Absa Stadium on the same day, Premier Sibusiso Ndebele announced the launch of District Human Rights Forums.

He said the forums would "consolidate the respect, protection and defence of human rights" in district municipalities.

Ndebele said they would make it easier for communities, particularly the vulnerable, to air their grievances and make suggestions.

About 150 women and children from Austerville, near Wentworth, took part in a march to mark Human Rights Day.

Organised by the Wentworth Organisation of Women, the marchers had a message for men: treat us as equals, appreciate the role we have to play, and quit abusing women and children.

ANC Councillor Gloria Hoorzuk said fathers should set an example to their sons, "so they know that women are to be protected and not treated as punching bags".

The United Nations proclaimed 21 March as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

IN BRIEF

Make sure you're alive

THE Department of Home Affairs is urging South Africans to check that they're still alive.

No, this isn't a Pieter Dirk Uys skit, but a genuine attempt to identify people who have fraudulently been declared dead on the population register.

The department has launched an Alive Status Verification service which lets citizens check their status via the internet, SMS or by phone.

Visit www.dha.gov.za and click on the Check your Status link.

For the SMS service, send the letter L followed by your ID number to 32551. A reply SMS will confirm your status as either "Alive" or "Deceased". Each SMS costs R1.

Or call 0800 601 190.

If you find that you have been mistakenly classified "Deceased", you must report to a Home Affairs office with an affidavit from the police, confirming that they are indeed alive.

The department will then ask them to fill in a form and take a full set of fingerprints and investigate.

Career advice for matrics

MANY matric pupils in Lamontville are now better prepared to further their studies, thanks to a careers exhibition held at the local community hall last weekend.

It was organised by the Municipality's Library and Heritage Services unit, and representatives of several universities and colleges were on hand to offer advice and answer questions about career options.

The Unit's Deputy Head, Reigneth Nyongwana, said exhibitions like this were important as they helped pupils identify reputable, accredited tertiary institutions and avoid the many "fly by night" colleges.

Schools attending the exhibition were given projectors donated by Engen.

How to bid for a tender

A NUMBER of contractors have contacted the City's Supply Chain Management Unit in response to the 13 March *eZasegasini Metro* article headlined, "Want to know how to win a tender".

They wrongly assumed some form of lucky draw was on offer. In fact a series of workshops are being held where people can learn how to bid for and secure tenders.

For more information on the workshops, call Customer & Supply Relations at 031 311 7153/7028, fax 031 311 7330, or e-mail blosecb@durban.gov.za or shabanen@durban.gov.za.

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Illegal advertising costs City R4m to remove

DERRICK DLAMINI

IT'S costing the Municipality R4-million a year to remove illegal advertising stickers and posters in the central business district alone.

Advertising and Signage Manager with the City's Development Planning and Management Unit, Ntombi Maema, said the CBD had been hit by a blight of bills, including many advertising

abortions. These were stuck up on buildings, robots, electricity sub-stations, and at taxi and bus ranks.

Maema said removing the advertising involved "enormous" effort, including using "chemicals, scrubbing, mopping, washing and even sweeping".

"At times, paint from buildings, robots or sub-stations gets erased in the removal process, and the City faces

repainting costs," she said.

Officials have vowed to catch perpetrators, who will then face prosecution and fines.

A recent programme to remove illegal stickers and posters in the CBD had resulted in the writing of many fines, said Maema.

She appealed to public to report illegal advertising.

Hoosen Moolla, Acting Manager of the City's urban

renewal office, iTrump, said law enforcement needed to be intensified, and that partnerships with other council departments were crucial.

"Stickers and posters are defacing our beautiful city. We are going to be tough to those found guilty," he said.

Moolla said it was illegal to distribute advertising pamphlets on the street.

"Correct processes must be

followed when one wishes to advertise a business. Our inspectors will work with Metro Police to ensure adherence to by-laws."

He said advertising boards often blocked pavements, forcing pedestrians to walk on the roads, putting their lives at risk.

"If people contravene these by-laws, they will be prosecuted," he said.