

TALKS *to our community*

April 2011

Metro praised for cleaning dams

The Metro's fight against the invasion of hyacinth plant, and continuous restoration of cleanliness of its local dams, has received praise from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

The department congratulated the Metro for its success in controlling the water hyacinth in the Kleinfontein Dam which previously was heavily infested.

"This is a success story which could be implemented in other dams within Ekurhuleni and also by neighbouring municipalities," reads the letter praising the Metro from the department.

The Metro is encouraged to establish an effective maintenance plan to ensure that any re-growth of the invasive weed is dealt with speedily.

Community members and other stakeholder have given positive feedback on the impact of the intervention by the municipality in so far as restoring the dams in the region. The Metro is working its environmental partners in this project.

Ekurhuleni is part of the national department's Declared and Weed and Invader Plant Committee where stakeholders share best practices as part of the urban weed control programme.

The success is mainly attributed to work done by the multi-purpose wetland cleaning and dredging machine, the Watermaster Classic III, which was purchased by the Metro at a cost of R7 million, and put to work in February 2010.

Although work still continues in Benoni, other priority areas such as Brakpan Dam and Boksburg Lake will soon receive attention.

CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES



Jennifer Dikgale, one of the beneficiaries of the Lepharo Incubation project in Springs, shares her experience with the Executive Mayor, Clr Mondli Gungubele. See page 3 for full story.



WAR AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

In an effort to help reduce unemployment and boost the metal industry, the Lepharo Entrepreneur Incubator Centre was opened in Springs recently.

The Metro is in partnership with SEDA, Exxaro and Impala Platinum in this project that seeks to develop entrepreneurs in the field of base metals by helping them register their own companies, give training on how to operate the machines and then assist with funding to start up their own business.

Executive Mayor Cnr Mondli Gungubele said the concept of business technology incubation is internationally acknowledged to

be an ideal medium to support start-up and emerging micro, small and medium sized businesses.

"We will ensure that emerging and existing small business entrepreneurs in the base metals sector survive the start-up period and grow into confident, successful business people who are well grounded financially and secure in their knowledge of how to run an independent productive business," vows the mayor.

Lepharo means 'corner stone of knowledge' and is a SEDA Base Metals Incubation project that aims to equip aspiring entrepreneurs to

make metal products from key holders to roofing gutters. No formal qualification is needed to register for the Lepharo programme, except passion and the ability to succeed.

Jennifer Dikgale from Tembisa is one of the first beneficiaries of this project and with her partner, Tsakane born Senzo Shongwe, has formed a company known as Shenni Metal. While Jennifer has a qualification in electrical engineering, Senzo doesn't have a post matric qualification, except the training from the centre.

New clinic

True to his words of delivering a healthier Ekurhuleni within a short space of time, the Executive Mayor Cnr Mondli Gungubele opened a new clinic for Reedville residents in January.

The facility costing R5.6 million, boasts nine consulting rooms, emergency, counselling, tuberculosis and baby changing rooms.

Reedville in Brakpan has about 3000 residents who previously had to travel to Kwa-Thema and Springs for primary healthcare services as the nearest hospitals are two private facilities.

It is one of five clinics which the municipality has undertaken to deliver to the Ekurhuleni residents before June this year.

"Council has responded to an outcry from the community to have a facility of their own," explains the mayor.

The following primary healthcare services are rendered at the new clinic from 07h30 to 16h30 Mondays to Fridays:

- Child Health; including Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses and immunisation.
- Maternal and women's health, reproductive health and cancer prevention.
- HIV and Aids Sexually Transmitted Infections (HAST) control programme, management of acute and chronic diseases, mental health services, rehabilitation service, HIV counselling and testing, wellness services for HIV; down referral of patients on treatment; The rest are hypertension, diabetes, asthma, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis and HIV infection.

Tackling high bills

Residents are encouraged to assist the Metro in the process of meter reading in cases where inaccessibility to their property is experienced.

Hampering meter reading includes locked gates to the property as well as obstructed meters. In such cases the resident can call the company appointed to do the Council's meter readings, and make an alternative arrangement – such as to read after hours when the owner is at home. Alternatively, residents can also send through the readings themselves via a call, SMS or on the website. These are some of the interventions which have been put in place to improve the level of meter reading.

Motla Consulting Engineers is the service provider doing the meter readings for electricity and water on behalf of the Metro.

To make arrangements for after hours readings call Motla's call centre on **086 106 6852 (086 10 motla)**. To SMS readings you will first need to register, which you can do

by sending the word 'REGISTER' followed by your municipal account number to **40882**. You only need to register once and you will be sent a notification SMS after registration.

Thereafter, you can send your monthly readings to 40882. For water send '**SET WATER**' followed by your meter reading and in a separate SMS send '**SET ELEC**' followed by your electricity meter reading.

Do not send both readings in one SMS. SMSes will be charged at standard rates and *free SMSes do not apply*. A return SMS will be sent to confirm the successful submission of the reading.

You can also send via the website of Motla at www.motla.co.za. Click 'Ekurhuleni Customer' and choose 'Online Meter Reading Submissions'. A simple registration process must then be followed. A specific user name and password will be sent to the customer after registration via e-mail. This will ensure that only the user has access to his/her account details.

Application for the 2011 Grants-in-Aid is now open

The Grants-in-Aid is a programme where funding is allocated by the Metro to organisations that seek to better lives of citizens through developmental projects within the Ekurhuleni region.

Categories in which application can be made include educational institutions, social development and charitable organisations, provincially and nationally affiliated local sporting bodies, community upliftment and developmental projects, to name but a few.

Application forms are available at all offices of the Corporate and Legal Services Department in Alberton, Benoni, Boksburg,

Brakpan, Edenvale, Germiston, Kempton Park, Nigel, Springs and the Head Office in Germiston as well as all ward committee offices.

Closing date for applications is 29 April 2011 - no late applications will be considered. For more information, interested parties can contact any of the following officials:

- Nthabiseng Lerata on 011 999 0810;
- Annah Moloi on 011 999 0806; or
- Kobus Hough on 011 999 0832.



City of Ekurhuleni

PHOMOLONG LIBRARY CHANGES LIVES

The future of learners and students in Phomolong will never be same after the opening of a fully fledged library, the only one in the area.

The facility, which cost R17 million, services the Winnie Mandela informal and other parts of Tembisa and can seat over 80 users. During its official opening in February the Executive Mayor, Clr Mondli Gungubele, stressed the need to have libraries in local communities.

The library even has books that guide

readers on how to apply for university or college bursaries.

It offers the following services:

- Sustainable reading programmes;
- Provision of information;
- Provision of references;
- Internet service;
- Fax and lamination;
- Photocopies;
- Newspapers;
- Government information; and
- Educational support material.



The entrance to the newly built Phomolong library.

Alberton library is operational

The Alberton library, which closed in December 2010, has since re-opened.

The Metro apologises for the inconvenience caused during the closure. Patrons are reminded that the facility is open Monday to Friday, 09h00 to 16h30, and 08h00 to 13h00 on Saturday.

INDIGENTS INVITED TO REGISTER

An extensive indigent registration campaign by the Metro has shown how by registering it can offer some relief to struggling residents.

The indigent policy caters for South Africans in Ekurhuleni whose combined gross monthly income, of all occupants over the age of 18 years in one household, is less than two social pension grants per month.

This policy also covers child-headed households, unemployed residents with proof that they cannot afford to pay for municipal services and semi-employed residents, with a letter of proof from the employer or an affidavit signed and stamped by the South African Police Services.

If you fit the above criteria, and your application is approved, the municipality will grant your registered indigent household nine free kilolitres (9kl) of basic and waste water, free 100kwh of electricity and free refuse removal.

The first registration process was held in Kattlehong, followed by Kingsway in February where almost 200 new applicants were added to the database. Also visited during this campaign was Villa Lisa in Boksburg.

Daveyton residents will be visited and educated on this policy on 20 April at the Duduza Multipurpose Centre.

Currently the Ekurhuleni Metro has over 48 000 registered indigent households who are receiving assistance from the programme.

Those wishing to register for indigent status can apply at any of the Customer Care Centres.

Buying prepaid electricity

If you have a prepaid electricity meter, buying units is now even easier.

The Ekurhuleni Metro offers four ways in which to do this, all you have to do is choose the easiest and most convenient option for you. One of the newly appointed supervisors, Easypay, will soon provide internet based vending, with cellular vending hot on its heels.

A new prepayment vending methods that has been introduced by the Metro is termed "scratch card vending", or UniPIN. In areas where the existing communications infrastructure does not cater for point of sale vending (remote areas), the UNiPIN option will be the preferred method. At the moment, the Engen Service Station group is the only point where you can use the UniPIN prepayment method.

UniPIN is a voucher that can be redeemed using your cellphone at a time and place convenient to you. This is how it works:

- Prepaid electricity vouchers must

be purchased by the customer at a UniPIN vendor.

- Customer to send a SMS request following the instructions on the UniPIN Voucher. The cost of the SMS request is currently 20 cents.
- The message is sent to the short code (5 digit service number) and upon receipt of the message, the UniPIN Manager works out which utility the customer belongs to, displays a "prevend" in the case of arrears collection and collects the 20 digit prepaid electricity token number from the relevant utility.
- The customer enters this number into the keypad on the prepaid meter in the home or business and the credit is registered as per standard Numeric STS meters.
- Should the key entry of the 20 digit prepaid electricity token fail, or yield an error message, contact the call centre service at 0861 499 499.

FAQs

Q: Can I use any cell phone and any network to redeem a UniPIN?

A: Yes all cellphones and all networks are supported.

Q: Can the UniPIN be given to others to use?

A: Yes. A customer can purchase UniPINs for family member and friends. The person that needs to top up the meter is the person who should redeem the UniPIN voucher.

Q: What if you send a sms to redeem a UniPIN but don't receive a response.

A: The customer must always ensure that they are sending the request to the correct short code number (41589), and that the request is sent in the correct format as shown on the voucher instructions. If the problem persists please call the call centre on 0861 499 499.



City of
Ekurhuleni

REPAIR LEAKING TAPS AND TOILETS

March is water month and the national theme for this year is “Water is life: Working together we can save more water”.

In an earlier article information was given on how to read a water meter and determine if there is a water leak. As a follow up, this article shows how you can fix leaking taps and toilets. You are eligible for a rebate on your water account if you fix your own leaks and a reduction in water consumption can be demonstrated.

Please consult your nearest Customer Care Centre for further details on this rebate programme. South Africa is a water scarce country and it is up to all of us to play a role towards the reduction of water wastage and consumption.

LEAKING TAPS

Usually, leaking taps are caused by a worn washer which costs less than R2 in a plumbing store. However, if this doesn't fix the problem, you may need to buy a whole new tap. This will cost you about R100.00.

The eight-step guide to replacing a tap washer:

1. Close the stop-cock (the main supply tap to your home);
2. Open the leaking tap fully;
3. Unscrew the cover;
4. Unscrew the spindle (hold tap firmly otherwise you might damage supply pipe below basin or sink);
5. Unscrew the washer-retaining nut and remove the washer;
6. Fit a new washer and replace the nut;
7. Re-install the spindle and screw down the cover;
8. Close the tap, restore the water supply and check for leak.

A word of caution:

When you have replaced the tap washer, be careful not to over-tighten the tap. A new washer will feel comparatively “soft” and will be damaged if over-compressed.

LEAKS THROUGH THE TOILET BOWL

A water leak might be visible in the toilet bowl or you may hear a sizzling noise at the cistern inlet side. To confirm an invisible leak, add some food colorant into the toilet cistern. If the colorant flows into the toilet bowl without you flushing, then you have a leak.

Leaks through the toilet bowl could be a result of a number of things:

- The float ball adjustment is incorrect. The float is set too high and this causes constant inflow of water into the overflow pipe and into the bowl. Adjust float by bending the float arm carefully. Other units may require adjustment via pre-set holes in the float arm. Make sure the float is not cracked or damaged;
- Float inlet valve washer is damaged. Water fills the cistern and overflows into the bowl although the float is set correctly.

Replace washer. (See replacing of float valve washer);

- Float level is correct but water is leaking into bowl. The flush rubber washer is worn. Replace washer. (See eight-step guide)
- External leaks on cistern. Damp or water shows on the floor. Make sure that cistern is not cracked or damaged or check for a leak at outlet pipe at underside of cistern. If leaks occur replace seal or if cistern is damaged replace cistern (preferable by qualified plumber).

Eight-step guide to replacing a typical cistern flush valve washer:

1. Close the stopcock
2. Disconnect the lifting wire from the lever arm
3. Remove the split pin and the side float
4. Withdraw the spindle assembly
5. Unscrew the bottom flange and remove the washer
6. Install a new washer with the sloping side uppermost
7. Re-assemble the parts
8. Open the stopcock and test.

Note:

Cistern flush valve washers and tap washers are not manufactured as a standard item, you should first establish the type of valve and tap washer needed for your specific tap or toilet. Your local hardware store should be able to help you in this regard.

Remember the three Rs. **Reduce** the amount of water you use, **Re-use** water whenever you can and **Repair** leaks as soon as you find them.

Please report any water and sewer related problems to the Services Call Centre: 0860 543 000. Have your address, contact details and account number on hand when you call.

Figure 3: Components of a flush valve.

