PRIORITY 1: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND JOB CREATION.

Creating opportunities for young people
By Monique Warden: GCIS, Western Cape

The Prince Albert Advice and Development Centre was contracted to employ 400 young people between the ages of 18 to 35 to execute the Expanded Public Works Programme COVID-19 Project. The company was contracted by the Independent Development Trust, and funded by the Department of Public Works. The 400 young people were recruited to assist with maintaining social distancing, completing attendance registers, measuring temperatures and doing awareness messaging in schools, health facilities and communities.

On 8 June 2020, the first phase of inductions was held for the first 180 EPWP COVID-19 Project workers. The environmental health practitioners, together with strategic management from the Central Karoo District Municipality conducted training on hygiene protocols and ministerial determination. The Department of Employment and Labour also did a presentation about employment and labour relations.

On 24 July 2020, the second phase of 220 young people were inducted. They will predominantly work at the hospitals, clinics and schools to do screening, tracing, and assist facilities in their day-to-day tasks.

The recruits received full personal protective equipment from the Prince Albert Advice and Development Centre to ensure their safety and that of those they come into contact with.

All the towns in the Central Karoo will benefit from this project, and the Prince Albert Advice and Development Centre works very closely with the Central Karoo District Municipality, who are monitoring the project.
Buffalo City Metropolitan Executive Mayor Xola Pakati together with the Board Members of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency launched the construction project of the first of its kind, Water World Fun Park precinct in Leaches Bay, West Bank, on 30 July 2020. The intervention by the city, through its agency, marks the first phase of an ambitious plan which will see further developments in the precinct.

Construction is already underway in the 5.9-hectare project, which seeks to further develop the tourism and entertainment of the city. The project also intends to diversify spaces of entertainment along the beach, thereby reducing congestion in the traditional spaces where citizens gather such as Esplanade beachfront. This project is also intended to revitalise property development in the West Bank area, which has immense real estate development potential given its scenic wide sea facing views.

“The people of Buffalo City Metro have been negatively affected by COVID-19 and left with a visible devastation to human lives and livelihoods, however, we are confident that initiatives of this nature will be an essential feature of our recovery plan for the sector and broadly economic recovery,” Mayor Pakati said.
Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga conducted a visit to two schools in North West at Letlhabile Township near Brits on 4 August 2020. The Minister’s visit was aimed at motivating learners and teachers and also to monitor compliance towards COVID-19 regulations.

The Minister’s visit started at Eletsa Secondary School and further proceeded to Tshepagalang Secondary School. Both schools have more than 1,000 learners. Eletsa Secondary School has 185 matric learners, and on the first day of the Grade 12s’ return to school, a total of 158 learners were present. At Tshepagalang Secondary School, all the 105 Grade 12 learners returned to school.

Minister Motshekga was satisfied by the turnout of learners who returned to school. “It is not easy but you have to pull through. Your certificate should be of the same standard with any matric certificate. You have to work double harder than any matriculant of any year. The future of this country depends on your success. Follow the instructions of your teachers of keeping a social distance and wearing your masks. I came here to encourage you that you can make it. Do whatever it takes to ensure that you make it. You should never relax and do not aim below Level 5,” said Minister Motshekga.

Mpho Mokoena, a 19-year-old Grade 12 learner, indicated that she was grateful for being back at school. The MEC for Education, Mmaphefo Matsemela, highlighted that as a province, they are going to provide all Grade 12 learners with psychosocial support.
MEC Sasekani Manzini visiting Tonga Hospital to monitor the COVID-19 facility.

Mpumalanga MEC for Health Sasekani Manzini visited Tonga Hospital in the Nkomazi Local Municipality on 29 July 2020 to provide support and check the progress on the newly built ward in response to COVID-19 pandemic. The MEC and her entourage were received by the hospital management, representatives from various organised labour, contractors, hospital board members and officials from the Department of Public Works.

The construction of the dedicated COVID-19 ward is part of the province’s plans to strengthen its healthcare system and to increase critical care beds and ventilators that will assist COVID-19 patients. The ward consists of 26 high care beds, 24 medium risk beds, 25 low risk beds, nurses’ station and doctors’ offices, a changing room, sanitising rooms, store rooms and an open waiting area.

MEC Manzini said, “This is indeed a good story to tell because even after the pandemic, the infrastructure will still be utilised for other healthcare needs.”

She did a walkabout at the hospital to assess progress of the structure. She also checked the provision of healthcare services, which continues to run smoothly amidst the pandemic. The MEC was pleased to hear about the lifespan of the structure, which is above 50 years.