

MY DISTRICT TODAY



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Outcome 3: All people in South Africa are and feel safe

New police station brings hope to the people of Hazyview

Joy Themba, GCIS Mpumalanga

As part of Output 1 (namely addressing overall levels of crime), the South African Police Service has identified five key priorities to combat crime and its contributing factors. Among other things, the department has committed to building new police stations in areas that were neglected in the past.

The Minister of Police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, officially unveiled a new police station in Hazyview. The Minister was accompanied by the National Commissioner, General Riah Phiyega and the MEC for Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr Vusi Shongwe. The opening of the police station is important in that it will contribute to the reduction of crime in Mpumalanga.

The Minister told the Hazyview community to use the building to ensure safety for them and their children. "Once we have built these structures, the next fundamental goal is to provide our police officers with the required resources and equipment to enable them to meet their constitutional obligations to the nation," he said.

As part of the opening of the police station, Minister Mthethwa, General Phiyega, MEC Shongwe and Provincial Commissioner Ntombela handed over food parcels to 10 needy families. Certificates and trophies of acknowledgement were also given to five hard-working police officials who are dedicated to serving the Hazyview community.



Community members look on as Minister Mthethwa opens the new police station.



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Outcome 12 (b): An empowered, fair and inclusive citizenship

Communities informed about new bank notes

Bongani Mazibuko, GCIS Mpumalanga

One of the strategic objectives of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) is to communicate proactively with the public about government policies, plans, programmes and achievements. The GCIS, in partnership with the communications firm Lekwa, Msukaligwa Local Municipality, Ermelo Hawkers Committee, shop owners and the Standerton Taxi Association, hosted taxi-rank and shopping-mall sessions to educate and inform the public about the new bank notes.

The sessions were held at the Standerton taxi rank on 22 October and at Ellerines Shopping Centre in Ermelo on 23 October 2012. Members of the community were informed on how to identify a genuine bank note and the security features of the notes.

Mr David Morajane of the Standerton taxi rank said, "It will help us a lot as taxi operators to know genuine bank notes in case crooks try to forge them and offer fake notes."

The community and local shop owners appreciated the sessions. Leaflets and posters on the bank notes were distributed. GCIS also made use of this platform to distribute and market information products to the public. The cooperation of all stakeholders led to the success of these information sessions.



Members of the communication firm educating the public about security features of the new bank notes at Standerton taxi rank.



Community members receiving information at the GCIS information stall.



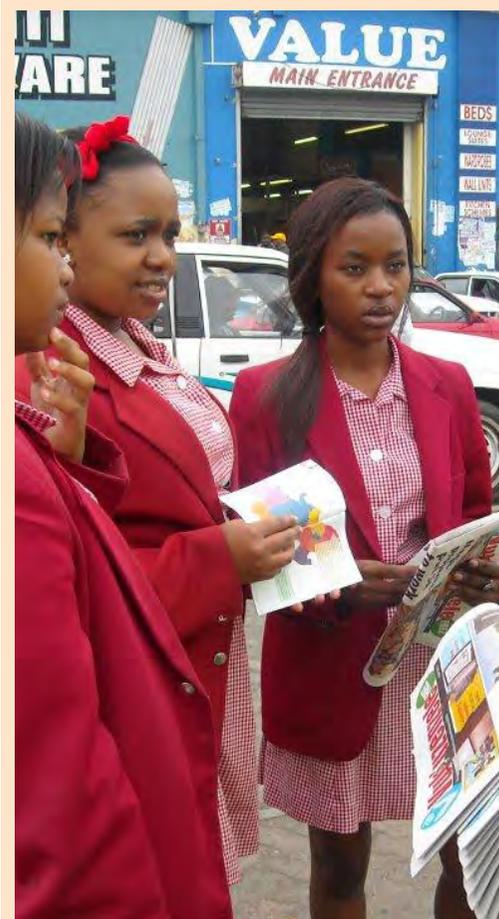
Information was also distributed at busy intersections in Standerton.



Outcome 10: Environmental assets and natural resources that are well protected and continually enhanced

Onseepkans unite to preserve their water resources

Llewelyn Cloete, GCIS Northern Cape



The Working for Water Programme is a multi-departmental initiative led by the Department of Water Affairs aimed at clearing alien plants.

The programme's intention is to have substantial control over invasive alien plants (IAPs) in South Africa by 2020.

The initiative is expected to contribute to economic empowerment, social equity and ecological integrity. IAPs are non-indigenous plants that are able to reproduce and spread without assistance from people. Also known as environmental weeds, these plants threaten both agriculture and natural ecosystems.

Due to IAPs' negative effect on water resources the National Weedbuster Week, which took place in October, focused on aquatic weeds. The week was celebrated under the theme "Goggas nip weeds in the bud" – which suggests an alternative biological control method to manage alien species by using insects. The method will reduce the need to use herbicide or chemical

substances to destroy or inhibit the growth of the plants.

The objectives of the National Weedbuster Week were to:

- raise awareness and increase public understanding about the problems alien plants cause
- help the public make the connection between gardening and agricultural practices and potential land and environmental degradation
- provide the public with the information and skills required to play a responsible role in the sustainable use of land and water resources
- ultimately make the necessary changes in behaviour to help the environment.

The initiative aims to foster community ownership of problems, resulting in acceptance of and support for alien plant management projects.

One of the reasons for bringing the event to Onseepkans, was the poor economic conditions of the community, the need for environmental support, and the benefits of the Working for Water Programme.

The keynote speaker at the event was the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, who said, "The most powerful tool in our arsenal around the problem is education and awareness initiatives."

Community members were encouraged to cut off alien plants to prevent them from re-growing. The Deputy Minister also highlighted that some species needed to be protected as they were medicinal and could cure diseases. Communities were encouraged to teach their children about these species to motivate them to consider careers in science and medicine.



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, shows a thumbs-up for the fight against alien plants.



Outcome 12 (b): An empowered, fair and inclusive citizenship

PixleyKaSeme district tastes the fruits of democracy

Thenjiwe Konono, GCIS Northern Cape

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) held its annual sitting at the Emthanjeni Local Municipality in the district of PixleyKaSeme, Northern Cape, from 5 to 8 November 2012, in pursuit of the constitutional injunction of overseeing the executive and facilitating public participation in its processes.

The NCOP's Taking Parliament to the People Programme was initiated in 2002. It is aimed at giving effect to the promise that the NCOP serves as a forum for considering matters affecting provinces and to oversee cooperative government.

In addition to Emthanjeni, the PixleyKaSeme district consists of six other local municipalities, namely Siyancuma, Thembelihle, Ubuntu, Umsobomvu, Kareeberg and Renosterberg.

The area has a high unemployment rate and remains one of the most rural and underdeveloped in the province. This is what informed the choice as home for this year's chapter of the NCOP's Taking Parliament to the People Programme.

On 3 October, site visits were conducted in De Aar and surrounding areas and a public meeting was held at Nonzwakazi Hall in the Emthanjeni Local Municipality. The purpose of the meeting was to listen to people's concerns about service delivery challenges, to inform the content of the November programme. The people therefore shaped the programme.

More than 3 500 people across the district attended the event to listen to President Jacob Zuma and to various Cabinet Ministers. Issues raised by members of the community included improving:

- education at both basic and tertiary levels
- safety and security, including the fight against abuse of and attacks on women and children.

In response, President Zuma said, "Indeed government is already responding to some of the

issues raised. On basic education, the provincial education department has noted the request for a special school in the district. In this regard, the department is currently upgrading Alpha Primary School. It will be converted into the first full-service school in the province. The school will be able to accommodate learners with barriers to learning that need levels 1 to 3 support."

The President added, "The education department has also assessed inclusive education as a whole, including special schools, and this has been declared a priority.

Therefore, the skewed geographical spread of special schools will be addressed. The province currently has one school of skill. Another five schools of skill will be established – one in each district. This will be done over the next five years. Learners who experience moderate to mild cognitive barriers will be accommodated in these schools. They will acquire not only academic knowledge, but also practical skills."

