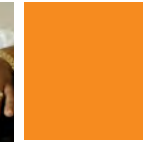




MY DISTRICT TODAY



Issue no. 3 February 2012

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Big screen for a small Thaba Phatchoa community

Compiled by: More Matshediso

Thaba Phatchoa is a small, remote and rural farm area in the Eastern Free State.

On 9 February 2012, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) organised a big screen in the local school hall for the Thaba Phatchoa community to view President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address (SoNA) live. During the day, the departments of home affairs and health as well as the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) rendered mobile services for the community.

About a hundred members of the community, including youth, adults and the elderly, gathered from about 18:00 to view the SoNA. It was evident that they were happy to see government officials bringing this broadcast to their remote community.

The SoNA is delivered at the opening of Parliament and is a key event on South Africa's parliamentary and political calendar. The SoNA is important for all South Africans because it tells us what government's Programme of Action is

for the year ahead. By being aware of what government is doing, everyone can become involved and also take part in government's plans to build a better life for all.

After the viewing of the SoNA a GCIS official, Mr Henk Zeeman, gave an overview of the address and explained the Government's priorities which include education, rural development and land reform, health, job creation, and fighting crime.

The community was also given the opportunity to respond and comment on the President's address. There was a positive response from the community about the different government programmes announced by the President in his address.

A quiz on the content of the SoNA was also held with South Africa yearbooks as prizes. The community enjoyed this and participated enthusiastically.

The Chief Director of Provincial and Local Liaison from the GCIS Head Office in Pretoria, Mr Michael Currin, thanked the Thaba Phatchoa community for their friendly reception and support and also the school for the use of their hall.

The local councillor, Ms Jane Jacobs, thanked the GCIS for bringing the big screen to them. She said it shows that government also have their community's interests at heart. She also thanked the community for showing such support. Other GCIS officials present at the event were the Director of the Free State GCIS, Mr Trevor Mokeyane, and Senior Communication Officer, Ms Mamagolo Dirane.



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Bringing SoNA to the people

Compiled by: Sikelela Zokufa (SCO)

The Zolani Thusong Service Centre in Nyanga hosted a State of the Nation Address (SoNA) big-screen event on 9 February 2012. The event was organised by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in partnership with the Miranda Ngculu Sub-Council, to render service delivery by the Department of Home Affairs.

By the time President Jacob Zuma started his SoNA, the service centre's hall was packed to capacity, with more people queuing outside.

One of the local community members, Siyabulela Ngwenduna, said he was pleased that government brought SoNA to the people.

"I work until late. When I come from work, the government offices are already closed, so this after-hours government programme makes a difference to me and many other people from the community. Some people are employed in construction companies, where if there is no work there is no pay; they work every day until late and do not have time to access government services in their areas during normal working hours."

Home Affairs District Manager Zamuxolo Joba explains that the request from GCIS was a great call to action for them, as they want to get as many beneficiaries involved in the community as they can. He also praised the cooperation between the different departments to ensure the success of the event. These included the Department of Local Government, the South African Police Service, the GCIS and the City of Cape Town 107 Emergency Services. "I am pleased by the turnout, because it shows that we achieved what we set out to achieve. This is indeed government coming to the people."

While the SoNA was being broadcast in the Theatre Hall, members of the community were also being educated and entertained in the main hall. Radio Zibonele and Cape TV exposed many people who had never been on-line before to the world of cyberspace. Ward Councillor Luvuyo Zondani, a co-facilitator of the discussions, said that he was thrilled to lead the discussions and that he had identified community leaders and youths who can make a fundamental difference. "I commend President Zuma for his clearly outlined programme of action for this year."

Sindile Namba is a Cape Town official from the Department of Social Development. "I am satisfied and happy with this year's SoNA. The President made a great speech with timeframes, budget allocation and targets, but he did not go into details on youth development; I was expecting more details on youth development programmes, as young people are often victims of unemployment and crime."

The GCIS' Sikelela Zokufa said he was glad that community members, organisations and government departments participated in this very important event. "We are mandated to coordinate local events as part of government communication, with the purpose of ensuring maximum participation of our communities and citizens at large. The event was successfully supported by the Miranda Ngculu Sub-Council, and we reached 253 community members. Among them were traditional leaders, learners, youth and local community leaders. We reached an additional 486 584 members of the community through the live broadcast by Zibonele Community Radio and Cape Town TV."

