

Kota Festival set to boost local economy as it returns to eMalahleni

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9 YEARS ON, STILL THE VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS



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STEVE TSHWETE WINS AWARDS FOR CLEANEST MUNICIPALITY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Machadodorp author celebrates full-house debut book launch

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MACHADODORP — Local author Sandile Sibande (33) from Machadodorp marked the launch of his debut book, *My Journey My Scars*, with a full-house event at Greys Inn on 18 April 2026, where he reflected on personal challenges including illness, rejection and faith-based struggles that shaped the publication.

Sibande described the event as a “huge success” and a “momentous occasion”, saying he was astonished to see the venue filled with family, friends and supporters.

“To be truthful, I was pleasantly surprised,” Sibande said. “I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to grace this occasion and officially launch my book.”

The book explores challenges including rejection, isolation and a serious health scare in 2024 that left Sibande hospitalised for two weeks. He said those experiences taught him the value of gratitude, mental and physical well-being, and the importance of

human connection.

“The lessons learned from these experiences inspired me to share my story,” Sibande said. “The book serves as a beacon of hope for individuals who have grappled with loss, particularly those navigating the complexities of ministry, seeking clarity in their divine calling amidst persecution and pressure to uphold the gospel.”

The author thanked his editor and publishing team, Sell Your Book, for their “tireless efforts in bringing this story to life”.

He paid special tribute to his family, his daughter's mother Mercia N Mculu, the Imemeza Secondary School community, friends and the Emakhaseni Local Municipality.

Sibande also acknowledged several organisations for their support and donations, including Hamzer Press Forward Foundation, Ntokozo Slaghuus Pty Ltd, Sammy's Bakery, Claude

Empire, Chief Shepherd and the Pastor Fraternity.

“Your unwavering support was crucial to the success of the book launch,” he said.

Feyas Lifestyles (Palace) hosted the event, with Reverend M Nkosi credited for working behind the scenes to ensure the launch ran

smoothly. “Finally, I want to thank all of you for attending. I felt astonished when I saw the room filled with family, friends and supporters,” Sibande said. “Thank you for your kindness, your presence and your support for *My Journey My Scars*.” Copies of the book are available directly from the author.



Sandile Sibande poses with friends and relatives who came to support him at the launch
IMAGE: Supplied



Vusi Mnisi (Deputy Chairperson of Hamzer Press Forward Foundation), Sandile Sibande (author of *My Journey My Scars*) and Hamzer Ngwenya (Chairperson of Hamzer Press Forward Foundation)
IMAGE: Supplied

“the path of the righteous winds upwards to flee from hell beneath us” Prov 15:24



Beyond Today

By Pastor Chuck Swindoll

“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.” (Matthew 6:19–21)

“If you can look into the seeds of time, and say which grain will grow, and which will not, Speak then to me . . .”
Macbeth, act I, scene 1, line 58

Who wouldn't want to hear from someone like that? Who hasn't felt himself standing on tiptoe, straining to see what lies ahead? Even the writers of a weekly news magazine tried to look beyond today. They didn't try many predictions but they did ask some tough, sweeping questions. Among them:

Is America in retreat?
Will our nation regain its trust?
Is public education doomed?
Can the world be fed?
Can we find more oil?
Can we keep hoping?

That last one is really the root issue, isn't it? Unless we have hope, it could mean some pretty dismal years in front of us. Shakespeare's “seeds of time” might very well be scattered and dangerously thinned out by the next century.

But let's limit our thoughts to something we

can handle. Most of us must admit those news magazine questions are too vast for us. We need a bite-size chunk to chew on.

Okay then, how about that unit called your family . . . now there's something worth thinking about beyond today. Where are you going? What's your game plan for the next ten years? Given any thought to specific objectives you want to reach—or at least shoot for? How about selecting some priorities? You say there's no hurry? I challenge that. These ten years will literally fly by. A decade from now you'll rip the December sheet off your calendar wondering, “How did ten years go by so fast?”

Ten years . . . Right now, stop and add ten years to your life and (if you have a family) do the same with each of your children.

Suddenly we're all a bit more sober. The clapper of urgency has struck the bell of reality, and some of us sense a summons back to our inescapable responsibility. God commands us to “number our days, that we may present to [Him] a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).

Forgive me for pressing the issue near the point of offense, but unless some of you who read these words stop and think and start to execute essential goals for the next ten years, indifference, passivity, and procrastination will win another victory. And instead of making a few hard decisions that will initiate beneficial changes, your family ties will loosen, your children will drift, and you'll dread the memory of the way you were.

How much better to invite the living, all-knowing Lord to show you ways to make the coming years much better than the years before! To allow you to become better, as well as older. How about offering this prayer—in faith:

Lord, since You can look into the seeds of time, and say which grain will grow, Speak then to me . . .

DA slams road maintenance in Steve Tshwete, set to table motion to fix potholes

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — The Democratic Alliance (DA) in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality says it will table a motion at the next Council sitting calling for a time-bound plan to fix potholes, accusing the African National Congress (ANC) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)-led administration of failing to maintain local roads.

“Proper service delivery for residents is not a favour being done by the municipality. It is paid for by the hard-earned money of our residents,” said DA councillor Deon van der Merwe.

He said residents are being forced to navigate roads that resemble “4x4 courses” despite paying for road maintenance.

“It must be noted that service delivery is non-existent, and this endangers the lives of our residents and visitors,” he said.

Van der Merwe explained that the DA made the findings during recent oversight visits across several wards, where councillors observed a continued decline in road and stormwater infrastructure, along with slow repairs to existing potholes.

“During this oversight, it was clear that there is a lack of maintenance on roads and slow repairs of potholes. The current condition of our roads is a stark symbol of municipal neglect and a blatant disregard for the welfare of residents,” he said.

Van der Merwe warned that deteriorating roads are more than just an inconvenience.

“Accidents are likely to become more frequent, vehicles are damaged daily, and emergency services are delayed due to impassable sections,” he said.

He added that the problem is worsening as the municipality's population grows, increasing the number of taxis, school buses, pedestrians and private vehicles using local roads.

“The DA finds it concerning that despite multiple complaints and requests for assistance from residents, Steve Tshwete has turned a blind eye to the issues faced on the ground,” van der Merwe said.

The motion to be tabled will call on Council to commit to a time-bound, ward-based plan to address potholes and road maintenance backlogs.

In February, this publication reported

on motorists' frustrations with the state of roads in the municipality.

Following those complaints, the paper sent questions to the municipality to understand the methods used for repairing potholes. The questions included:

- What specific standards does the municipality follow for pothole repairs?
- What systems are in place to ensure repairs meet the required engineering specifications?
- Is weather a significant factor in the formation of potholes, or is it primarily due to ageing roads?

No response had been received at the time of publication.

As the paper awaits an official reply, Mayor Mhlonishwa Masilela said the municipality is addressing the pothole issue through the government's Letsema programme, which takes place every Friday.

“We are wholeheartedly committed to bridging the service delivery gaps in every ward where these potholes are being repaired,” he said.



DA councillor Deon van der Merwe says roads in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality resemble off-road tracks designed for 4x4 vehicles.
IMAGE: Supplied

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Nkangala IDP outreach draws service delivery concerns across eMalahleni and Victor Khanye

● NODICAH FUNDAMA AND RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

EMALAHLENI/DELMAS — Residents across eMalahleni and Victor Khanye municipalities raised concerns about water shortages, electricity, housing and failing infrastructure during Integrated Development Plan (IDP) mayoral outreach sessions hosted by Nkangala District Municipality in April 2026.

At an outreach held at Kwaguqa Extension 11 Community Hall in Ezinambeni, eMalahleni, on 21 April, residents highlighted ongoing service delivery challenges affecting their communities.

“We have about 700 houses without water, yet municipal bills keep increasing,” said Ward 3 resident Hlayisile Khumalo.

The session formed part of the municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Mayoral Outreach Programme, aimed at presenting planned programmes and projects for the 2026/2027 financial year and consulting residents on budget priorities.

Executive Mayor Thomas Ngwenya led engagements across both municipalities, outlining key projects and encouraging residents to participate in shaping development plans.

“The purpose of this outreach is to ensure that communities are informed and actively participate in shaping development in their areas,” Ngwenya said during his presentation.

In eMalahleni, residents raised concerns about lack of electricity in certain areas, water shortages, leaking sewage systems, pothole-ridden roads, lack of secondary schools, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to essential services.

Ayanda Nkuna from Ward 23 raised concerns about delayed electrification in Empumelweni.

“We want to know when electricity will be fully connected. There are areas still without power. The sewage issues have also been left unattended, and the road from P Ndimande is in a very poor condition,” Nkuna said.

From Ward 3, Tshepo Matlala pointed out the lack of educational resources in Ezinambeni.

“As a community, we do not have

libraries where children can go and study or access learning materials,” he said.

Residents from Ward 23 also expressed frustration over deteriorating infrastructure and access to education and healthcare. Concerns were raised about potholes, the absence of a secondary school in Vosman, forcing learners to travel long distances, and shortages of basic items such as pillows at the local general hospital.

Residents also questioned whether planned hospital renovations would extend beyond the mental health ward to other hospital units.

In Ward 29, local farmer David Mathebula raised concerns about lack of access to land and funding for agricultural development. Other residents questioned the allocation of RDP housing, citing incomplete projects, unroofed structures and uncollected waste. Responding to the concerns, members of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) acknowledged the issues and provided feedback on planned interventions. The municipality indicated that electrification projects are being implemented in phases, and affected areas will be addressed progressively.

Sewerage and sanitation challenges were noted, with officials committing to follow up on reported cases. On the issue of libraries, the municipality highlighted existing Social Labour Plan (SLP) programmes in partnership with mining companies, aimed at supporting community infrastructure development.

Agricultural concerns were referred to provincial authorities, while issues relating to Vosman bridge, healthcare facilities and the need for a secondary school are being considered, although land availability remains a constraint.

Addressing unemployment, the Mayoral Committee said a database has been established to assist in identifying and linking

job seekers with opportunities.

During a similar outreach session held at the Simon Gondwe Sports Centre in Delmas, residents of Victor Khanye Local Municipality raised concerns about housing, infrastructure and access to basic services. Victor Khanye Executive Mayor Vusi Buda told residents that the municipality does not directly build houses but facilitates development.

“We do not build houses ourselves; our responsibility is to facilitate development,” said Buda. “We have developed 500 stands, which will benefit residents, especially those living in low-lying areas from Extension 3 to Extension 7.”

He said some serviced stands will be allocated to the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), which will oversee the construction of houses for qualifying beneficiaries.

Residents said while they welcomed the engagement, they wanted faster implementation of services.

“We appreciate being given a platform to speak, but we need to see

real change, especially when it comes to housing and basic services,” one resident said. Another resident, Khanyisile Simelane, added: “The development of stands is a good step, but we are still struggling with water and road conditions. We hope the municipality will act faster.”

Ngwenya encouraged residents to continue participating in IDP

processes, emphasising that public input is crucial in shaping responsive and inclusive municipal development plans. The outreach forms part of ongoing efforts by both local and district municipalities to align development strategies with community needs and improve service delivery.




Victor Khanye Executive Mayor Vusi Buda (left) and Nkangala District Executive Mayor Thomas Ngwenya (right) pay close attention as community members voice their concerns. IMAGE: Rodney Hlatshwayo



Nkangala District speaker Cllr Kabelo Boshomane addresses the community in eMalahleni. IMAGE: Nodicah Fundama



Victor Khanye community members came in numbers to voice their concerns.




NOTICE TO THE COMMUNITY


OF VICTOR KHANYE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (VKLM)

NOTICE NO: **22**

DATE: **22 APRIL 2026**







NERSA TARIFF APPLICATION FOR 2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR



The Victor Khanye Local Municipality hereby informs all residents, businesses, and stakeholders that the municipality has submitted its tariff application to the **National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA)** for the 2026/2027 financial year.

The application forms part of the municipality's annual tariff review process, in line with applicable regulatory requirements governing electricity tariffs.

PLEASE NOTE THAT:

-  The municipality has officially submitted the tariff application to NERSA for consideration and approval.
-  A draft copy of the application is attached for public information purposes.
-  The municipality is currently awaiting approval or rejection from NERSA.
-  Once NERSA has completed its review process, the municipality will immediately communicate and publish the final approved tariffs to the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NOTICE:

Residents, businesses, and stakeholders are invited to submit written comments on the tariff application. Kindly note that **comments are open until MONDAY, 11 MAY 2026.**


IMPORTANT NOTICE


Residents are advised that **no final tariff increases** have been implemented at this stage, as approval from NERSA is still pending.

The municipality remains committed to transparency and will ensure that all stakeholders are informed of the final outcome as soon as it is received.

ENQUIRIES

For any enquiries, residents may contact the municipal offices through the usual communication channels or email:

 Fanele Maphanga
fanelem@vklm.gov.za

 Botlhale Dube
botlhaled@vklm.gov.za

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Steve Tshwete wins awards for cleanest municipality and waste management plan

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — Steve Tshwete Local Municipality in Mpumalanga has been named the province's cleanest municipality at the National Waste Kgoro Awards held in Bloemfontein. The municipality also walked away with a provincial award for its Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP), reinforcing its position as a leader in environmental management. Municipal authorities announced the achievement during a media briefing at the municipal headquarters on Thursday, 23 April 2026. Acting Municipal Manager Dr Elizabeth Tshabalala unpacked the double achievement during the briefing, crediting consistent community partnerships and staff dedication for the recognition. "This is not just a win for the municipality, but for every resident who separates waste at home, every street sweeper and every business that complies with our bylaws," Tshabalala said. "Cleanliness is a collective effort, and the results speak for themselves." She said the IWMP award specifically recognises the municipality's long-term strategy to reduce landfill use, boost recycling and manage waste streams across Middelburg, Mhluzi, Hendrina and surrounding areas. "We adopted an integrated waste management plan, which is a strategy that outlines how we deal with waste management in our area. We are looking at waste from the source, recycling programmes and ensuring that not all waste ends up in landfill," she said.

"We have minimisation programmes and transfer stations across the municipality. Steve Tshwete is one of the municipalities with a significant number of transfer stations, allowing members of the public to dispose of waste at designated sites. We are encouraging the community to participate," she said.

"We are also reporting on the tonnages of waste diverted from landfill sites. By doing so, we are prolonging the lifespan of these facilities. Not all waste should be dumped."

Meanwhile, Director of Solid Waste and Environmental Management Erald Nkabinde outlined steps to protect major new investments in waste infrastructure.

Nkabinde said equipment valued at nearly R22 million will soon be installed at the main landfill site and at some waste transfer stations across the municipality. The new systems are expected to improve sorting, compaction and processing capacity.

"With that level of investment, we cannot afford vandalism or theft to set us back," Nkabinde said.

"We are enhancing security measures at all our facilities to safeguard this equipment, including improved fencing, CCTV and closer cooperation with law enforcement and community patrollers." He added that the upgrades form

part of the IWMP rollout and will help the municipality divert more waste from landfills while creating jobs in the recycling value chain.

The provincial cleanest municipality title is awarded annually by Mpumalanga's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs following assessments of litter control, landfill compliance, illegal dumping management and public education campaigns.

The municipality previously won the Provincial Cleanest Town Champions in 2002 and 2006, including a third-place national finish in 2006. It also won the Mpumalanga Greenest Municipality Champions in 2013/14, 2016/17 and 2018.

Dr Tshabalala said the municipality would not "rest on its laurels" and urged residents to continue reporting illegal dumping and to use transfer stations correctly.

"The award is motivation to do more. A clean town attracts investment, protects health and shows pride in our community," she said.



From left: Executive Mayor Mhlonishwa Masilela, Acting Municipal Manager Dr Elizabeth Tshabalala and Director of Solid Waste and Environmental Management Erald Nkabinde after announcing the municipality's recent awards, including Cleanest Municipality in the Province and the Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP).
IMAGE: Lucas Shongwe

Kota Festival set to boost local economy as it returns to eMalahleni

● NODICAH FUNDAMA

EMALAHLENI — The return of the Mpumalanga Kota Festival to eMalahleni is expected to provide a significant boost to the local economy, with organisers projecting increased foot traffic, business opportunities and support for township entrepreneurs.

The festival, set to take place at Puma Stadium on 2 May 2026, is expected to attract more than 4,500 attendees, marking a 50% increase from the over 3,000 people who attended in 2025.

Positioned as one of the fastest-growing township food lifestyle events in South Africa, the festival is expanding its footprint, with more vendors, partnerships and commercial opportunities for small businesses.

This year's edition will feature more than 45 Kota vendors, creating a platform for local entrepreneurs to showcase their products, generate income and grow their brands.

The expansion is expected to drive economic activity through direct sales, job creation and increased demand for local services linked to the event, including transport, security and event logistics.

The festival also highlights the growing role of township economies in driving inclusive economic growth, particularly through food innovation and youth-led enterprises.

New partner Capitec Bank has joined the event, focusing on supporting township entrepreneurs with tools and insights around digital payments, smart money management, accessible banking and business growth strategies.

Meanwhile, returning partner Albany Bakeries continues its Kota Initiative, aimed at empowering vendors through training, operational support and long-term business development.

The involvement of corporate partners is expected to strengthen the sustainability of small businesses participating in the festival, helping them formalise operations and expand beyond informal trading.

Organisers say the event goes beyond food, positioning itself as a platform for economic participation and cultural expression.

"Get ready, Witbank! The streets are calling, the flavours are louder, and the vibes are unstoppable as the Mpumalanga Kota Festival makes its highly anticipated return —this time taking over Puma Stadium in eMalahleni for a full-day celebration of food, culture, and township creativity."

The festival will run from 10:00 to 22:00, offering a full-day programme that combines food, entertainment and cultural experiences, further increasing spending opportunities across the value chain.

With ticket prices ranging from R80 to R800, organisers are also targeting a broad consumer base, from families to premium attendees, which is expected to drive varied spending patterns within the local economy.

"After drawing over 3,000 attendees

in 2025, this year's edition is set to grow by 50%, with an expected crowd of 4,500+ food lovers."

The growth trajectory of the festival signals increasing demand for township-based events, which are emerging as important economic drivers in local communities.

Beyond immediate revenue, the festival is expected to contribute to long-term economic development by building networks between entrepreneurs, investors and consumers.

As the event continues to grow, it is positioning eMalahleni as a destination for food tourism and township lifestyle experiences, with potential spillover benefits for local businesses and the broader hospitality sector.

Councillor's Lunch for Teachers Draws MK Party Fire

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — A visit by Ward 6 councillor Sizwe Zulu to Phumelela Secondary School in Middelburg has drawn criticism from the Mkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party, which alleges double standards after its own attempt to donate items at the school was previously blocked.

"I went there not as representing the ANC, but as a community member to honour a promise I made to the school educators last year," Zulu said.

Zulu bought lunch for teachers and staff at the Extension 24 school on 17 April 2026. He said the gesture was tied to a pledge he made to educators if they improved their matric results compared to the previous year.

He said he did not wear ANC regalia during the visit.

"The teachers are doing important work for our children and our community. This was about supporting them, not about politics."

The visit has drawn criticism from MK Party Member of the Provincial Legislature (MPL) Qhawekazi Mtshweni, who is deployed to the education portfolio.

Mtshweni alleges her own attempt to hand over uniforms and dignity packs to underprivileged learners at the same school was blocked on 02 February 2026. She said the acting principal, supported by the circuit manager, stopped the donation and told her party members they were not allowed to campaign at the school.

"Despite not having our party uniforms on, we pushed for the handover to go ahead," Mtshweni said. "When they realised the clothing issue wasn't sticking, they changed tactics and said we hadn't

booked an appointment." She said Zulu's lunch could also be seen as campaigning and accused the education department of "engaging in political games".

Mtshweni confirmed she is escalating the matter to provincial education authorities.

Zulu said his role as a public representative extends beyond party lines.

"I may have become a councillor under the ANC, but when it comes to serving, I am serving everyone regardless of their political affiliation," he said.

"My office is open to every resident of Ward 6. When there's a service delivery issue or when our schools need support, I don't ask what party you belong to."



Ward 6 councillor Sizwe Zulu says he bought lunch for Phumelela Secondary School staff to honour a pledge linked to the school's matric results. IMAGE: Supplied



MK Party MPL Qhawekazi Mtshweni has accused the education department of double standards after her February attempt to donate uniforms to Phumelela Secondary School was blocked. IMAGE: Lucas Shongwe

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NEDA to pivot from LED projects to 'high-impact' investments

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — The Nkangala Economic Development Agency (NEDA) has resolved to move away from running projects similar to or parallel to Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives, and instead focus on “catalytic, high-impact” investments as it repositions itself as the district’s investment hub. Acting CEO Prince Mangani announced the shift following a two-day strategic planning session held at Nkangala District Municipality in Middelburg on 23 and 24 April 2026. “We are focusing on catalytic projects that have high impact. LED will be left to local municipalities in the district,” Mangani said. LED is a municipal function aimed at creating an enabling environment for business, driving job creation and supporting small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs). The decision means day-to-day LED functions, including SMME support, informal trader assistance and township economy projects, will remain to local

municipalities, allowing NEDA to focus on attracting major investors and positioning Nkangala as an investment-ready district. Mangani said the shift forms part of NEDA's repositioning as a “comprehensive investment hub” for the district, with a strong focus on improving ease of doing business. “In order to facilitate the ease of doing business, we should position ourselves as a one-stop investment centre for the district,” he said. “We should be able to engage with any investor willing to invest within the region and assist them with approvals for businesses, land use, building plans and related processes so that we facilitate investment.” The strategic session was attended by stakeholders including local business chambers, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Presidential

Climate Commission (PCC) led by Commissioner Ikosi Mahlangu, Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency (MGCA), Tshwane Economic Development Agency (TEDA), LED officials from local municipalities, Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), and the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT). Chief Economist Lennard van Vuren from DEDT presented an overview of the provincial economic landscape, noting that Nkangala records the highest unemployment among the three districts, while also being the largest contributor to the provincial economy at 38.4%. Academic institutions, including Nkangala TVET College and the Tshwane University of Technology, also outlined research and business opportunities available to the local business community. Mangani highlighted two funded projects already under way: a brick manufacturing plant in eMakhazeni Local Municipality and a chemical manufacturing plant in Thembisile

Hani Local Municipality. He also outlined projects in the pipeline requiring investment, including a fire academy, a fresh produce market in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality and a solar farm in Victor Khanye Local Municipality. Mangani further revealed plans to establish a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college in Victor Khanye, noting that Victor Khanye and Thembisile Hani are currently the only municipalities in Nkangala without TVET colleges.

“Our plan is that ultimately all Nkangala municipalities will have TVET colleges. There is land available, owned by the municipality. We just need an investor,” he said. The session also resolved that NEDA will strengthen its institutional capacity, actively engage with business chambers, and assist municipalities in sourcing and accessing funding. Mangani said engagements with potential investors and stakeholders would begin immediately.

KEY RESOLUTIONS FROM THE SESSION

- Leverage existing municipal assets such as land and infrastructure to support commercially viable and sustainable projects
- Develop and publish an investment prospectus to position the district as an attractive investment destination
- Strengthen institutional capacity through the establishment of a project preparation and investment function
- Source and facilitate grant funding on behalf of local municipalities
- Convert ideas into investable opportunities through feasibility studies, business case development and financial structuring
- Hold bi-monthly engagements with business stakeholders to refine the strategy
- Establish an investment book outlining infrastructure readiness, incentives and investment opportunities
- Explore establishing NEDA as a social housing institution
- Drive regional branding and investment promotion initiatives
- Undertake a learning visit to Tshwane Economic Development Agency (TEDA)



Sharing strategic ideas during commission sessions to help shape NEDA

IMAGE: Nkangala District Municipality



NEDA Acting CEO Prince Mangani during the agency's strategic planning session in Middelburg

IMAGE: Lucas Shongwe

Ngwenya urges Eskom to separate service delivery from municipal debt

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — Nkangala District Executive Mayor Thomas Ngwenya has urged Eskom to separate service delivery from municipal debt after the utility allegedly refused to energise a newly built substation in eMalahleni Local Municipality over an R11 billion arrears bill. The issue emerged during a Strategic Lekgotla and was raised publicly on 09 April 2026. “If the substation is not energised, it would mean that the municipality would not have spent 100% of the particular grant, and that will negatively affect the municipality from receiving grants from the Treasury,” Ngwenya said. Ngwenya said the matter surfaced during a Strategic Lekgotla meeting, where it emerged that Eskom is refusing to connect the substation due to debt owed by eMalahleni. He described Eskom's stance as “wrong”, noting that the substation was funded through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), a

conditional allocation from the National Treasury for basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation, roads and electricity. Municipalities that fail to fully spend MIG allocations risk receiving reduced funding in subsequent financial years. Ngwenya said the decision goes beyond officials. “It affects people's rights to access energy,” he said. He added that the district has already approached the provincial Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) to intervene and engage Eskom for a solution. eMalahleni is one of the Mpumalanga municipalities Eskom is pressuring to sign the Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA). The agreement allows Eskom to take over parts of a municipality's electricity distribution, including billing and revenue collection, to improve service delivery and recover debt. These agreements are intended to

curb debt growth by reducing electricity losses and improving revenue collection. The *Highveld Chronicle* sent questions to Eskom a week ago. Spokesperson Daphney Mokoena said Eskom was not part of the meeting mentioned and could therefore not comment on issues raised there. “However, any matter relating to service provision forms part of the Electricity Supply Agreement between eMalahleni and Eskom,” Mokoena said.



Mayor Thomas Ngwenya says Eskom's alleged decision to refuse connecting a substation in eMalahleni is wrong. IMAGE: HC Archives



Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality

PUBLIC NOTICE: ORDINARY COUNCIL SITTING

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 29(A) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, (Act No 117 of 1998) as amended, read with Section 19 of Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) that the ordinary council meeting of the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality will be held as follows:

Date: 30 April 2026

Time: 14:00

Venue: Council Chamber (Job Skosana Street Siyabuswa)

The public, media and other interested stakeholders are invited to attend and expected to be seated 15 minutes prior to the proceedings of the council meeting.

Ms MM MATHEBELA
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

ISIKO LETHU

Our Story

WITH SIPHO MAHAMBA

Ukufundisa abentwana ababesana abasakhulako ngokuziphatha kuhle kanye nokuzihlonipha

Isifunda seMpumalanga ngesinye seemfunda zeSewula Afrika ezinamacala amanengi wokugadhlhela, ubulelesi kanye nokuhlukumezeka ngokobulili. Minengi imizamo esele yenziwe ukulwisana namacala la, njengokufuna ubulungiswa kodwana, amacala la asaragela phambili.

Enye yezinto ezingalwisana namacala ahlathelisa umzimba la, kutjhugulula indlela esikhulisa ngayo abentwana, khulukhulu ababesana abasakhulako esifundeni seMpumalanga.

Zinengi iinhlangano ezivuliweko ezifundisa abentwana ekubentazana iindlela zokuziphatha kuhle. Nanyana lokhu kuqakathekile, kufanele bona sifundise nabentwana

ababesana abasakhulako ukuziphatha kuhle, ukuzihlonipha, ukuvikela omunye umuntu, kanye nezinye iindlela ezihle ekufanele bona bazazi.

Ababelethi, iinkolo kanye namalunga wemiphakathi nange angasebenzisana ukusekela iinhlangano ezibuyisa ukuziphatha kuhle kanye nokuzihlonipha kwabentwana abasakhulako ababesana, kungaba nomhlahlandlela osidosela ekukhanyeni.

Ukuthula kungabakhona esifundeni seMpumalanga.

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From Delmas to the World Stage: Thandolwethu Mnisi's journey to Peru

Mnisi seeks financial support for travel, accommodation and preparation for Peru pageant

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Twenty-year-old Thandolwethu Mnisi from Delmas, Mpumalanga, has been named Face of Miss Teenager South Africa 2026 and is set to represent the country at an international pageant in Peru in June. Her journey, shaped by bullying, self-doubt and resilience, highlights both the opportunities and financial barriers

facing young women from small towns. Growing up in Delmas, Mnisi says she had limited opportunities and experienced moments of insecurity. She recalls being bullied for her appearance, particularly for being “too skinny”, which affected her confidence.

Instead of retreating, she turned to modelling. “I wanted to feel comfortable in my own skin,” Mnisi said. “At first, it wasn't about competing. It was about finding myself again.” Her first step into pageantry came in 2019 when she entered Miss High School Delmas, where she placed second runner-up. The result marked a turning point, and over time, pageantry became less about appearance and more about personal growth.

“Pageantry has helped me understand who I am,” she said. “It gave me a voice and taught me to stand in my truth.”

Now preparing for the international stage, Mnisi said her focus is on representation rather than competition, noting that her presence carries meaning beyond her own ambitions.

“When I think about Peru, I think about where I come from,” she said. “It's not just about me, it's about showing that girls from small towns can also dream beyond what they see every day.”

Still, the opportunity comes with challenges. Like many young South Africans, Mnisi faces financial constraints in pursuing international opportunities.

Travel, accommodation and preparation costs present a significant hurdle.

“Getting there is the hardest part,” she said. “The opportunity is there, but access is not always easy.”

Mnisi is currently seeking financial support to cover travel, accommodation and preparation costs for the Peru pageant in June.

Those willing to assist can contact her directly or contribute through her fundraising platforms.

“Even just sharing the story or encouraging someone can make a difference,” she said.

Away from the pageant stage, Mnisi is already thinking about what comes next. She hopes to use her experience to create opportunities for others, particularly young people in her community seeking direction and confidence.

“I want to give back what I've

learned,” she said. “If I can help someone else believe in themselves, then it means something.”

As her departure date approaches, Mnisi's story reflects a broader reality — that talent and ambition often exist alongside barriers.

Whether she makes it to Peru or not, her journey has already begun to reshape how she sees herself and what she believes is possible.

Her story is already resonating in Delmas, inspiring other young people to imagine possibilities beyond their immediate surroundings.



Face of Miss Teenager South Africa 2026, twenty-year-old Thandolwethu Mnisi is set to represent the country in Peru. IMAGE: Supplied

PLEASE DONATE

Face of Miss Teenager South Africa 2026, *Thandolwethu Mnisi*, has been selected to represent South Africa at a prestigious international pageant in Peru this June 2026.

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Delmas creative blends design, music and business to uplift community

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Tebogo Goodwill Lekhuleng, known professionally as Kenart King, is a graphic designer, musician and creative entrepreneur from Delmas Extension 3 in Mpumalanga, using art and business to create opportunities for himself and others through design, education and music.

Lekhuleng said his creative journey is driven by a belief that creativity is a tool for change, not just self-expression.

“I've never seen creativity as just a talent,” he said. “For me, it's a tool that can change your situation and the situations of people around you.”

His journey began in Delmas, where he started drawing names and characters as a child, unknowingly building the foundation for a career in design.

“I didn't even know it was called graphic design at the time,” he said. “I was just doing what felt natural.”

Growing up in Delmas and Springs, Lekhuleng was influenced by both family members and global artists such as Salvador Dalí and Pablo Picasso, which helped shape his abstract design style.

After earning a National Diploma in Graphic Design and Web Development from Pretoria College,

Lekhuleng worked across printing companies, schools and corporate environments, building experience in both creative and technical fields.

He later shifted his focus towards entrepreneurship, founding Beyond Description, a non-profit organisation (NPO) focused on education and skills development, as well as Info 411 Solutions, which assists entrepreneurs with branding and business registration.

“I realised early that having a job is one thing, but creating opportunities is another,” he said. “That's when I started thinking about business.”

Lekhuleng said his goal is to help others access opportunities he once lacked.

“I know what it's like to have the talent but not the access,” he said. “So if I can help someone formalise their business or build their brand, that's already changing something.”

Alongside his design and business work, Lekhuleng has maintained a long-standing presence in music, starting in local groups such as Amaphala and Rebel Drums.

His sound is influenced by South African hip-hop groups such as Skwatta Kamp and Cashless

Society, as well as international artists including Sade, Nas and Lauryn Hill.

“Music is where I speak without filters,” he said. “Design can communicate ideas, but music carries emotion and truth.”

Over the years, he has shared stages with artists including Stogie T, Sjava and Musa Keys, which he said affirmed his place in the industry, even as he remained grounded in his independent journey.

Lekhuleng is now preparing what he describes as his final musical

projects, After Rehab EP and Life Begins at 40.

He said this phase represents a transition towards focusing more on business development, mentorship and community upliftment.

At the core of his work is a belief that success should benefit others, not only the individual.

“In our communities, we don't just need inspiration, we need structure, access and guidance,” he said. “That's what I'm trying to build.”

Through his work in design, business and music, Lekhuleng

continues to position himself as part of a growing generation of South African creatives focused on building sustainable opportunities in their communities.



Delmas creative Tebogo Goodwill Lekhuleng, also known as Kenart King, is using design, music and business to create opportunities and uplift his community. IMAGES: Supplied





Ezinambeni teams qualify for Glencore Easter Tournament after weekend finals

SHARON CHILOANE AND NODICAH FUNDAMA

EMALAHLENI — Ezinambeni football teams have secured qualification for the Glencore Easter Tournament following two days of finals held at Mshaya Sport Ground on April 18 and 19, 2026.

The tournament, organised by the Ezinambeni LFA Zonal League in partnership with the eMalahleni Football Association and sponsored by Glencore, brought together junior and senior teams from across the zone.

The finals determined which teams will represent Ezinambeni at the regional Easter tournament.

“The level of competition, discipline and talent displayed throughout the tournament was truly exceptional,” said Ezinambeni LFA Development Secretary-General Mr Maleeu Mahlangu. “To all teams representing Ezinambeni at the upcoming Glencore Easter Tournament, go out and represent the zone with pride, passion

and excellence.”

Saturday’s programme focused on youth football, with One Goal Academy claiming the Under-15 title, while Stars of Mpumalanga secured victory in the Under-17 division.

Earlier junior fixtures saw Young Aces crowned Under-11 champions, while Empumelelo FC lifted the Under-13 title, highlighting strong development structures across the zone.

Senior LFA finals followed on Sunday, April 19, where Makubephi FC emerged victorious after a series of knockout matches, confirming their place as the senior representatives of the Ezinambeni zone.

The semi-finals featured closely contested fixtures, including Shining Stars FC against Makubephi FC and Highveld Young Lions FC facing Witbank United FC, setting the stage for a

competitive final.

According to the Ezinambeni LFA Executive Committee, the finals showcased strong discipline, talent and sportsmanship across all divisions.

“All participating teams showed great sportsmanship, and we congratulate the winners who will carry the hopes of the zone into the next stage,” the committee said.

Chairperson Vusi “Gattuso” Kabinde also commended the teams, noting that the tournament reflected growth and unity in local football.

“The tournament has showcased not only talent but also unity, growth and the future of football within our zone,” he said. “To our champions, carry the hopes of Ezinambeni with confidence and make us proud.”

The winning teams will now represent Ezinambeni at the Glencore Easter Tournament against top sides from across the region, with the Easter tournament set to take place on 27 April 2026.



Ezinambeni teams with the referees who officiated the matches.

IMAGES: SHARON CHILOANE

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