

ABOUT US

The eZasegasini Metro is the official eThekweni Municipality publication through which ratepayers and residents are kept informed about news, entertainment and perspectives in the greater Durban region.

It is also a forum for readers' views.

It hits the streets fortnightly on a Friday, with 450 000 copies distributed throughout the region.

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Swords crossed over crime

SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

THE DA in eThekweni says more remedial efforts are needed from Council if the City is serious about tackling drugs and alcohol in its communities.

At a full council sitting this week the opposition party moved a motion calling for the City to form a strategy aimed at curbing the dealing of drugs and alcohol in communities.

This was the second time in as many council meetings that the DA had tabled such a motion.

It was shot down on both occasions by the ruling African National Congress and other smaller parties at Council, who argued that the relevant committee was dealing with the issues raised.

In its latest motion the DA said there was a clear link between violent crimes and drug and alcohol and the City needed to formulate partnerships with the SAPS and the Metro Police to curb the scourge.

"Let the punishment fit the crime for drug lords and illegal sellers of alcohol; don't let innocent children destroy their lives," the party said.

The ANC however described the motion as an "insult to the Metro Police who went the extra mile to fight crime".

"The work breakdown of the (Durban) Metro Police is 60% crime fighting, 30% on traffic and 10% enforcing by-laws," the party said.

IDP: call for comment

UPDATED copies of eThekweni's latest, updated Integrated Development Plan are now available at council libraries and Sizakala centres, and citizens are urged to read it and offer comments.

The updated plan includes five-year targets and key

ANC councillors said they were aware of DA leader Helen Zille's imminent visit to Durban next week and the DA was "trying to look good for the media" ahead of her visit.

The Minority Front also described the DA's motion as a premature attempt at scoring political points ahead of the 2009 elections.

But the IFP and the ACDP stuck with the DA, saying crime was causing great harm to communities.

"Drugs give birth to rape, murder and other social ills, would it be wrong to then say they are the mother of crime?" asked IFP Cllr Vela Gumede.

ANC Cllr Khanyisile Mthembu (ANC)

pointed the opposition to a circular that had been circulated by the Council's Health, Safety and Social services cluster requesting councillors to supply information on the number of shebeens and other illegal activities related to alcohol in their wards or areas of deployment.

"Clearly the party is grandstanding again because their leader is coming to town," she said.

Although the DA, IFP, ACDP, and the newly-formed FECOSA all voted in support of the motion, they were defeated by the ANC and other smaller parties who voted it be scrapped.

The Minority Front abstained from voting.

MaphumuloSiyadurban.gov.za

Big guns to take on township troubles

SAMANTHA MOODLEY

DURBAN'S Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK) area comes under the spotlight next week with a visit from top national government and city officials.

Public Enterprises Minister Alec Erwin, Deputy Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba, City Manager Michael Sutcliffe and Mayor Obed

Mlaba will be in the area to assess its development and the difficulties faced.

"The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the area's achievements thus far and obstacles that hinder progress, and how to unblock these," said Zee Nqala, communications manager for the INK Area Based Management Programme.

Five anchor projects are



MEMBERS of Reggae Group, the Meditators, perform during a memorial service for slain Reggae King, Lucky Dube, at the Durban City Hall on Saturday. Speakers, including Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo, and actress and poet Gcina Mhlophe, described Dube as a man of peace, who had the interests of the poor at heart. Dube was shot dead in a hijacking in Rosettenville

Picture: DERRICK DLAMINI

'Business must train engineers'

SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

MAYOR Obed Mlaba says the scarce skills shortage in the country cannot be remedied by the government alone.

The mayor said big business needed to help the government with interventions to bridge the yawning skills gap in engineering and science.

Mlaba was speaking at a welcoming for delegates at a three-day conference organised by the Institute of Municipal Engineers of Southern Africa (IMESA) at the ICC last week.

The conference discussed town planning, infrastructure and improving the standards of municipal engineering.

"One specific problem facing our fledgling democracy is the scarce skills shortage," said Mlaba, adding that the lack of skilled engineers was making it harder to attain the country's development goals.

"Leaders in the fields of engineering in the private sector should play an active role in developing the African child in this regard," he said.

IMESA President Moses Maliba agreed. "We need more (black) and women engineers to enter the profession."

He said municipal engin-

eers were in very short supply.

"We are negotiating with the South African Local Government Association to assist tertiary students with more internships and bursaries in engineering," said Maliba.

The mayor said intervention was needed at earlier grades to prepare children for careers in science-related fields. "Children need to start getting exposure to these fields as early as Grade 8."

'Too late'

"You cannot wait until a child is in matric before deciding to expose him or her to opportunities - by then it might be too late," he said.

Mlaba said if this was done it would ultimately address the problem of unemployment among graduates.

"Why is it that every weekend there are thousands of advertised jobs, yet on the other hand you also have thousands of unemployed graduates?" he asked.

He said pupils needed to start looking favourably at careers in the engineering and building sectors to meet the country's needs.

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Bid to better water service

KEN MCHUNU

EVERY customer, rich or poor, deserves to be treated with dignity, honesty and respect.

That's the message from the eThekweni Water and Sanitation (EWS) unit, which is forging ahead with several initiatives aimed at improving its customer service levels.

Its head, Neil McLeod, said the unit had in recent years, "built a reservoir of things to be done, but a lack of appropriate skills within the unit has delayed their implementation".

Now, with a beefed-up workforce, the unit is implementing a Customer Services Charter, Service Level Standards, a Perception Analysis Survey and Citizen Report Cards.

EWS Project Executive Mandla Malakoana said: "We want to enhance dialogue between ourselves as the service provider and the customers we serve."

He said the unit would convert all the feedback into a scorecard and use it to identify gaps in service delivery. There will also be an assessment of the customers' rights and responsibilities.

"Through this we will gather valuable information and be able to evaluate our own performance to determine the types of changes that are necessary," Malakoana said.

The unit recently received the United Nations Public Service Award for the best debt-relief scheme, beating 2 000 other municipalities from around the world.

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skills development and expectations of work opportunities.

The ministers are two of the area's political champions appointed through the Urban Renewal Programme with a mandate to promote the vision and mission of the programme and to remove obstacles in the way of its successful implementation.

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