

# Fair boost for business

With six business fairs planned for the year ahead, eThekweni is helping to grow the national economy, reports **Sohana Singh**

**A** SERIES of small business fairs are planned for eThekweni this year.

The fairs aim to promote small medium and micro enterprises, and give them an opportunity to showcase their businesses, and promote their services.

They will be organised by the municipality's Business Support Unit in partnership with the city's area-based teams in the South Durban Basin; Inanda, KwaMashu, and Ntuzuma (Ink); and rural areas.

The unit's Acting Head, Philip Sithole, said: "The fairs show the municipality's commitment to developing and supporting small, medium and micro enterprises in the region, and the economic transformation of the country as a whole."

Hundreds of exhibitors are expected to participate and benefit from the opportunities to network and learn.

The main fair will cater for 300 exhibitors, while the regional fairs, in the Ink and the South Durban Basin areas, will have a maximum of 200 exhibitors each.

There will be three, one-day rural fairs, with about 50 exhibitors at each.

The focus of the rural fairs will be on workshops and information dissemination.

"The fairs focus on forging sustainable links between small businesses, industry and government departments," said Sithole.

He said since the success of the 2005 fair, the unit has launched a business linkage programme which has been extended to the fairs.

"Big business is urged to participate in the linkage programme. It is only with their support that small business will be able to develop to their full potential," said Sithole.

The main fair in September is likely to be better than ever, with participation from

more of eThekweni's sister cities, and a buyers' programme on the cards.

Experts in small business development will be conducting free workshops, covering a variety of topics.

These include accessing finance; business compliance; the municipality's business support programme; and procurement procedures and policies.

The fair aims to:

- Showcase high-quality goods and services produced by small businesses in eThekweni;

- Build a common understanding on issues affecting businesses operations, for example, getting finance, financial management, and the tender processes, through workshops;

- Inform small businesses on strategies, developments, agencies, structures and programmes that exists for their support;

- Showcase municipal departments and the opportunities available to small businesses within the municipality; and

- Provide networking opportunities between small businesses and national, provincial and local support agencies and structures.

Some of the SMMEs who have benefited immensely from the city's fairs include:

- Siyanda Mthethwa from Nyambose Arts and Crafts. He said the fair introduced them to the world of opportunities. "Since then, fairs have played a significant role in developing our business. The amount of business information we received helped us to elevate our thriving business to greater heights."

- Sonto Duma of Duma Bezwe said: "The fairs helped us acquire valuable business and management skills. It created a crucial platform for me to interact with fellow business people."

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**A LOT OF BOTTLE:** Zanele Mngoma of Mabhala Foods Processing says the fair has had a tremendous impact on her business



**BUSINESS SUPPORT:** Musa Mahlambi (right) of the Ink Area Based Management team attends to a query at an SMME fair



**ABOVE:** Nonhle Memela of Izinyo Reptile Farming chats with a fair-goer about her company's products



**LEFT:** Xolani Nzama (left) of Miyane Contractors brokers a deal with customers

## ETHEKWINI BUSINESS FAIRS FOR 2007

EVENTS	DATES	VENUE	TIMES	EVENT CO-ORDINATOR
<b>South Durban Basin SMME Fair</b>	4 – 6 May	Green Field Arena Umlazi Mega City	8am – 5pm	PMG Events & Promotions Gugu Kheswa Tel: 031 309 3767 031 309 8158 Fax: 031 309 1902 Cell: 082 877 2955
<b>INK SMME Fair</b>	22 – 24 June	JL Dube Stadium Inanda	8am – 5pm	Vezubuhle Events Thuli Mthembu Tel: 031 303 8218 Fax: 086 654 4339 Cell: 073 408 7065
<b>Rural SMME Fairs</b>	North: 30 June West: 5 July South: 7 July	Mount View Hall Verulam Pinetown Civic Centre Umbumbulu Municipal Offices	8am – 4pm	Ikhono Communications Zodwa Msimang Tel: 031 266 9937 Fax: 031 266 6054 Cell: 082 554 3150
<b>Main SMME Fair</b>	28 – 30 Sept	Durban Exhibition Centre	9am – 6pm	Business Support Unit c/o Winile Mntungwa Tel: 031 311 4500 031 311 4442 Fax: 031 332 6408 Cell: 083 449 6005



**CREATIVE:** Siyanda Mthethwa, owner of Nyambose Arts and Crafts, exhibited his work at last year's fair