

IN BRIEF

Incomplete cheque details

CUSTOMERS who are paying for their services by cheque over the counter must ensure that they put the important information on their cheques, namely the account number, date, amount, signature and payable to eThekweni Municipality. Incomplete details could result in deposits being transferred to a suspense account and thus lead to electricity being disconnected. To avoid this inconvenience, it is important to have these details on the cheque whenever paying for services.

Hard work is recognised

ETHEKWINI Municipality will be hosting their 3rd bi-annual long service awards ceremony for staff on 6 June at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre.

The celebration is for all those staff members who have completed 25 and 40 years service with the Municipality. They will be treated to lunch and entertainment and it will be their day to take the time off to relax and enjoy.

Public service week

ETHEKWINI Municipality's Batho Pele committee will soon be kicking off with Public Service Week, which will commence on 13 June. Some of the activities that are planned for the week include visits to Siyobathanda Special School in Claremont, service delivery challenges for the youth at the Council Chamber, keeping our City clean (which will take place at the beachfront), and the celebration of Africa Public Service Day.

Why not stop for breakfast

AS PART of celebrating 76 years of committed and relevant services, the Pinetown-Highway Child and Family Welfare Society have planned an exciting fundraising breakfast.

The event takes place on 20 June at 8am at the Centre Court Restaurant, Suncoast Entertainment Centre. The money raised will be used to support vulnerable children and women in terms of food, security and HIV/Aids programmes. The breakfast costs R125 and caters for people with different eating habits. For bookings or further details please contact Vani on 031 701 3288 or 083 271 4047 or Isai on 031 701 3288 or 083 271 4007.

New toilet facilities for informal settlements

KEN MCHUNU

ETHEKWINI Municipality has to date spent more than R360-million on the roll-out of a new type of toilet facility to some 30 informal settlements across the city.

These toilets are designed to keep urine and solids separate, allowing liquid waste to drain into the ground while collecting solid waste in two underground chambers.

Deputy Head of the City's Pollution Control department, Siva Chetty said: "The backlog in the housing delivery programme is the driving force behind the installation of these new ablation facilities.

"They will help address our sanitation problems at informal settlements temporarily while the City helps provide formal housing."

Meanwhile, a project is

underway to empty an estimated 60 000 pit toilets provided for informal settlers several years ago.

"These are extremely dangerous to use and pose a health hazard to residents," Chetty said.

These toilets were also used to dispose of domestic waste and bathwater, and are now full to overflowing.

The Municipality has set aside an additional R10-million for the next three years in order to build more of the new urine diversion toilets at other informal settlements.

"As more of the new toilets are rolled out, the number of conventional pit latrines will decrease," Chetty said.

"In more heavily populated rural and peri-urban areas, the solution may be to provide individual urine diversion toilets for households."

MchunuK@durban.gov.za

Snake park to make way for promenade

SAMANTHA MOODLEY

THE Fitzsimons Snake Park has been given until 21 June to move out of the premises it has occupied for almost seventy years on Durban's beachfront.

The park's lease expired in December 2006 and the attraction, home to 250 snakes and 3000 other animals, has been living on borrowed time ever since.

Park management were given an eviction notice requiring them to leave last week, but the Municipality has granted an extension to allow time for all the animals to be relocated.

City Manager Michael Sutcliffe said the park had been aware for several years that the City would not renew it lease. The decision to demolish the structure followed a study by the Council for Scientific and

Industrial Research, which found that it was on a dune beyond the building limit line and subject to constant erosion by wave action.

"This is a similar situation to that of the Mermaid Lido building which was demolished a couple of years ago. Neither of these buildings would today have been permitted by the City or the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and efforts have accordingly been taken to remove these structures," said Sutcliffe.

Sutcliffe said that once the building was demolished, the land would be graded and grass and vegetation planted to stop the sand from blowing or washing away. Later, the promenade would be extended to incorporate the site.

Demolition is expected to start as soon as the present occupants have fully moved.



GETTING RED-DY: The new public transport lane (indicated by its red tar) opens on the Western Freeway today and will improve the flow of traffic Picture: SUPPLIED

Public transport red lane arrives

THE LONG awaited public transport lane on the Western Freeway goes into action in June, with a host of high tech policing measures in place to ensure motorists stick to the rules.

The lane is set aside for buses and taxis. It runs between the Candella Road and Botanic Gardens Road bridges, both east and west-bound. It's easy to identify because it replaces the old fast lane and boasts bright red tar.

To compensate for the "loss" of the fast lane, the freeway is being widened in both directions to provide a faster, more convenient expressway for public transport vehicles and a smoother passage for other motorists.

Motorists travelling in cars have been urged to use only the middle and left lanes. To ensure that unauthorised cars don't stray into the public transport lane, security cameras will be placed at six locations and linked to a high-tech

monitoring room.

Each surveillance spot will have two cameras. A wide-angled camera will scan the entire width of the highway, while a telephoto camera will read number-plates. State-of-the-art optics and an infrared flash will allow the cameras to catch culprits at high speed, even at night.

Jelle Meintsma, Municipal transport planning manager at the Ethekeeni Transport Authority, said illegal users of the lane would quickly be identified by comparing their registrations against a public transport database and they would be prosecuted.

"The system is in place and final testing and commissioning is underway. Metro Police are committed to policing the lane and the rules will be applied around the clock," Meintsma said.

The speed limit in the new lane will be the same as the other lanes.

Ethekeeni Transport Authority Deputy Head Logan Moodley said, "People need to see this in the context of

the broader city vision for public transport. Many more residents will become regular users of a much improved public transport system."

City Manager, Michael Sutcliffe said, "We have done our homework and this system will only work with the full co-operation of all our city stakeholders. We have engaged with the taxi associations and other public transport authorities over a long period and we're confident that this system will work".

Although some had expressed concerns about the lane being on the far right, Meintsma said, "According to the research we did, the lane is in the best possible place".

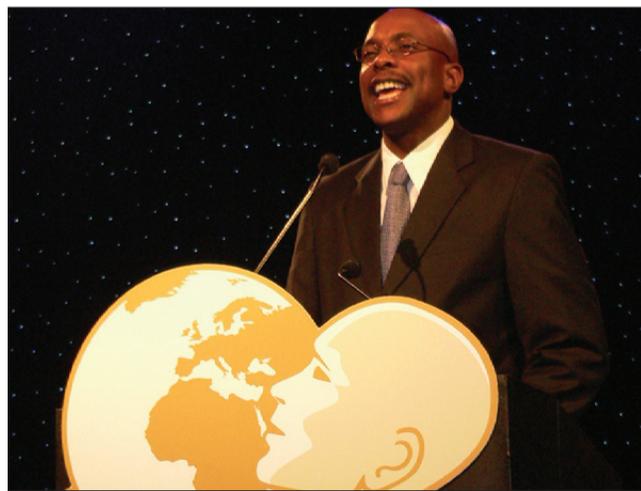
The Western freeway is one of the busiest in South Africa and is the most congested stretch in Durban during peak hours. The public transport lane is in line with global trends and similar initiatives will be rolled out in other major South African cities over the next few years.

ICC voted best in Africa for the seventh time

ICC DURBAN has been voted Africa's Leading Conference Centre for the seventh year by the World Travel Awards. The World Travel Awards, dubbed the 'Oscars of the tourism industry', acknowledges and celebrates organisations that have made the greatest contribution to the global tourism and travel trade. The Awards also recognise those who are driving the industry to great heights and innovation.

The announcement was made during the first World Travel Awards ceremony to be held in Africa. It was fitting that the glittering event coincided with Africa's biggest tourism and travel Indaba, which the ICC has hosted for sixteen years.

An elated Miller Matola, chief executive officer of ICC



AFRICA'S FINEST: Miller Matola, CEO of ICC Durban, jubilantly receives the award for best conference centre in Africa Picture: SUPPLIED

Durban, commented: "The survey is truly global in scale and is the highest accolade in the travel industry.

Winning this award seven times endorses ICC's world-class facilities and service excellence. Last year was the

first time after six consecutive years that we missed the winning vote. However, much of our attention had to be focused on the opening of our R460-million indoor Arena. It was a busy and challenging, but extremely rewarding year for us."

The winners of this fifteen year old award are voted for independently by travel professionals in more than 120 countries. They were asked to vote for their leading global conference centres, travel destinations, airlines and hotels. Award winners enjoy massive international exposure in the world's travel and tourism industry.

"They are the true innovators and benchmarks for our trade, especially in the areas of customer service, technology, opera-

tional efficiency, product offering and style," said Graham Cooke, President of the World Travel Awards.

South Africa won seventeen of the twenty-four African categories at the gala Africa awards, which was opened by King Goodwill Zwelithini.

Television personality Gerry Rantselli compered while local superstars Freshlyground provided entertainment.

Matola also announced that the ceremony will once again be held at the ICC Durban next year. This is a major coup for Durban as the event attracts unprecedented trade and consumer media coverage, spearheaded by the event's global media partner, BBC World whose coverage spans a global audience of over 274 million.