

# Debt drive to recover millions

DERRICK DLAMINI

THE City is forging ahead with efforts to recover millions in outstanding debts owed by government departments and hostel residents.

This follows a report tabled before the Council's Executive Committee (Exco) which stated that at least R757-million is owed to the City in outstanding rates and services.

The report said three government entities: the Ingonyama Trust, the KwaZulu-Natal Public Works and Housing departments, were among the major debtors.

But, Deputy City Manager for Procurement and Infrastructure, Derek Naidoo, indicated that substantial progress had been made to recover outstanding revenue.

At least R148-million, he said, had been recovered last year. "It's an ongoing process, we are determined to recover the remainder. Therefore, it should be understood that the City is doing its best to deal with this scenario."

The ruling party had earlier come in for criticism from opposition for "lacking a political determination to crack a whip on their provincial counterparts".

DA Caucus leader, Councillor Tex Collins, called for tougher measures to deal with the issue. "The outstanding amount could be used for housing projects and other services, and lower the burden

on ratepayers in the face of a rates increase," Collins said.

Councillor Nigel Gumede, Chairman of the Council's Housing Committee and an Exco member, proposed the formation of a Municipal team led by Mayor Obed Mlaba to have "serious discussions" with the City's debtors.

IFP Councillor Gladwin Ndlela supported the call. "We must pursue negotiations with the government, especially in the face of a new leadership, to see if we can't get something. Such figures are worrying and we should act accordingly," he said.

## Court

The report said the Municipality intends to take the Ingonyama Trust issue to court after a declaration of a formal dispute with the trust.

The City Treasury, according to the report, had contracted consultants to confirm the ownership of properties, as well as the area that belongs to Ingonyama Trust, before the matter goes to court.

In 2007 an intergovernmental dispute was declared and an arbitrator appointed as a facilitator. But, there has been no breakthrough.

The Ingonyama Trust, created by an Act of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, holds title to, and administers about, 3 million hectares of communal land in the province.

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# City's new health boss all fired up

SANE SHANDU

ETHEKWINI'S new Health Unit Head, Dr Nomakhosi Gxagxisa, is

passionate about eThekweni and its people and says she's looking forward to serving the community. "I am excited to be working for local government because this is where policies and programmes are delivered with the participation of the community," Gxagxisa said.

She said co-operation between government departments, community organisations and the public was the key to tackling the Aids pandemic.

"The biggest challenge is getting the buy-in of the community so that the people own the programmes put in place to improve their health," she said.

The friendly doctor is of mixed heritage. She was born to a Zulu mother and a Xhosa

father in Orlando West, Soweto and spent the first 10 years of her life there and in the Eastern Cape.

Thereafter she moved to Groutville, in KwaZulu-Natal.

Gxagxisa attended Groutville Secondary School, Adams Collage and Ohlange.

She qualified as a doctor in the Soviet Union, where she also earned a Diploma in Russian Languages

(Teaching and Translation).

Gxagxisa has been a civil servant since 1985 and has worked for the Zambian, Gauteng, North West and KwaZulu-Natal governments.

She held the post of junior superintendent at Wentworth Central Hospital, before becoming the chief executive of the Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital.

Gxagxisa enjoys spending time with her children having fun and developing their spiritual life.

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NOMAKHOSI GXAGXISA



NEW BEGINNINGS: The Motatinyane family of Panikeng, Dassenhoek, receives building material from Ward Councillor, Patrick Mfeka  
Picture: DERRICK DLAMINI

# Help to rebuild home

DERRICK DLAMINI

A DESTITUTE family of eight in Panikeng, Dassenhoek, have received building material worth R12 000 to help rebuild their home, which was destroyed by fire.

The Motatinyane family also lost furniture, clothing and food in the blaze last month.

The disaster prompted Ward 14 Councillor, Patrick Mfeka, to co-ordinate relief efforts and lobby sponsors to help obtain building material for the family.

"As public servants, and in line with our City's principles of being a caring city, it's our obligation to quickly respond to dire situations such as that facing the Motatinyane family," said Mfeka.

The head of the family, single mother Rose Motatinyane (48), could hardly contain her excitement.

"When the disaster struck we lost hope that we would ever have a decent home again. I got worried for my

children and prayed day and night that a miracle would happen so that I could get them a shelter.

"I truly appreciate the efforts by our City officials, especially our councillor, who went all out to ensure that a sponsor was roped in to help with some building material.

"We are extremely grateful. My family will now have a decent home again," she said.

## 'Wonderful'

Daughter, Nthateng Motatinyane (28), said: "Our days of sleeping in the open and being exposed to risks are over. Our family is extremely grateful for this wonderful gesture. We hope such relief efforts would spread to other families in need."

Panikeng is a semi-rural area with little infrastructure, and is home to about 22 000 people.

Mfeka said his ward required a proper housing project. "We are hoping to have a

housing project in the near future, but in the meantime, we felt that those families who are in distress should not wait any longer.

"I have other families waiting in line, seeking our intervention in terms of providing shelter," Mfeka said.

He said statistics from neighbouring Ward 15 clinic suggested HIV infections in Ward 14 were on the increase, which was of "grave concern".

He said there was an urgent need for a clinic in the area.

He said that Ward 14 had recently hosted a TB and Aids awareness workshop to educate residents.

Mfeka said that apart from housing and clinics, his ward needed better infrastructure.

"We further need main and sewer pipes, a clinic and a library.

"There is no proper drainage system, no sewer outlets, no main water lines, and no access to the main roads," he said.

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# Praise for Réunion links

DERRICK DLAMINI

GROWTH and development can only be achieved if countries go beyond their borders to share knowledge and expertise, said Mayor Obed Mlaba, commenting on the Réunion Island Season.

The two-week festival, which ended last week, celebrated the links between the Indian Ocean Island and South Africa with a variety of cultural and business events.

"We welcome the celebrations of the season of the Réunion Island as they give us an opportunity to share in their knowledge and wisdom, and to look for opportunities we can build on," Mlaba said.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the two countries in 2003 focused on crucial sectors of the economy, including business links, exchanges between businesses, cooperation between the harbours of Le Port in Réunion, Durban and Richards Bay, and the promotion of agriculture and tourism.

Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo said: "We must ensure that we breathe life into the MOU."

The then Acting Premier, Mike Mabuyakhulu, said a ministerial task team would aim to "enhance the efficiency and relevance" of the MOU.

Réunion, an overseas department of France, is part of

the European Union. Mabuyakhulu said this would, "enable us to have an even stronger voice to influence the direction of the EU, particularly with regards to its approach on issues of Africa".

Deputy Mayor of Le Port, Michel Seraphine, said they were happy with the partnership with Durban, and were looking forward to creating economic opportunities through exchanges in the tourism, arts and IT.

Monique Labat of Trade Point Durban encouraged small businesses to "explore international markets and business trends, especially in the Réunion Islands".

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## IN BRIEF

### Rain in mix at soccer tourney

OCCASIONAL rain at the finals of the recent Youth Football Programme at CJ Smith (Wema) Stadium, near Lamontville, made for some interesting play.

Five games were played – girls under 15 and 17, and boys under 15, 17 and 19.

The tournament was part of an City's Sports and Recreation Development Department partnership with Safa to promote the development of soccer among young people.

Ravi Subramoney, District Manager, for the Sports and Recreation Department, said: "This programme will create opportunities for youth to participate in a competitive league."

The City will fund the programme until 2010.

### City to host beach fun run

THE City is holding a family fun run and walk on 28 June to mark Public Service Week. Entrance is free, but only the first 200 entrants will get a T-shirt and medal.

The course is from Bay of Plenty to Blue Lagoon and back again. There is no age restriction and people are urged to bring their families.

Dimakatso Mavundla, Batho Pele Co-ordinator for the City, said: "We want to bring Municipal employees and their families together with the public in a social event as part of our programmes for Public Service Week."

Entry forms are available at Sizakala centres.

### Call for clean nominations

THE Association of Clean Communities Trust is holding its annual general meeting and an awards ceremony in June. The awards highlight the contributions made by community groups, businesses, schools, and the media to a cleaner environment in eThekweni.

The closing date for nominations is 5 June.

Call 031 311 5845.

### KwaMashu karate event

KARATE SA will host an open selection senior tournament at the KwaMashu Indoor Sport Centre on 30 May.

Weigh in and registration is from 8am to 10am.

For more information call Tournament Director Herman Dube at 084 556 9864.

### Safer Drums

DURBAN Station street traders were recently given 1 000 clean, new drums. The move was part of the City's Safer Drums initiative to replace contaminated drums.