

**Phumelela Mayor,**

**Tlokotsi Motaung response to Phumelela hosting of the Free State, State of Province Address by Premier Magashule On 21 February 2017**

The Phumelela Local Municipality hosted the 2017 State of Province Address of the Free State Provincial Legislature at Thanda Tau Centre Vrede, with approximately 2000 guests from across the Free State province and neighbouring provinces whom attended. The event planned by the Provincial Legislature in collaboration with Phumelela local municipality and assistance/sponsorship from by number businesses from across the province.



As Mayor of Phumelela I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation towards all role-players whom made this event possible and a success. Amidst the continuous rain, hundreds of people / guests from all over attended the event, visiting local guest-houses and hotels around Vrede, Warden and Memel. The hospitality services experienced a strong cash-injection, by the hosting of such an august and prestigious event a 100% fill-out and occupation of all registered hotels and guesthouses. Though traffic piled-up on the N3, especially around the off-ramp towards Roadside / Thanda Tau, most visitors were accommodated inside the 2000 capacity Marquee Tent, the venue, where the State of Province Address was delivered by Premier Magashule.



***Municipal Manager, Mr B Kannemeyer and officials preparing official Goodie-bags for delegates at SOPA***

SOPA was preceded with a golf-tournament which was scheduled for Clarence, from where guests attended an official welcome function, hosted by Phumelela Mayor at the local Vrede Golf Club. The rains placed a damper on the event, though those attending clearly indicated that the event was ideal for networking and sharing ideas on how to make the province even better. I in this instance wish to express my sincere appreciation towards the outgoing Municipal Manager, Mr Bruce Kannemeyer for his efforts to ensure the Welcome function realises and is successful. Mr Kannemeyer and his team did a sterling job with the support of a local service provider whom diligently provided the catering services. The local economy benefited completely from the hosting of SOPA. With some of the MEC's, Mayors, Municipal Managers, Directors and Heads of Departments hosted in the area, Vrede was for the last days quite a significant place to be for those whom wanted to understand and/or get a glimpse of what is planned for the coming financial year of provincial government. As mayor I want to thank all of those whom made use of our local facilities and trust that the facilities satisfied most if not all of your needs for the duration of your stay.

We look forward to hosting you again in the near future, should you wish to re-visit our municipal area again, be it in your official or private capacity. Phumelela and its people hope to return the favour towards you, should you be hosting any event of such magnitude, which builds local economy, stimulate social cohesion and builds social consciousness and patriotism in the province and extends government services.



As much as the event was staged at Thanda Tau, all residents from across Phumelela and surrounding areas had the opportunity to view the State of Province Address live at the different venues in Warden, Vrede and Memel where the event was streamed live on Big-screens. Those attending were also provided with lunch packages and soft drinks after the viewing and residents certainly made use of this opportunity to view and listen to Premier Magashule. These events were made possible by the Provincial Legislature, GCIS and Phumelela municipality.

I also wish to express my appreciation and gratitude towards the management of Thanda Tau for agreeing to become the host venue; your hospitality is greatly appreciated.

When the Premier engaged us on his SOPA he mentioned a number of specific initiatives which presents great opportunity for us all, be it individual municipalities that were identified as beneficiaries or any program or project from which we believe we may benefit or see value. I therefore wish to mention of the few we identified as potentially game changers in its different forms towards our local economy and social infrastructure.

We must look at formalising the coordination of activities in the hospitality sector, specific to the development and implementation of a Tourism Board in Phumelela. This is imperative to drive the radical transformation program of government, specific to this sector. When looking at this sector as a municipality we must look at the intended Hotel school and how our local businesses can benefit from this with a long-term benefit of a more thriving tourism sector. The setting of standards within this industry is paramount, also the manner in which we do business, specifically encouraging businesses to pay for their municipal services. The foreseen establishment of a Skills Centre around Sasolburg present some opportunity for our municipality which we must explore for a multitude of reasons, of which includes long-term mechanical workshops / centres which must be established to render mechanical support to vehicle owners, truck owners, owners of farm equipment and implements. Our institution currently also lacks the mechanical repair or maintenance support we desperately need, which currently forces us to procure services from outside our municipal area as we wish to circulate business to build our local economy. We must certainly explore funding for such program of Phumelela potential artisans immediately if such funding does not come with the intended program.

I will drive the establishment of a local Black Business Forum or Chamber for Phumelela and broader Phumelela Business Chambers is foreseen which must incorporate all businesses and will not drive exclusivity. These

***Premier Magashule made time to handed over this house (located in Extension4) to a local resident after SOPA***

structures must look at business activity, business ethics and business requirements. Our CBD requires a serious revamp and rejuvenation to revive a sense of pride in our CBD's.

Phumelela must become part of the Provincial Jobs Summit, with a specific



focus on the agriculture value-chain and how to expand such. We must therefore research of the work done in the Kroonstad area and how we could possibly learn from those farming processes undertaken in the area.

The state of our roads, infrastructure and others present great opportunity for Co-operatives given our lack of in-house capacity and skills.

As a municipality we must build on the foundations laid and lay new foundations in the areas that require intervention.

We will therefore in the next few months not only engage on the IDP and budget for the next five years, but also engage on longer term solutions to the numbers of challenges we as a local government, local businesses, local churching communities, local education fraternity, local unemployed persons, local recreational communities and local residents are experiencing.

Phumelela belongs to all whom lives in it, let us not only live but unite in action to achieve success and greater success to establish better integrated society.

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