

MANTSOPA ON THE RIGHT TRACK

By Pule Lechesa



Mayor Dennis Sello Ntsepe

LADYBRAND – The Mantsopa Local Municipality (MLM) has been praised for improving its performance over the last two years during which period it has received qualified auditopinions from the Auditor General.

Residents said the municipality had drastically changed the outlook of the small principality since the AG condemned it for non-delivery some three years ago.

In an interview with *Public Eye* the Mayor Dennis Sello Ntsepe, attributed this achievement to the self-less dedication and determination of officers.

“I am delighted that we are now working better and smarter in our endeavour to improving the service delivery in our municipality,” said the Mayor.

“We adhered to the cabinet’s decision to develop a municipal turn-around strategy in order to make sure that our government works better.”

He added this is a step in the right direction: “This shows that we have turned the corner in as far as financial management is concerned. To align ourselves with the bigger scheme of things we will make sure that we get a clean audit before 2014.” Ntsepe lauded the national Department of Environmental Affairs for funding street cleaning and greening projects.

“There are people who reckon that we have wasted money by putting chairs all over the town unawares that this was sponsored by the department of Environmental affairs. That project created employment for about 338 people. They ensured that we have chairs that people use for relaxation while at the park or in town,” said Ntsepe.

He also pointed out some of the “apartheid regime’s legacy” major challenges that the municipality is faced with at the moment.

“We are aware that our tarred roads are aging hence the many pot holes. We are hard at work in an attempt to address that issue. We have had some technical glitches that disturbed the process,” he said

He said that they will put paving on some of the streets that are badly affected. “Our suppliers had some labour problems. Their employees went on strike. Everything is back to normal now.” He said for the “Fix streets programme” to work effectively, the council would lease equipment needed for fixing the streets instead of buying the same.

“We have a team of experts that is busy with the evaluation of the equipment that we have at our disposal. They will advise as to what we must do with them. Leasing is a cheaper and effective way.” He was unhappy with the “tortoise pace” at which some employees performed the duties.

“The municipality is losing a lot of money paying the workers overtime. We have learnt that when they get a call during working hours they will use delaying tactics until they knock off. They will only go after working hours so that they can clock over time,” he said.

To the delight of many people the residential Platberg where blacks were forcibly removed during apartheid is in a process of being developed. “We have given the sites to some people at Platberg. Others are still occupying the sites illegally as they did not go through the office. The matter is being investigated.”

According to the Mayor there is about R2,4 million that has been put aside for sanitation in this area. “We will soon be having the electricity in the area. They have installed the coupon boxes and promised to electrify the area before month end. I am glad that I have a site as I spent most of my life renting,” said a Platberg resident Lethusang Mpheteng.

Mantsopa Local Municipality has been demarcated under the Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality due to the de-establishment of the former Motheo District municipality.

“We are no longer under Motheo District Municipality as you are aware that it is defunct. We fall under the auspices of Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality,” he explained.

He said there was a plethora of challenges that were hampering the council’s progress.

“We have fenced the water pumping station with devil forks but to our disappointment it has been broken into. We are looking into the matter and might employ a security guard in the area.”

He said 42 jobs have been created for people responsible for upgrading streets in Koma Village in Mahlatswetsa, Hobhouse and Tweespruit 35 jobs were created in bucket eradication project, the greening project (Hantique) saw the employment of 225 people, whilst 99 are working in the development and upgrading of the road to Lekhalong la Mantsopa in Modderpoort.

Mantsopa won the provincial municipality performance excellence VUNA awards in 2004 and 2008, and was a runner up in the 2007 provincial cleanest town competition.

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