From the Mayor’s Pen

This is breast cancer awareness month and I am sure you have noticed the pink ribbons and other campaign paraphernalia as part of this initiative. Thank you to our local businesses for supporting your – the Waterfront is a prime example of how one of our top tourism attractions brilliantly shows their support for this worthwhile cause. According to an article on Women24, one in 26 SA women is likely to get breast cancer at some stage. While South African women have the highest risk with one in 12 diagnosed positive, while the lifetime risk for coloured and Asian women is one in 18 and the risk for black women is one in 48. It is clear that there is a very good chance that we will be affected, or those close to us.

A scary thought. But then the catchily and encouraging tweet of actress and cancer survivor Fran Drescher (who also founded the early detection group CancerSchmoaner) is the silver lining in the dark cloud: “If it hit you on arrival, 95% survival.” These are pretty good odds, but early detection is the answer.

So my question to you is – in between all the pink ribbons and clever awareness campaigns – have you made your appointment yet? It is a scary thought that breast cancer may affect your life. Digging your head in the sand, like our neighbouring elephant, will not help. Make sure you get regular screenings. I know mammograms and MRIs are not fun, but they can save your life.

Then there is the other side of this disease – supporting those battling the cancer already. Our local Hospice and GABC’s organisations are doing fantastic work. They always need volunteers to help on a variety of levels. Often you do not need any prior experience, they will help you to help. e.g. patients on a social basis. If you do not have the time, I know they are always looking for donations of certain items. Find out how you can help and assist them.

And lastly, let’s work together to find a cure. Take part in fundraising initiatives, donate to the many extraordinary organisations doing fantastic work all this area, or get involved in a breast cancer walk, run, or other fundraiser. If we all add our bit, we can make a difference! Let October be just the start of an all year long campaign to be pro-active every step of the way.

Geretse Wolmarans • Executive Mayor

Western Cape to assist motorists during eNATIS transition period

Motorists in the Western Cape are advised that renewal notices for motor vehicle licences will not be sent via the South African Post Office while the National Department of Transport (NDOT) is implementing eNATIS. All motorists are encouraged to visit their South African Identity (ID) document or valid Driving Licence Card, to make an appointment to collect their renewal notices. This transition period will directly affect thousands of motorists in the province who normally receive their notices through the post.

Motorists are urged to be proactive in checking their licence disc expiry dates, and ensure that they renew by 23 October 2015 to avoid penalties. Affected motorists residing outside of the Western Cape are encouraged to visit their local Department of Transport and Public Works office at its Provincial Service Centre for assistance on how to complete their renewal.

Contact Number: 0860 212 414
Send “Please Call Me”: 079 769 1207
Email: service@westerncape.gov.za

Alternatively, vehicle owners can also visit the Knysna Municipality’s registration section in Main Street, Knysna, to check the validity of their licence disc or obtain Driving Licence Card and complete a green ALV form for licence renewal at the counter.

Municipality looking to buy vacant land for a new cemetery

The Knysna Municipality is looking for vacant land for the use of cemeteries and has issued tender T75/2015 (below) to private owners to submit offers to purchase property.

Municipal Manager Grant Easton said they are very close to capacity at the existing facilities. “The existing graveyard in Vlakplaas and Barbers Street is reaching capacity and we need to find alternative options. We need to cater for about 16 000 burials over a period of 45 years, which is why we are looking for suitable land to buy in the Knysna Municipal area.”

He continued to say that obviously the land must meet certain criteria as specified in the tender. The short-listed land must be within the Knysna Municipal area. A geo-hydrological investigation will have to be done to look at soil susceptibility, soil permeability, site drainage, topography and local river/riverine flow. It is also important that the site is a safe distance from private water resources.

Other important oblivious factors that will influence suitability are traffic flow, accessibility by communities and the availability of civil services. “A minimum size of about 11Ha would be ideal and we would obviously take into consideration the position of the land in context with key biodiversity areas,” said Easton.

As legally required, the acquisition of the new sites will be done as part of a formal tender process (T75/2015). Once a short-list of a maximum of 5 suppliers of appropriate land has been identified, the Municipality will conclude a land availability agreement with the short-listed suppliers to ensure availability of land to determine the feasibility of the project. The short-listed suppliers will, at own cost, conduct the above feasibility analysis and the potential suppliers must make the land available to the Municipality for assessment.

Once the most appropriate land has been determined, the suppliers will be required to complete the full tender documents and submit these for further assessment by the Municipality. The Municipality will then apply for the required Environmental Impact Assessment and other prescribed approvals; the Municipality will conclude a land availability agreement with the short-listed suppliers to ensure availability of land to determine the feasibility of the project.

All tenders must be submitted by 12h00 on 20 January 2016 and tender documents can be requested via e-mail from the following address: mmgrant@knysna.gov.za or visit www.knysna.gov.za/tender/8845. For more information, please contact Mr. John Jotta on (044) 302 6407 or email jjaftha@knysna.gov.za.

Ward Focus: Ward 5, Cllr. Eleaneou Bouw-Spies

Ward 5 covers a large area from Brenton on Sea, Brenton on Lake and Belvidere to Bishopsbok and Rheenendal Central, while including Buffalo’s Bay. Our ward stretches from our beautiful beaches deep into the heart of our beautiful forests, and most surely one of the most beautiful in the greater Knysna area. I took on the mantle of Ward 5 Councillor in July 2015 and, while it is a very large area, I want to achieve in especially the previously disadvantaged areas, I am pleased with this ward’s progress in terms of development.

I have always focused on youth development and uplifting the communities where our children are our future and our economy. As Mayor, I opened the Youth Centres and these are doing remarkable work. This year I partnered with the Knysna Plettion Foundation to present the Step out with courage programme to 100 local students. Last year I allocated R20 000 from my ward allocation budget to fund this programme. Young people need and deserve our support and, while important, they cannot rely solely on DoE support. They do not know what they shall learn in the future classes. Originally initiated in 2005, this programme aims to graduate 12 learners and to prepare them for their final exams and life after matric.

The participants attended a three day camp designed to temporarily remove the pressure of their everyday life and daily distractions in order to focus on their short- and long term goals. The initiative has yielded great results and I was very impressed with the young adults that went through the programme in 2005. It is gratifying to see the outstanding and confident young people that the participants have become, as well as the good work they are doing for themselves and their communities. Each year the results in terms of results this year’s programme will have on its participants. I am grateful to the Avontuur Du Plessis Foundation and the Youth Centre for what we have achieved thus far.

Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act states that: “A municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance and self-accountability, in other words, a professional form of government with a system of participatory democracy, and must publish the requirements, conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality.”

I have always encouraged Ward 5 community members to participate actively in the municipal process, such as the Integrated Development Plan. It is the only way to ensure that people take ownership of their own community development. And it is through working together that we can create a town where people and nature prosper.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION LEADS TO RESULTS

“I strongly believe that the community must be involved in the municipal processes that affect their areas,” said Ward 5 Councillor Eleaneou Bouw-Spies. Through our public participation engagements in Ward 5, we have managed to address many of the community’s requests.”

Bouw-Spies said that R94 500 was spent on new paving at the Rheenendal Community hall during the 2014/15 financial year. The project began on 10 June this year, was completed on 30 June and created temporary employment for 10 members of the local community.

Another 10 individuals were temporally employed during the June 2015 upgrading of the sidewalks in Dawntime in Rheenendal. R99 560 was spent on this project.

The existing timber walkways in Brenton on Sea were upgraded and a new ATC was installed along the Fisherman’s Walk. Work was also done on the Brenton footbridge in June of this year, at a cost of R1 670.

RHEENENDAL SPORTS FIELD UPGRADE

Work on the R2 3 million upgrade of the Rheenendal sport field, a project expected to be completed by the end of February, 2016, has begun. Knysna Municipality had appointed a contractor to investigate the feasibility of upgrading and adding multi-purpose community facilities after initiating this project in 2013.

Speaker and Ward 5 Councillor Eleaneou Bouw-Spies explained that the municipality conducted many engagements with all affected stakeholders in order to identify the needs of the community. “I believe that this community must be involved with what the municipality is doing in their area, but we wanted to ensure that everyone was on board and had the same vision of the planned development.”

Some of the planned works include: the repaving and repainting of pathways and fencing; layer works and grading of the rugby pitch; replacing the ablution facilities, sanitary ware, wall, floor and electrical wiring; construction of a caretaker’s residence, various paving works, and the construction of a security room.

“Unemployment remains one of the key challenges facing this community. That is why we are here today,” said Cllr. Bouw-Spies. “Rheenendal is classified as a rural municipality. As there is very little economic activity, employment opportunities within this community are scarce. This project has the potential to create temporary employment opportunities for a number of local community members, which is sure to make a difference in their daily lives, as well as that of their family members and the rest of the community.”

“I trust that the community will take ownership of this facility, and will guard it against vandalism,” she concluded. “When we take care of our resources, our resources will last. When we take care of our environment, our environment will last.”

In support of breast cancer awareness

LPLIND INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADE

Lapland consists of 31 informal structures and when it rains heavily these structures become flooded and families have to be temporarily relocated. After engagements with the relevant stakeholders, R724 080 has been made available for upgrading Lapland. To date these funds have facilitated the construction of 31 new Wendy-houses, the provision of portable toilets, the upgrading of electricity and water services, the construction of an access road and the installation of stormwater channels. Electrification work will also begin towards the end of the financial year.

TALK TO US...

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