Knysna Municipality received three awards at the Western Cape Greenest Municipality of the Year ceremony held on 3 November in Stellenbosch.

Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said she was extremely proud of their achievements. “Not only did we receive the second runner-up award as Greenest Municipality of the Year, we also received Certificates for Outstanding Achievement as the category winners for Waste Management and Water Conservation, and Most Innovative for our green rebate initiative.”

The Greenest Municipality Competition (GMC) is arranged by the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Developmental Planning. It is judged according to strict criteria which cover waste management, energy efficiency and conservation, biodiversity management, coastal management and beautification, water management and conservation, air quality management and leadership, compliance, institutional arrangements and public participation. Sixteen local municipalities participated and Mossel Bay Municipality won the competition for the 2nd consecutive year with Hessequa Municipality the first runner-up. Eden District Municipality won the award for Best District Municipality. It is very fitting that the Garden Route’s municipalities did so well.

Ms. Waring said there were a variety of factors that played a role in achieving the awards which included strategic planning, waste minimisation, operations and management, monitoring, financial planning, effluent management, emergency planning, water balance and water conservation, public awareness and educational programmes. “We had outstanding results in all of these and I want to congratulate and thank all the relevant departments for their hard work. The green rebate initiative was launched by the Finance Department. It gives you a 30% discount on your rates if set criteria are met, which apply to residential estates or registered Private Nature Reserves. Criteria include alien clearance programmes, membership of the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association, membership of Cape Nature and a management plan for green initiatives, etc.”

The municipality won a R50 000 cash prize as the second runner-up of the Greenest Municipality Competition and Waring said the guidelines are very specific as to what the money can be used for. “We need to identify a project that will promote one or more of the principles of the competition and all the relevant departments will have to put their heads together to develop a business plan.”

She said that the municipality is aiming for first place next year and is already working on some new initiatives with the focus on raising public awareness and increased education. “We want all our residential areas to come on board with, amongst other, water saving and waste minimisation projects amongst others. We will also run a variety of concurrent educational programmes to promote participation. This is about caring for our natural environment which, after all, is Knysna’s biggest asset.”

The aim of the competition, now in its 14th year, is to promote improved service delivery that restores community pride and commitment in caring for the living environment. It also focuses on improved integrated sustainable development strategies in municipalities.
The South African Institute of Civil Engineering (SAICE) awarded the team responsible for the Karatara River weir with two awards at their annual SAICE Awards for 2014.

“The Karatara River weir was named the 1st Joint Winning Project for Technical Excellence, as well as the 2nd Joint Winning Project in the Environmental Engineering category,” said Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans. “The weir remains an innovative approach to a range of water supply and environmental issues, and I would like to congratulate the entire team on receiving these awards and well-deserved recognition for their expertise, skill and hard work.”

The weir, officially opened in August 2013, was designed to address water supply to Sedgefield and surrounds during the drought in 2008/2009. “The economic boom experienced in the Garden Route from 2002 onwards compounded issues surrounding potable water supply, and came to a head when Sedgefield ran out of potable water in 2008,” said Knysna Municipal Manager Lauren Waring. “We implemented a long term strategy to address the situation which included the sinking of a number of additional boreholes, the construction of the Sedgefield desalination plant – the biggest of its kind at the time, and the Karatara River weir.”

The weir system incorporates a number of features that earned it the joint award in the Technical Excellence category. “Stainless steel gates automatically open and close depending on salinity and water levels,” Waring explained. “When the saline level in the Swartvlei rises to a certain level, or the river stops flowing, the gates will close. And when the water is flowing normally they will open. No manual operation is needed during flood conditions as the gates will also automatically open, reducing the risk to human life.”

Wolmarans explained that specific environmental issues were also considered when designing the weir. “A special fish ladder was incorporated in the design to accommodate fish that swim upriver to spawn. I am sure that it’s environmentally responsible factors like this that contributed to the weir winning the joint award in the Environmental Engineering category.”

“It took nearly three years of planning, environmental investigation, consultation and public participation to finally open the weir last year,” Wolmarans continued. “It required determination and dedication from the entire team to result in an exceptionally well executed project.”

The team included the local community, Tuiniqua Consulting Engineers, Cape EAPrac, Amanziflow Products, B & V Construction, and Knysna Municipality. Other contributors included Brian Dalton OHS, Outeniqua Labs and the Western Cape Government. Interested and affected parties included SANParks, PG Bison and the Departments of Public Works, Water Affairs and Environmental Affairs.

“This weir, along with the other measures put in place as part of the Comprehensive Water Plan for Sedgefield, will contribute significantly towards a secure, safe and permanent supply of water to the community of Sedgefield and the surrounding areas,” Wolmarans concluded.

“But we have to remember that as we are experiencing low rainfall and summer is on its way, we all have to adhere to the existing water restrictions. It is only through working together that we can create a town where people and nature prosper.”
Len Richardson, Knysna municipality
Electro-technical engineer

Update on water situation

The suggestion recently in a local newspaper that Knysna only has water for three months is completely incorrect and the reporter took the matter out of context.

As residents know, Knysna does not have a storage dam like our neighbouring municipalities, but relies on rain fall resulting in good river flows to ensure that our holding dams are at capacity. The main holding dam, the Akkerkloof, has storage capacity for three months, and as long as there is sufficient rain fall and river flow, the dam is continually refilled as the water is utilized. This has been the case since the capacity of the Akkerkloof dam was increased. Currently there is sufficient water for the months ahead.

As we are entering into a dry period and are expecting a bumper tourist season, we have established a committee to monitor the water situation. Contrary to some reports, a drought has not been declared. Should the situation become concerning, the municipality will inform the public under notice from the Municipal Manager. We thank all water consumers who are ensuring our water stocks are protected due to adherence to restrictions. It must also be noted that the water demand management restrictions, such as defined watering periods, have been in place since 2004. It is gratifying to note that residents are valuing the limited water resources we have, and making water conservation part of their daily activities.

With regards to the reference to six months: this is a best practice for the industry where the authority has a large storage capacity. However, as in Knysna, numerous municipalities do NOT have the luxury to be able to store for six months.

The municipality is in the process of investigating other storage options. In addition we are also looking at a regional scheme with Bitou Municipality that can assist with improving the situation.

We thank residents for their efforts in saving and using water. However, the dry weather continues to put a strain on our available potable water resources. While watering of gardens is still allowed, it is only permitted within strict parameters.

Residents with even street numbers may water their gardens from 6pm -7pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Residents with odd street numbers may water their gardens from 6pm – 7pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Residents with alternative water resources like spikes or boreholes are encouraged to register these on the municipality’s database.

Please visit www.knysna.gov.za/be-water-wise/ for more tips on using water responsibly.

Len Richardson, Knysna Municipality Electro-technical Engineer, has announced that he will go on early retirement at the end of November.

Richardson joined the municipality on 1 May 1983. “One of the biggest challenges of the last 31 years was to keep Knysna’s electrical supply constant in the midst of Eskom load shedding. A particular bad period was when, in winter one year, the town had only one transformer to rely on as the other had failed. It was nerve-racking - if anything happened to this transformer, a replacement would have taken two years!”

Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said that it was a privilege to work with him. “Mr. Richardson has served the town with great commitment and dedication. It has been a pleasure to be able to work with him, and to learn from him. He has not only been a wonderful colleague, but a great friend as well. I know the town is going to miss him and his immense knowledge and wisdom.”

Richardson moved to Knysna in 1978 as Knysna’s Public Prosecutor. Deciding to change careers he went back to study, and started at the municipality’s electrical department. “I started and am going to finish my career at the municipality and am thankful for the opportunities I’ve had. I am looking forward to relax a bit, but am busy building a small steam train that must be completed first. We plan to move to Agulhas in the next two years where we will settle.”
**Council Snippets:**

**Knysna Municipality supports the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence International Campaign from 25 November until 10 December. This year marks the 15th year anniversary of the campaign in South Africa. In collaboration with FAMSA, South African Police Services, Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, this year’s programme will be launched on 25 November in Hornlee, Khayalethu and White Location.**

**Important numbers to remember:**
- Child line 0800 055 555
- Lifeline 0861 322 322
- Gender-Based Violence Helpline 0861 150 150
- FAMSA 044 382 5129

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**Cuppa for CANSA**

Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans hosted her annual Cuppa for CANSA fundraiser at the Knysna Municipal Council Chambers on Friday 31 October. An amount of R7 200 was raised to aid in the fight against cancer. Emotion filled the room when Municipal Manager Lauren Waring, who was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, shared her personal journey, inspiration and victory over breast cancer.

**Matrics 2014 where to from here?**

Did you know that Knysna Municipality has four Youth Centres where you can access information on further studies, training opportunities, job opportunities, information on how to start up your own business and much more? Visit or contact the Youth Centre in your area today:
- Hornlee: Housing Office, 044 302 6528/ hornleeydc@knysna.gov.za
- Smutsville: Community Centre, 044 302 6330/ smutsvilleyc@knysna.gov.za
- Rheenendal: Support Centre, 044 302 6354/ rheenendalydc@knysna.gov.za
- Khayalethu: Housing Office, 044 302 6591/ khayalethuydc@knysna.gov.za

**International Fraud Awareness Week**

Knysna Municipality supported the international Fraud Awareness Week (which ran from 2 to 8 November). The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness on fraud and corruption and how the two affects service delivery. The municipality encourages residents to report any corruption or fraud by contacting our anti-fraud hotline on 0800 214 764.

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**16 Days of Activism**

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**Water Saving Tips**

- Check all taps, pipes and toilets periodically for leaks
- Take a shorter shower, or soap and scrub, and then rinse off
- Put a bucket in the shower to catch water for your plants
- Don’t flush tissues etc. away in the toilet, use a waste basket
- Invest in a dual flush toilet and one with a smaller cistern
- Turn off the water while shaving, brushing teeth etc.
- Completely fill your dishwasher
- Defrost food by taking it out in time, not under running water
- Don’t rinse dishes under a running tap
- Pour old water on your plants instead of down a drain

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**Dates to Remember**

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