

Rheenendal celebrates dual milestone with new eCentre and dedicated Fire Engine

Knysna Municipality and the Western Cape Government officially launched the Rheenendal eCentre today, 10 June 2026. According to Knysna Executive Mayor Thando Matika, the launch marks a significant milestone in expanding digital access, skills development and economic opportunities for residents of the rural Rheenendal community.

Matika said that residents will have access to a wide range of services. “These include computer and internet access, printing and scanning facilities, CV writing assistance, online job applications, digital literacy training, entrepreneurship support and access to government services through online platforms,” he explained. “This facility will help unlock opportunities for residents, particularly young people, by providing them with the tools they need to succeed. It is a substantial investment in the future of this community.”

The centre, which began operating earlier this year, includes a Business Corner, a Public Access Centre and a Training Centre. In addition to providing services, the facility has already created local employment opportunities, with two young residents appointed to assist with its operations.

“The success of this project demonstrates the value of collaboration between different spheres of government and local communities,” said Matika “It shows what can be achieved when government works together with communities to address real needs. Through cooperation and a shared commitment to improving lives, we have created a facility that will have a lasting impact on Rheenendal and contribute to building a more inclusive digital future.”

The Rheenendal eCentre is the result of a strong partnership between the Western Cape Government, the Department of Local Government, the Office of the Premier, Knysna Municipality and Library Business Corners. It also reflects years of dedication and advocacy by Community Development Worker Devoline Koopman, who championed the need for improved digital access and youth development opportunities in Rheenendal.

Today’s launch follows the successful deployment of a Western Cape Government Mobile eCentre in Rheenendal in July 2025. The mobile facility received strong support from the community and demonstrated the significant demand for digital services, skills development and employment support in the area.

“This eCentre is expected to play an important role in reducing the digital divide, supporting youth development, assisting job seekers and entrepreneurs, and improving access to online information and opportunities for residents,” Matika continued. “As a model of collaborative governance and community-driven development, the facility stands as a practical example of how partnerships can improve service delivery and create meaningful socio-economic benefits for rural communities.”

In another significant milestone for the Rheenendal community, the municipality also took delivery of a brand-new fire engine, made possible through funding provided by the Western Cape Provincial Capacity Grant. The vehicle will be stationed in Rheenendal, strengthening local emergency response capacity and ensuring that fire and rescue services are available closer to the community. The new asset will enhance the municipality’s ability to protect lives, property and the environment while improving service delivery in the greater Rheenendal area.

“The addition of this fire engine is a major boost for the safety and resilience of the Rheenendal community. By stationing the vehicle in Rheenendal, we are bringing essential emergency services closer to residents and improving our capacity to respond when assistance is needed,” Matika concluded. “We are grateful to the Western Cape Government for its investment in this critical service and its continued support of our communities.”

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