



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU - NATAL - ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU - NATALI

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT**  
**UMNYANGO WEZOKUTHUTHA**

**TO : All Editors/ Reporters and PR wire**

**Date : 16 May 2007**

**Re : Media Alert**

**MEC CELE ADHERE TO COMMUNITY CALL**

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Mr. Bheki Cele will attend a sod turning ceremony of a bridge over the Black Mfolozi River. **On Saturday 19 May 2007 in Mahlabathini ,Thombothi Primary School (KwaXasane) at 10h00 am.**

This follows a request by the Department of Education, Principal of the Thombothi Primary School and the local councillors in the area for the construction of a bridge over the Black Mfolozi River. The bridge would serve the Thombothi Primary School and the surrounding community members.

Over the years many pupils and other community members have lost their lives while attempting to cross the river. Pupils lose many school days especially over the rainy season when the river levels are too high to cross. The closest alternative school is over 15kms away. As this is a primary/junior secondary school, pupils as young as 6 years old are forced to cross this dangerous river without adult supervision.

The river bridge will serve as a link between the communities that are separated by the Black Mfolozi River and provide safe passage, particularly the school children who have to cross the river twice daily. At the point of the crossing, the river flows north to south thus separating the Matheni Tribal Authority (Esizinda community) in the east and the Zunga Tribal Authority (Xasane community) in the west. The school located adjacent to the river on the west is the Thombothi Junior Secondary School.

An important aspect of the bridge construction is that its cost remains an economic benefit to the communities it will serve. To this end, the prospective contractors will be compelled to source all materials from the Ulundi/ Mahlabatini area and employ all artisans and labour from the nearby communities. It is intended that the whole of the bridge construction will be manual.

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