



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Street Address: 172 Burger Street,
Pietermaritzburg, 3200
Postal Address: Private Bag X9043,
Pietermaritzburg, 3200
Tel: (27)(33) 355 8664
Cell: 072803146 / 0796995755
Fax: (27)(33) 355 8632
Email: Kwanele.Ncalane@Kzntransport.gov.za
Website: <http://www.kzntransport.gov.za>

MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

MEDIA RELEASE

To: All media
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Attention: News editors, reporters & PR wires

MEC MCHUNU HANDED OVER THE TUGELA RIVER VEHICLE BRIDGE TO AN OVERJOYED SAHLUME COMMUNITY

LADYSMITH – KwaZulu Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu, today handed over a **R24.5 million** vehicle bridge to a delighted Sahlume community in the Uthukela District.

The much awaited 135 metre-long bridge came as a great relief to the community, which has long experienced challenges connecting to areas of destination for daily socio-economic and educational needs. At least 200 learners have previously crossed the river, hazarding their lives as they waded through the water to reach schools such as Thuthukani Primary and Sahlume High every day.

The bridge will also bring immense comfort to motorists using both passenger cars and buses, who cross the river to and from areas including Nomoya and Mbango to access social and health amenities.

“Importantly, the surrounding communities will now say goodbye to the unfortunate drowning incidences which claimed seven young lives since the year 2000,” said Mchunu. “Today we are fulfilling our government’s commitment to improving the lives of the people in both rural and urban areas for the better by delivering critical road transport infrastructure.”

He explained that the new bridge will connect district road D1275 to the main road P280 on the south of the Tugela River – and therefore the rest of the province and country.

“Providing the public with a safe, integrated, affordable and accessible transport infrastructure is the essence of our mandate. With this bridge we are adding to an already expanding road and transport network that has markedly increased social and economic activity in the greater Uthukela District,” he asserted.

The KZN Department of Transport has already built an expansive, multi-million Rand network of blacktop and gravel roads throughout the Uthukela District in a major development investment that has created hundreds of direct, local jobs. The construction of this Tugela River Bridge in Kwan-Nomoya, Kwa-Gudliqele, Sahlume, just outside of Ladysmith, created 16 direct jobs for members of the local community.

All of this investment is in addition to other KZN Department of Transport’s programmes including, among others, the R40-million Public Transport Facility in Estcourt and those taking place in all municipalities in the district.

Today’s handover also underpinned the culmination of a packed Mandela-Public Service Week for Mchunu. During the hectic week, Mchunu visited children’s homes, rolled up his sleeves to paint houses, and spent time hosting a lunch with the elderly in the Uthukela District, an area of which he is the political champion.

Ends.

Media contacts:

Kwanele Ncalane

072 803 1462/ 079 699 5755/ kwanele.ncalane@kzntransport.gov.za

OR

Nathi Sukazi

082 565 0205/ 081 018 0518/ nathi.sukazi@kzntransport.gov.za