Igalelo

Official Newsletter of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport

July/August 2005

Right to protest does not stop government from acting in public interest

THE KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has a planned programme of action to work with the taxi industry in the interest of the general public and for the well-being and sustainability of the industry. Government will not renege on its commitment to protect the interests of the general public. This undertaking was given by KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Bheki Cele, in the wake of the latest protest action orchestrated by taxi owners in the province.

Cele said while taxi owners had a right to express their views and sentiments about issues that affected them, in the same vein the government had a responsibility to carry out the mandate issued to it by the electorate. That mandate included securing and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all the people of KwaZulu-Natal, including motorists and commuters.

The latest taxi protest, apparently over the perceived delay in obtaining public transport permits, occurred at a time when government is working relentlessly towards the emergence of a safe, reliable and affordable public transport system in the country.

In this respect, advanced plans are underway for the implementation of the taxi recapitalisation programme.

Certain areas of KwaZulu-Natal, among them Edendale and Mpangeni, have been selected for pilot projects in the roll out of the exciting taxi recapitalisation programme, which will boost the level of safety and business ethos in the industry. Cele said there was a planned programme of action to work with the taxi industry in the interest of the general public and for the wellbeing and sustainability of the industry.

Cele emphasised that he was committed to frank and transparent discussions with the taxi industry and to also work with its member associations in identifying and resolving problems to the mutual benefit of taxi operators and the government.

"We have always been prepared to sit down and talk to leaders in the taxi industry; it is time that certain people changed their ways and used dialogue, rather than threats and intimidation," said Cele.

He told representatives of various taxi associations that if they wished to express their concerns and grievances, they should first consider the safety of commuters. The government would not tolerate any action that posed a threat to the lives of commuters.

"If you wish to show your dissatisfaction, you have a right to express your concern in any way you like, but it is upon us as government to ensure that we prioritise the safety of commuters, ensure value for money fares, and also ensure that commuters are transported in the correct manner," said Cele.

ON THE PATH FOR PEACE: MEC Bheki Cele and Transport Head Kwazi Mbanjwa are determined to ensure that the taxi industry is well run and prospers, bringing heightened confidence among commuters. But while they have shown their commitment to talks, they made it clear that they will not tolerate any compromises on commuter safety.

"We have always been prepared to sit down and talk to leaders in the taxi industry; it is time that certain people changed their ways and used dialogue, rather than threats and intimidation," said Cele.

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From KZN to cross-border agency, Mngqibisa has straddled the high road to success

THERE is simply no stopping the KZN Department of Transport. Now the Department has produced a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the country's Cross-Border Transport Agency: he is Sinethemba Mngqibisa, former Director: Freight Transport in the KZN Department of Transport.

Mngqibisa served the National Department of Transport as a Freight Transport Policy Advisor for about two years before moving back to the KZN Department of Transport to take up the position of Manager responsible for the establishment of the Freight Transport Directorate.

Mngqibisa began his career with the Department of Health in Pietermaritzburg, as a Medical Technologist at the Edendale Laboratory. He studied towards a Bachelor of Commerce degree privately which helped to create an interest in transportation.

Mngqibisa went on to obtain a bursary to study for a postgraduate diploma in transport management with the Rand Afrikaans University. On completion of the diploma, he joined the KZN Department of Transport's Local Road Transportation Board. He was responsible for the issuing of transport permits, a position he held for about three years. He then moved to the Gauteng Department of Transport, where he worked as Senior Transport Economist. He was responsible for the monitoring of bus contracts.

Speaking to Igalelo, Mngqibisa said: "When I returned to the KZN Transport Department in 2002, my main task was to establish the Freight Transport Directorate and much was achieved during my tenure in the directorate. Firstly, we were able to formulate the Freight Transport Policy, which is the first of its kind in the country. Even the national Transport Department has followed in KZN's footsteps." He added: "But most importantly, the Freight Databank, established by the KZN Department, was endorsed by the National Department of Transport and duplicated in the other eight provinces." Mngqibisa recalled: "Another achievement was that of revitalising rail transport.

We conducted research on how we could revitalise our rail lines and came up with a model which is now being implemented nationally. Right now, the Nkwaleni branch line has been revitalised and others are to follow soon.

"Last, but not least, the issue of dangerous goods being transported on our roads is of serious concern. We have just completed a snap survey on the transportation of these goods, and this year we will be embarking on a study to look at specific routes and supporting documentation. This is also another first for KZN."

Sinethemba Mngqibisa

Speaking about his personal life, Mngqibisa said that he was very much of a flexible person who was able to adjust to any work environment. He attributed his achievements to his philosophy of doing everything.

Commuter rail heads for speedy revitalisation – in time for 2010

IN an endeavour to accelerate Black Economic Empowerment and revitalise the KwaZulu-Natal rail network, the South African Rail Commuter Corporation (SARCC) hosted a workshop recently.

The workshop also served the strategic purpose of introducing the SARCC to the KZN Department of Transport and to members of the public who are potential service providers.

The other purpose of the workshop was to assist potential suppliers of goods and services with information and guidelines on how to be eligible to provide a service to SARCC. This includes access to the tender process, business opportunities, advertising in targeted publications, simplified tender documents and pre-qualification criteria in the case of large tenders.

The workshop was facilitated by MEC Bheki Cele. It followed a meeting with officials of SARCC at the Limpopo International Transport Conference, held in Polokwane recently.

In relation to the needs of the province, Cele said the workshop served the purpose of positioning KZN as a front-runner in the revitalisation of the rail network, ahead of the 2010 World Cup.

This would help improve the quality of life of the province's people by reducing traffic congestion and vehicle emissions that cause pollution.

Addressing the workshop, Cele said: "Commuter rail will undoubtedly be an important mode of transport to South Africa's delivery of a successful Soccer World Cup, and it is now necessary for KwaZulu-Natal to revive the provincial rail network."

Cele added: "In foreign countries the use of public transport is better than the use of private vehicles. If we all agree that apartheid was a mistake, then it must be changed in order to redress the imbalances of the past by seeking to substantially and equitably transfer and confer the ownership, management and control of South African economic resources to the majority of its citizens through Black Economic Empowerment Programmes similar to Zibambele and Vukuzakhe."

KZN Transport Head Kwazi Mbanjwa said: "The KwaZulu-Natal Transport Department has always been at the forefront of efforts to encourage revitalising the rail network as a means of addressing the ongoing taxi problems by providing an alternative means of transport, such as rail." Mbanjwa pointed out that the KZN Department of Transport was the first provincial transport department to conduct a study on how to revitalise rail and produced a model which was now being considered nationally. "Right now, the Nkwaleni line is one of the provincial rail lines that has been revitalized, with others to follow soon," he said.

SARCC's Group Executive Director, Ms. Selomane Maitisa, said the workshop was undoubtedly the beginning of a process of promoting and reviving rail in the region, stressing, at the same time, that metropolitan roads were the most congested roads in South Africa.

"The only alternative is commuter rail, which provides an affordable and safe mode of public transport that will also alleviate the congestion on our roads," she added.

SARCC is an agency of the national Department of Transport. It was established in 1990 to ensure that commuter rail services in South Africa are functional. It has contracted Metrorail, a division of Transnet, to carry out its mandate. Metrorail provides transport services to more than two million people daily in major metropolitan cities throughout the country.

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport

hosts the

2nd Africa Technology Transfer Conference

Mr. Bheki Cele
MEC: Transport, Community Safety and Liaison

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport will be the proud hosts of the 2nd Africa Technology Transfer Conference from the 20th to the 23rd of September 2005 in Pietermaritzburg. The 1st Africa Technology Transfer Conference was held in Arusha, Tanzania in May 2001 under the auspices of the Tanzania T^2 Centre. The conference attracted delegates from many parts of the world including Africa and the United State. Following on the success of the first conference, a decision was made to stage similar conferences in other African countries every two years to create a forum for exchange of experiences and ideas relevant to the transfer of road transportation technologies. South Africa was selected as the host country for the 2nd Africa T^2 conference and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport T^2 Centre was nominated to host it.

The Department is committed to supporting the activities of the T^2 Centre by providing the required financial and human resources. So great is the commitment that the department decided to renovate three floors of an existing building to provide modern facilities for the T^2 Centre. The renovations have been completed and the centre is now housed in the new facilities.

The Theme for the 2005 T^2 conference is "Transportation Technology Transfer for Africa's Renaissance". Papers will be presented on the following four broad themes:

- Theme 1: Technology Transfer Centres – challenges and opportunities
- Theme 2: Socio-economic aspects in transportation
- Theme 3: Integrated transport planning and management
- Theme 4: Appropriate innovations in transportation

Papers covering the various aspects of these themes will be presented at the conference by engineers, technicians, and policy makers from South Africa, the rest of Africa and other parts of the world.

The T^2 concept was initiated by the US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide a forum for cost effective transfer of transportation technologies to local and state government transportation departments. Building on the success of T^2 Centres in the US, FHWA started to export the idea to other continents especially South America and Africa. At present there are many T^2 Centres in Latin America, Africa and the former Eastern Europe. The first Technology Transfer Centre in South Africa was established in 1996 when the National Department of Transport signed an agreement with the US Federal Highway Administration. The centre is currently run by the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) on behalf of the Department of Transport. The second T^2 Centre was started at the Transportation division of the CSIR in 2000.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport signed a Memorandum of Understanding with FHWA in 2000 to start the first of the provincial T^2 Centres. It was envisaged at that stage that the KZN T^2 Centre would assist in expanding the T^2 Centre concept to other provinces. Since its inception in 2000 the T^2 Centre in the KZN Department of Transport has established itself as a major provider of technology transfer services for the Department and for external customers. Services provided by the T^2 Centre include:

- Developing & facilitating technical training;
- Collaborating with external service providers to facilitate courses;
- Providing mentorship training to graduate engineers;
- Supporting additional maths and science classes for learners in disadvantaged schools;
- Supporting other activities aimed at encouraging study of maths and science by high school learners;
- Providing experiential training to S3 technikon students to enable them complete their studies;
- Carrying out and/or co-ordinating research on issues of interest to the Department;
- Managing the Departmental infrastructure system; and
- Managing the technical resource centre.

Conference Details and updates are available on the official conference web site at .
www.kzntransport.gov.za/africaT2Conf <http://www.kzntransport.gov.za/africaT2Conf>

Pietermaritzburg
20-23 September 2005

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Department responds

KZN MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr Bheki Cele, responds to the recent taxi protest. The grievances of the taxi industry can be categorised into the following four broad areas:

1. Problems related to the Transportation Board and the issuing of permits;
2. The legitimacy of the Taxi Council and status of independent Taxi Organisations;
3. The Enforcement Drive, and
4. The Taxi Recapitalisation Programme.

In responding to the grievances, the Department prefaces its response to each of the issues raised by clarifying the various categories related to permit administration. There are four areas which seem to be of concern:

• TRANSFERS, RENEWALS, etc.

I agree with the industry that operators coming for these transactions must be able to process their applications on the same date. I have, therefore, communicated this matter to the Board and staff to ensure that this happens.
They have promised me that they are beefing up resources and systems to ensure that this does happen. The Head of Department and I will be monitoring that this does happen.
The industry can help us by ensuring that renewals in particular are submitted timeously so that bottlenecks are prevented.
Secondly, we will be appointing a full-time Chairperson of the Board so that authorisation is done quicker and administrative queries are attended to faster.

• NEW APPLICATIONS

It is important that a new culture is created within the industry. The culture I want to emphasise here is that operators should not first acquire a vehicle before acquiring a right to trade (permit).
The first step is to ensure that you have been granted a permit before you acquire a vehicle. We are, therefore, not going to allow for the granting of temporary permits to allow for the legal process to be completed.
There is a need for us to sit down and talk about these matters so that problems from all sides can be identified and resolved with speed, without us resorting to confrontation. Let me deal with each of your demands as presented.

• RECOGNITION OF ORGANISATIONS, OTHER THAN KWANATACO

Our view is that Taxi Operators, like everyone else in South Africa, have a right to form voluntary organisations based on shared interest. We are not against the formation and existence of the Kwa-Zulu Natal Transport Alliance.
You took a resolution at your National Conference in September 2000 to form regional, provincial and national Councils as consultative bodies. If there is a feeling that the present structures are not adequately providing for proper mandates and feedback, let the industry discuss the matter collectively and engage us on the way forward. We will welcome such discussions.

• LAW ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS

Law enforcement is the cornerstone of our government's mandate. If we were to stop law enforcement as government, the sporadic violence we see now will multiply ten-fold and will expose legal taxi operators to "pirates" and criminals and it will then lead to attacks and revenge attacks. We will be abdicating our responsibility as government if this happens.
We will address this matter with the sensitivity it deserves since our aim is not to be punitive, but to primarily protect the interest of legitimate operators.
We will continue to improve the relationship between legitimate operators and law enforcement agencies.
Taxi enforcement Units are there to support and protect legitimate operators and they are not a relic of the apartheid past.

• BAKKIES AND SCHOLAR TRANSPORT

In terms of the legislative framework governing Public Transport, bakkies are not recognised as a legal mode of public transport because they were not designed as such. All of us must encourage these owners to upgrade to legal vehicles so that they can benefit from the accelerated Licensing Programme.

• REGISTRATION AND ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

The Taxi Registrar is based at the Head Office of the Department of Transport and the Physical Address is first Floor, New Building, 172 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg. The telephone number is 033 – 3558000.
In a months time they will be moving to new offices.
The second point in the memorandum is the different standpoint between the industry and government on the issue of constitutional provisions in their constitutions which contradict the legal provisions in the National Land Transport Transition Act, 2000.
You are arguing that because your constitutions allow you automatic addition of vehicles, until you reach your constitutionally-stipulated number, the board must automatically grant you a permit. Public Transport statutes do not

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frankly to Taxi Issues

LET'S WORK TOGETHER:
MEC Bheki Cele has again appealed to taxi operators and their representatives to work with government in order to find solutions to problems plaguing the industry.

allow for this. We will be working with you as industry structures to restructure your constitutions in order to meet these challenges.
I, therefore, appeal to all structures of the industry and my department to initiate a formal discussion on the matter so that a joint position is adopted.

• TAXI RECAPITALISATION PROGRAMME

The Taxi Recapitalisation Programme was reviewed and a new framework adopted by the national Cabinet in October 2004. The new framework is informed essentially by the resolutions we adopted together at Alpine Health, Drakensberg. On May 26 and 27, 2005, a further resolution was adopted at the Departmental Summit in Ulundi to conduct roadshows throughout the province to inform the public on the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme and how we intend implementing it in the province. Roadshows are planned for the month of August by my Department after the final vehicle specifications have been adopted by Minister Jeff Radebe.
We believe that after such roadshows, the confusion and fears will have been allayed and buried.

• METERED TAXI PROBLEMS

There are no specific metered taxi problems we are aware of and, therefore, we would like to invite stakeholders who have issues to raise on the matter to please come forward.

• ROAD SAFETY CHALLENGES

The Department has established 35 Road Safety Councils throughout the province and we encourage taxi operators and their Associations to utilise these structures as forums to improve road safety in the province.

• TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE TAXI INDUSTRY

We piloted a comprehensive training programme in Nquthu and subsequently a joint Skills Development Programme was compiled to be implemented over a three-year period.
In 2004, a Leadership Development Programme was implemented throughout the province as part of the three-year plan. Discussions are at an advanced stage with the Transport Education and Training Authority to roll-out the rest of the programme. The need for skills has been identified by all of us.

• TAXI ELECTIONS

We agree that elections must be conducted freely and fairly at all levels of the industry. We have, therefore, appointed an independent electoral team to conduct these elections as we move forward.

• FINALISATION OF REGISTRATION

Minister of Transport, Mr Jeff Radebe has proclaimed the end of August 2005 as a deadline for the completion of this process. We are deploying teams to ensure that this is achieved. We would like to encourage the full participation of all of you in achieving these objectives.

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KwaZulu-Natal's latest road safety campaign, promoting the correct usage of traffic lanes, has been welcomed by the Bridgestone/SA Guild of Motoring Journalists' Committee for Active Road Safety (CARS).

The campaign describes, in the most profound way, how the horrific situation on South Africa's roads can and should be tackled, says chairman of CARS Ian Auret.

"The campaign has established KZN and their traffic authorities as the benchmark for road safety, showing that they are coming to grips with the underlying problems of an untenable situation in South Africa.

"The authorities have identified a very real problem and devised a highly effective plan for addressing it. Importantly, they have embarked on an advertising campaign, highlighting the problem and effects of poor lane discipline on other road users. This is accompanied by the implementation of a focused enforcement campaign on the roads.

The fact that they are allocating a budget for the campaign goes a long way towards addressing the negative image of traffic officials being there just to make money, and shows a real concern for traffic safety in its priorities.

"The campaign does a tremendous educational job for road users in the country, but sadly only KZN will see its implementation."

Meanwhile, the KwaZulu-Natal Co-ordinating Traffic Committee (KZN CTC) has resolved to expand traffic policing services in the province to areas that were previously excluded. A meeting was held in Pietermaritzburg recently to deal with law enforcement and road safety challenges, such as speed enforcement, the capturing of warrants of arrest on NaTIS, legislative guidance regarding stray animals, pedestrian behaviour patterns, as well as revisiting road safety campaigns like "Siyabona Bonakala" (See and Be Seen).

The key outcome of the meeting was a commitment to ensure joint emergency responses at major road crashes, and joint multi-disciplinary enforcement activities that will result in fewer road crashes and associated deaths.

Also present at the meeting were representatives of South African Breweries who reiterated their commitment to public-private partnerships that will assist in spreading the message of road safety.

Chairperson of KZN CTC and Director of Hibiscus Coast Protection Services, Victor Chetty, said: "In the interest of effective and efficient service delivery, radio networking needed to be attended to as a matter of urgency. In the event of a vehicle being stolen, the SAPS should be able to communicate directly with RTI and other enforcement agencies so that the particulars of the said vehicle can be circulated to as many enforcement officers in the shortest possible time. This should also occur in the event of other emergencies or criminal offences."

KZN CTC comprises officials from various law enforcement agencies in the province who are involved in a multi-pronged initiative to facilitate the sharing of traffic-related information in order to address quality issues, and jointly implement effective solutions. Enforcement agencies represented include Durban Metro Police, SAPS, Municipal Traffic Agencies and the Department's Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI).

KZN RTI SHARES ITS ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES WITH MPUMALANGA IN EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Officials from the Mpumalanga Road Traffic Inspectorate spent a few days with their colleagues from the KZN Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI) recently. The visit was aimed at picking up pointers from strategies that have earned KZN RTI the reputation of being one of the best law enforcement agencies and trendsetters in the country.

Both KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga face similar challenges when it comes to road safety. KZN RTI has continuously embarked on custom-made initiatives to reduce road offences and illegal operations in public transport.

The Mpumalanga delegation were given presentations on various issues, including labour matters, traffic management policy and gender representivity.

The discussion on labour issues related to ways of dealing with organised labour and successfully resolving disputes within the RTI working environment. In terms of traffic management policy, the delegates were explained how KwaZulu-Natal had implemented effective law enforcement strategies to deal with illegal public transport issues, especially taxi violence which has claimed the lives of many innocent commuters.

Other successful projects in KZN include the Booze Bus, Roadside Courts and speed enforcement.

The introduction of Booze Buses in KZN has been highly effective in dealing with drunken drivers. With regards to the roadside courts, thousands of motorists have appeared before them, resulting in the reduction of road fatalities and reckless driving. A consequence of these measures is that the "100% compliance" initiative is being accepted as a stern reminder that this province is serious about keeping injuries and death off our roads.

BRAIN STORMING: Traffic officers and administrators from Mpumalanga and KZN got together recently as part of an exchange programme.

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WINNING THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME: MEC Bheki Cele and Kwazi Mbanjwa receive a cheque from the Head of the Special Investigative Unit, Willie Hofmeyer

Over a million rands have been recovered from truck companies and handed back to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport.

The amount recovered was due as unpaid vehicle licence fees. It is thought that about R1,3 million was owed by individuals and companies.
A cheque for R769 000 was recently handed over to MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Bheki Cele, as initial payment to the government.

The owners of heavy motor vehicles (trucks) – depending on their tare weight - are charged higher annual licence fees for using the roads, as compared to light motor vehicles (cars), because heavy vehicles indirectly cause more damage to the road network which is expensive to repair.
Cele said: "It has been found that about 195 companies are defrauding us of well over R2 million per annum by paying much lower licence fees than that they are legally obliged to pay.

For instance, the owner of a 15 ton truck is expected to pay R21 000 a year, but would register the vehicle as a 7 tonner and pay R5 000. That is called abusing and stealing from the state."

Thanks to the Special Investigative Unit (SIU), headed by Advocate Willie Hofmeyer, the Department is moving closer towards ending this malpractice which is an injustice to taxpayers.

The SIU was asked by the Department to investigate the fraudulent and unauthorised reduction of tare weights of motor vehicles on the National Traffi c Information System (NaTiS) by some of the Department's employees. The scam was originally uncovered by the Department when officials spotted certain irregularities in the licensing of heavy vehicles at a few licensing centres. The special investigation unit was assigned in 2001 by the President to look into the matter and help bring the culprits to book. Since then, 195 companies were investigated and 80 of them were convicted.

Head of the KZN Transport Department Kwazi Mbanjwa said he was pleased with the work that the SIU had done and continued to do. The money recovered would go directly into the Central Revenue Fund and not to the KZN Transport Department. However, attempts would be made to reclaim the money so that it could be directed towards the building and maintenance of much needed road infrastructure.

"It is not always easy to prosecute offenders in these cases because these investigations can take a very long time. In one of our major cases, a key suspect, Mr Roy Singh, passed away during the investigation. His testimony was crucial and we, therefore, could not charge anyone in this case," said Hofmeyer.

Meanwhile, the KZN Department of Transport has also welcomed the SIU's investigation into fraudulent drivers' licences in the province.

India's Rural people will benefit from visit to KwaZulu-Natal

A recent visit to KwaZulu-Natal by a delegation from India's National Rural Roads Agency is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of rural people.

The delegation shared knowledge with the KZN Department of Transport on how to reverse underdevelopment and alleviate poverty.
The visit was facilitated by the World Bank as a strategy to encourage mutual learning between India and South Africa in the area of rural development. South Africa and India already have strong relations in many fields.

The Indian delegation admired the Department's high level of development and its achievements in rural road construction and other development issues.

The visit formed part of the World Bank's broad initiative to encourage governments to learn from one another.

India and South Africa have some similarities, key of which is that millions of their citizens live in underdeveloped rural areas where there is poverty, lack of job opportunities and the absence of infrastructure.

The KZN Department of Transport has a reputation nationally and in many parts of the world as a beacon of hope for rural people when it comes to development, ending poverty and creating jobs.

Thanks to the Department's proactive and pro-development leadership, the KZN Department of Transport is considered a pace setter in the South African government when it comes to rural road upgrading and wealth generation for formerly marginalised communities.

ON A MISSION: A delegation from India visited KZN recently to look at the work being done in rural areas

DoT senior management took the Indian delegation on a site visit to main road 399 in Pietermaritzburg which is part of the African Renaissance Roads Upgrading Programme (ARRUP).

The project, which is estimated at R65 million, is to be handled by a construction company owned by a woman.

Commenting on the visit, the Department's manager responsible for the Technology Transfer Centre, Dr. Simon Oloo said: "There are prospects that members of the Department will visit India to share and learn from that country's experiences."

A spokesperson for India's delegation told Igalelo that his team was overwhelmed to be in South Africa: "Our visit to the KZN Department of Transport has afforded us a learning opportunity; we sincerely hope that the relationship will strengthen and both countries will benefit from such interaction," he added.

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Religious groups launch road purification initiative to curb deaths from accidents

Many traditional religious groups, including the Nazareth Baptist Church (AbakwaShembe), the institution of traditional healers (izangoma) and Sukyo Mahikari, believe that one of the reasons why road accidents frequently occur is because the spirits of those who die in crashes are not guided to rest.

Sukyo Mahikari (meaning true light of God) was one of the spiritual groups which accepted the challenge of helping to deal with the problem of road carnage.

The group is involved in promoting spiritual civilisation and also spreads its teachings. Robin Maharaj of the Sukyo Mahikari explained: "The light enables us to purify ourselves on the spiritual, mental and physical levels." The light emitted by Sukyo Mahikari has been used to purify the roads in Durban and Ladysmith this year.

According to Maharaj, they believe that when the soul leaves the body, the spirit has to be placed in its rightful place. If the spirit is not taken to its rightful place, it can cause accidents to occur in the future. Sukyo Mahikari practices purification of divine light upon human kind. The most dangerous spots where accidents frequently occur were targeted for the purification process.

Groups from various faiths have been working closely with the KZN Department of Transport's road safety inter-faith campaign to spread the safety message among its members. Head of Department Kwazi Mbanjwa said: "As the Department of Transport, we are grateful to the various spiritual leaders for their continuous support and commitment in assisting us to try to reduce the number of road accidents."

In the wake of the Department's success in stepping up law enforcement, which has resulted in a decline in road crashes, MEC Bheki Cele has made an appeal to spiritual leaders to engage themselves in praying for safety on our roads.

Addressing a Memorial Service at Mayville in memory of eight people from the Nazareth Baptist Church who were killed in a bus accident, Cele said: "The pain of facing the family members of the deceased is unbearable."

PURIFYING OUR ROADS: Religious leaders have joined the battle to reduce the number of road fatalities by spreading the message of road safety, and praying.

ABOUT IGALELO

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and

P 4's Straight Talk
Thursdays 6:30-7:30 pm