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Official Newsletter of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport

KZN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT SCOOPS AWARDS FOR 2005

January/February 2006

MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison B.H. Cele and KZN Transport Head Dr. Kwazi Mbanjwa with family members of a truck accident victims in Chesterville

Unroadworthy vehicles are like 'Time Bombs' waiting to kill

Unroadworthy vehicles are like 'time bombs' waiting to kill, maim and harm innocent road users. That is the reason Government does not want them on our roads.

Within one week fourteen lives have been lost, killed by a truck that had a brake failure while pulling two trailers laden with 30 tons of bags containing fine gravel stones.

This happened in Durban's Warwick Avenue and Old Dutch Road. Fifty seven people were injured in this accident.

Valuable human life, time and money are wasted as a result of vehicle owners who do not want to take care of the condition of the vehicles they use on the road.

Speaking at a memorial service held in Chesterville for eight people that were killed (and 57 injured) in Durban's Warwick Avenue and Old Dutch Road, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, B.H. Cele, said: "The poor vehicle condition was like a bomb waiting to explode."

According to the truck driver he tried to warn other vehicles of the emergency situation but it was too late for a mini-bus taxi, a bakkie and three other vehicles.

KwaZulu-Natal Transport Department Head, Dr. Kwazi Mbanjwa, said the crash was the worst that ever occurred in the Province.

"Body pieces, the inside of the stomach and human brain were all over the road and you could not identify what part of the body belongs to which dead body," he said.The truck owned by International Eagle Truck was not roadworthy.

Principal Provincial Inspector, Mervyn Atwell, said, the truck must have been working in the local vicinity for some time because it would have been highly unlikely for it to pass Van Reenen's Pass and Town Hill steeps in that condition.

Condolences to the bereaved came from different sources, including the Ethekwini Speaker, various taxi associations, truck drivers associations, members of parliament and the general public.

MEC Cele said his Department is investigating ways of reducing road accidents.

Truck owner Dawie Engelbrecht refused to come to Durban from Limpopo to attend to the situation.

The Province mourned innocent victims like Nonduduzo Simelane (20), Lwazi Nyuswa (1 month), Asobana Mafede (2), Nondumiso Simelane (30), Delisile Jali (40), Thami Sibiya (44), Lindelwa Sikodi (25), Wendy Khoza (22).

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The Department hosted Siyabakhumbula Road Safety Prayer Days with religious leaders and their congregations from various religions to pray with officials from the Department of Transport for divine intervention in our efforts to end road fatalities

Photos taken during Siyabakumbula Prayer Days around the province recently

DOT keeps province safe by punishing those who put holiday makers' lives at risk

Traffic law enforcement agents did not have rest during the past December holidays as pedestrians, taxis, buses, trucks and small vehicles kept them on their toes in KwaZulu-Natal.

A seventeen percent increase was noted in the number of crashes that were recorded in the previous year during the festive period. The figure rose from two hundred and thirteen(213) in 2004/5 to two hundred and fifty eight(258) in 2005/6.

Speedsters ranged between 19 and 40 years of age and the highest offenders were charged up to R20 000.

KZN Transport Department Head Dr Kwazi Mbanjwa has once again thanked and congratulated members of the provincial Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI) and local government traffic law enforcement agents, together with members of the South African Police Service (SAPS), for a thankless and risky business of keeping the province safe.

He praised them for doing the best they could to bring to book those who put other road users' lives at risk this past holiday.

"The challenge of removing pedestrians off freeway was a particularly successful one, with RTI removing five hundred people between Nottingham Road and Cato Ridge, and Ethekwini Metropolitan Police Service arresting sixty seven pedestrians for walking on the freeway," Dr Mbanjwa said.

He added: "Attempted hijacking of vehicles is becoming a problem during the night and according to the recorded statistics, the hijackers usually kill or assault the victim."

The RTI has prosecuted over 1 113 motorists for exceeding the speed limit which included seven hundred and forty five(745) trucks, twenty eight(28) buses, seventy mini bus taxis and two hundred and eighty one(281) small vehicles.

RTI officers checking roadworthy vehicles at Mooi River Toll Plaza

The RTI staged major road blocks in Richmond/Umzimkhulu, Umgeni Road, M4 Hypermarket by the sea, Edendale Road, Pietermaritzburg sub-urbs, Ballito, Hibiscus Coast, N3 North/South Ohrtmann Road, Marina Hill Toll Plaza, in collaboration with the SAPS.

Drivers involved in fatalities were sixty one in 2005/6, against forty nine in 2004/5. Passengers were one hundred and five during the 2005/6 holiday period, compared with seventy five in 2004/5, whilst pedestrian fatalities were one hundred and forty eight in 2005/6 and one hundred and twenty one in 2004/5.

MEC Cele visits survivers of the most recent road crashes.

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Community Outreach gains new heights as DoT rolls out mobile learner licence units in rural KZN

In another splendid example of taking services to the people, the KZN Department of Transport has launched a programme to take Mobile Learner Driver's Licence Testing Units to rural communities in the province.

This is in line with the provincial government's newly adopted initiative Uhulumeni Uya Kubantu (government going to the people).

KZN Transport, Community Safety & Liaison MEC Mr. B.H. Cele, in launching the programme, said the mobile testing unit has on board 13 computers and it can also cater for more than 3 000 learner licence tests each month. The new facility will go a long way towards eradicating the issuing of illegal learners' and drivers' licences.

The mobile testing unit has a high-tech camera that identifies a person by an iris when taking the test.

Cele said: "We believe the rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal will benefit from this mobile testing unit as it will save them time and money travelling to Testing Centres. I appeal to the community to take ownership of these units. The mobile unit will be monitored by satellite. I, therefore, warn anyone who may try to steal or tamper with the unit that if they do so, they will be apprehended immediately."

The unit will be easily accessible to local people because it will be situated close to schools and clinics. High school learners will be able to obtain learners' licences without having to travel long distances, for example, to Mtubatuba.

Addressing the community at Ingwavuma, KZN Transport head, Dr. K.B. Mbanjwa, said: "The Department has worked hard to assist communities with various needs. I am delighted that today we are launching this mobile learner licence testing unit, and people will have a choice of being tested in either Zulu or English."

A resident of Ingwavuma told Igalelo: "We appreciate this initiative of the Department of Transport in bringing this mobile learner licence testing unit to the people of Ingwavuma. Previously it was difficult to go for a licence test because of the long distance one had to travel."

Above: MEC Mr B.H. Cele and HOD Dr. Kwazi Mbanjwa launch the state of the art mobile Learner Licence unit.
Below: A member of public during a test of the system.

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Springboks: Gary Teichman, Mark Andrews and Botha,
"I think the whole system is good, it's very thorough, and it must be targeted to public transport drivers."

Former Muvhango Doobsy
"I congratulate KwaZulu-Natal for actually coming up with such a great idea…I wish it was endorsed earlier so we could all have had the privilege of going through what I went through today. I envy those who are going to undergo this test, from the eye testing, to the learner's licence, to the driving, it is such a great experience. Everything is modern, everything is new, everything is nice …it's actually easy, it takes less time, it doesn't take days, you are in and you are out…you are not judged according to appearance and you are not forced to bribe anyone."

Former Muvhango Doobsy
"I love this system because it's going to deal with corruption and as you know in South Africa many people are killed through road accidents and it is mainly people who didn't even go for a proper test right from understanding the road signs when they do their learner's test, right up to driving the vehicle.
So when you come up with something like this where there is no human element that will tamper with what the system demands, then I can assure you that something good is going to come out of this."

South African celebrities
"It's definitely going to lessen the number of accidents on the road…You know, in a country where we have some of the best roads on the continent, we really must look after what we have, that is, our lives. So I really think this is a brilliant structure, this is a brilliant plan, it's about time….let's hope everything and anything else that involves testing with regards to public transport on the road can be done in this way. Let's take it down to ID's, to trucks, this is a good campaign...It's about time, congratulations KZN for being the first to launch it…"

Celebrities endorse the new driver and learner licence system.

Kwaito Stars, Soccer legends together with KZN Transport Head
"We think it's an amazing system, it's about time, we have a lot of people on our roads who do not follow road rules. I hope it's going to become national though, it shouldn't just be a KwaZulu-Natal thing. We need people who are knowledgeable about what they are doing on the road. There are so many accidents that are unnecessary. Accidents should be accidental; but when it's people who can't drive, when it's people who did not properly pass a licence test and who are on the road and they are driving with fake licences, when those accidents happen, it's not accidental."

Tizoso of Woze Durban fame
"In KwaZulu-Natal we are spending about R18 million just to deal with corruption - so whatever we are spending to bring this down, it is value for money. What we are saying is that fake drivers' licences have to come to an end. That is why our slogan says 'kuphelile, finito' because it's the end of corruption…"

NO TO FAKE LICENCES:

OBTAINING your learner or driving licence in KwaZulu-Natal will never be the same again

The new state of the art equipment installed at the Rossburgh Driver Certification Centre.

Attacking inefficiency, fraud and corruption in our driver licensing and vehicle registration and testing systems forms an integral part our mandate. My Department has therefore spent and is continuing to spend millions of rands on the upgrading of our Driver Certification centres in KZN.

These were the words of KZN MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Mr. B.H. Cele at the launch of the "NO TO FAKE LICENCES" campaign held recently.Rossburgh Driver Certification Centre in Durban, once dogged by allegations of irregularities, is slowly beginning to shake off its negative image – thanks to high-level intervention by the KZN Department of Transport.

Speaking at the official launch to introduce new measures aimed at instilling confidence and changing negative perceptions, Head of the Department of Transport, Dr. Kwazi Mbanjwa, said government had invested huge resources on forensic investigations into driver and learner licence fraud, which was a countrywide problem and which gave the Rossburgh facility an element of notoriety.

Mbanjwa said: "We are looking forward, rather than backward, and to that effect, we now have new measures to ensure that Rossburgh becomes a world-class driver licence station. We have renovated the facility and introduced improved systems and fresh attitudes on the side of management, staff, instructors and candidates.

"We want to make obtaining a driving licence an enjoyable experience, in which the value of the licence relates to the quality of the test, and not monetary value."

There is a close relationship between the high rate of road carnage and illegally obtained licences, as the holders of these licences are generally inexperienced drivers who adopt poor driving standards. It has always been the Department's top priority to rectify the situation as part of its mandate to ensure the safety of all road users in the province.

In terms of the new measures, Rossburgh will improve its driver test systems, including the way in which people make bookings for learners' licences up to the process of learning to become professional drivers.

Mbanjwa said the refurbished facility is a modern building, housing a family lounge, candidate waiting areas, driving school instructors' waiting area and improved toilets and ceilings. The functions performed at the station are now grouped together in buildings rather than performed haphazardly.

Other renovations will include premises dedicated to learners' and drivers' licences, improved fencing, revamped security, centralised cash hall with integrated security features, single area public parking, with improved security monitoring, uninterrupted power supply system with back-up generator, dedicated staff room and clearly demarcated pedestrian and vehicle areas.

On 10 October the first Mobile Learner's Licence Testing Facility was launched, which is indeed yet another first for South Africa and perhaps one of few such facilities in the world. The launch of this mobile learner's licence facility brings a service that has never been provided to the historically disadvantaged citizens of the province, the majority of who reside in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Had it not been for a facility such as this, many of these people would normally have to travel a round trip of more than 400 kilometres in order to write a learner's licence test. Today they have the opportunity of sitting for a learner's licence test in a state-of-the-art mobile facility where quality examinations can be conducted with professionalism and fairness guaranteed.

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Head of Department Dr. Kwazi Mbanjwa awards a tender certificate for the John Ross project to Rob Mngoma of Rob Construction. Looking on are MEC B.H. Cele and National Minister of Transport Jeff Radebe.

John Ross Highway's R3.46 million upgrading to create jobs and boost economic development in KZN

Jobs for local people and new economic opportunities are expected following the sod turning ceremony which marked the beginning of a road expansion programme aimed at connecting Gauteng and Richards Bay, that is being funded by the KZN Department of Transport.

National Transport Minister, Jeff Radebe and KZN Transport, Community Safety & Liaison MEC B.H. Cele graced the sod turning ceremony of John Ross Highway in Empangeni. The construction of this project will cost approximately R350 million. The road will assist in transporting goods from the Richards Bay harbour to Gauteng.

The Richards Bay harbour is one of the biggest ports in South Africa and is therefore a national asset that will contribute to the growth of the economy in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa as a whole.

"I applaud the Department of Transport in KwaZulu-Natal for the outstanding work in service delivery, changing the lives of the people and for the growing relationships that now exist amongst all spheres of government, from local, provincial to national levels," said Radebe.

The National government announced the construction of John Ross Highway to operate as a toll road but the community members were against the decision. Due to the poor condition of the road, a number of accidents had occurred in the past. The upgrading of John Ross Highway will also assist in reducing the rate of road carnage.

Radebe explained: "The need for upgrading the road between Empangeni and Richards Bay to four lanes was identified during the 1980's. The national government finally announced in 2000 its intentions to upgrade the John Ross Highway and to declare it a toll road. When construction was about to commence in 2003, extreme public pressure resulted in the abandonment of the project. The provincial funding will also be supplemented by contributions from national and local government, and this will not be a toll road."

A total of 106 Vukuzakhe Emerging contractors will participate in the construction of the road and more job opportunities will be created. The project will take a period of four years to complete and 4100 opportunities will be created for Zibambele contractors.

MEC Cele commented: "It is vital to work towards changing the lives of our people; if local communities cannot benefit from such projects, then it means that as a government we are failing our people."

This project is an excellent example of what we want to do all over South Africa, so that we truly address the legacy of apartheid and make sure that our work benefits everybody - especially the millions of our historically disadvantaged citizens.

"I applaud the Department of Transport in KwaZulu-Natal for the outstanding work in service delivery, changing the lives of the people and for the growing relationships that now exist amongst all spheres of government, from local, provincial to national levels," said Radebe.

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Cele gets warm praise for new bridges that will bring development, and relief, to many rural communities

MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. B.H. Cele, officially opened a bridge and performed a road sod turning ceremony at Ntambanana, underlining, in the clearest way, the KZN Department of Transport's commitment to roll out service delivery in areas where it is needed most.

As MEC Cele travels the length and breadth of KwaZulu-Natal, the Department receives warm praise and recognition for the impact it is making on the lives of people from all communities. In a word, Cele has touched their lives, leaving happy memories.

Millions of rands have been spent on delivering river bridges in the province. The community of Ntambanana was overjoyed when MEC Cele announced the construction of a bridge, for which they had waited since 2001.

Whenever it rains, the river floods, making access to eight schools impossible. The flooding river left the principals of the schools with no choice but to close their schools. The Ntambanana community has expressed a collective sigh of relief that a bridge has finally been built. The Ntambanana community is among dozens of disadvantaged communities that have benefited from developmental projects, such as bridges and tarred roads, which are being driven with energy by a hard-working Cele.

An excited community member said: "Life is changing for the better - it is not the same anymore. We thank the government for not forgetting us since we are in the rural areas."

The Jojosi River Bridge, in Mhlungwane, Nqutu, was also officially opened recently. The communities of Mhlungwane and Sofage are excited over the opening of the bridge, which will bring welcome relief from hardship. These communities have already mourned the deaths of six children who have drowned in the swollen river.

Cele told the communities who attended the official opening: "The new bridge will assist more than 300 children to cross the river, despite the weather conditions. I am proud to say that our emerging contractors (Vukuzakhe) constructed this bridge with the help of major contractors. The construction of these bridges has also created numerous employment opportunities".

Above: MEC B.H. Cele together with his Departmental Head Dr. Kwazi Mbanjwa, Mpangeni Regional Deputy Manager: Tseni Moloi and members of Mpangeni Transport Forum at the opening ceremony.
Left: MEC B.H. Cele with Implementation General Manager: Chris Hlabisa helped by local Amakhosi and Izinduna at the recent sod turning of a new bridge.

"Life is changing for the better - it is not the same anymore. We thank the government for not forgetting us since we are in the rural areas."

ABOUT IGALELO

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