

SPEECH NOTES BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR W MCHUNU AT THE ROLLOUT OF THE ALCOHOL EVIDENTIAL TESTING CENTRE IN PORTSHEPSTONE ON TUESDAY , 31 AUGUST 2010

Protocol observed

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to be present here today as we continue to rollout our Alcohol Evidential Testing Centres in partnership with South African Breweries (SAB). This alone is an indication of the positive results of public-private partnerships which our government believes is one of the sustainable methods to fast-track service delivery in our country. Our focus area as this Government through the Department of Transport is that of saving lives and as such we embrace SAB's continued involvement with us in the fight against irresponsible conduct on the road.

It has always been our call that road safety programmes need shared commitment from all sectors of society. It is everyone's responsibility. One death is one too many. We continue to call upon the taxi industry, the business sector, educational institutions, religious institutions, local governments, the media, NGOs and community-based organizations to rally behind such road safety initiatives.

Today we are observing the results of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which my Department signed with terms and conditions on which SAB will support the DOT-KZN in promoting the road safety campaign of combating drinking and driving. Given SAB's and the Department's mutual objective of ensuring that the law governing drinking and driving is upheld, the Department deemed it fit to enter into this partnership wherein SAB offered to provide funds for the installation of the Alcohol Evidence Centres (AEC) in Pietermaritzburg, eMdloti and now here in Portshepstone.

As government, we are grateful for the support from SAB in providing these Evidential Testing Centres. We are the first in the country to have such facilities. This partnership has further capacitate members of the SAPS, our RTI together with local law enforcement agencies to effectively enhance their zero-tolerance approach towards drunken driving.

The Centre is designed to cater for a smooth process of prosecution and user-friendly environment with majority of the paper work undertaken electronically. Where we have these facilities, the conviction rate has increased, especially in Peitermaritzburg given the stigma already attached to it as the capital city of drunks. Therefore, the centre we are launching here today will help to send the message that drunken driving or driving under the influence constitutes a serious offence as it endangers the lives and valuable properties of others.

To our enforcement agencies, we say that we want to build lasting relationships with our sponsors. Protecting innocent passengers and pedestrians from the unacceptable behavior of drivers under the influence is the main reason for this undertaking.

Therefore, you must ensure that the law abiding motorists and visitors to our province are be protected by removing these drunks from their path of travel. International studies have shown that strong enforcement is the most effective way to change drink-driving behavior.

The development of this centre has coincided with the forthcoming Summer Holiday season. To repeat offenders out there we say, we will not stop our attempts to reduce fatalities and serious as well as disabling injuries still further, and uphold best practice in road safety, and we will now bring you to book because our centers provide evidence that is admissible in court. It is evidence that can actually nail you and there is no reason you should not go down if you are in the habit of drinking and driving.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to thank the SAB for their concern about the safety of our road users. This partnership between the SAB and the DOT can only go on and grow from strength to strength. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is adequately equipped and ready to deal with any form of disdain or misbehavior that is exhibited on our roads. If you think of breaking traffic laws, particularly drinking and driving, please bid your family farewell and start preparing for your long prison sentence. You may run but you may not hide.

Finally, I want to caution matriculants and varsity students on drinking and driving. Parents need to play a bigger role in ensuring the protection of their children. You can also ensure that your children have lifts to and from venues and are not tempted to get behind the wheel intoxicated.

Students getting out of control through alcohol will not be tolerated, especially drinking and driving and being disorderly in public. You will be arrested and face the full might of the law.

I thank you