

# Rural transport to be targeted to bolster province's economy

NTHUSANG LEFAFA

THE provincial government says that rural transport needs to be fully efficient as it is an important catalyst for socio-economic development and the heartbeat of any thriving economy.

The community safety and transport department recently held a lekgotla to find solutions to improve the provincial transport network and to strengthen ties with stakeholders.

Because North West is a predominantly rural province, one of the challenges raised at the transport lekgotla was how best to integrate rural areas including farming communities into the provincial transport network.

One of the important discussions was the role which transport plays in the agricultural sector.

The department said bringing back rail as a cheaper way of commuting and also transporting goods was an important consideration.

Department MEC Mpho Motlhabane told The New Age of the ben-

efits of how an improved transport network can develop the agricultural sector and stimulate investment in the province.

"The role of transport in agriculture is important because it can transform the rural economy," Motlhabane said.

"When there is a good transport network, farmers will not be restricted to subsistence farming but can go into commercial farming.

"As part of our integrated transport network plans we have spoken to the South African National Road Agency Limited (Sanral) about improving some of the road infrastructure because it plays such an important role in the economy," Motlhabane said.

"We had already started piloting the Mahikeng-Johannesburg rail route but due to issues that are presently facing the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa the project has been halted.

"The department is also looking at connecting the Mahikeng airport to the rail network as this would make it easier



**BUS BETTER:** Rural transport is in need of improvement. PICTURE: ANNE HEUVE

to export agricultural produce.

"As we all know, the price of oil is very high and if farmers are paying a lot for petrol it means that food will be more expensive when it reaches the consumer," Motlhabane said.

Important issues such as how taxi drivers can contribute meaningfully to the province's economy were also dis-

cussed.

Molopi Moseki from the South African National Taxi Council said that it was important for taxi drivers not to only see themselves as those who only ferry passengers, but also as entrepreneurs.

"Taxi drivers should form cooperatives and venture into the manu-

facturing of key components of the motoring industry such as tyres and car parts.

"It is also important that we become owners of service stations where our passenger vehicles are serviced and also own the dealerships where car parts are sold," Moseki said.

David Kruyer, managing director and founder of Cape Town-based Concargo - which is a supply chain and road freight logistics company believes the sluggish state of the economy of the country could be stimulated if the South government fast-tracks its expenditure on strategic infrastructure projects in transport.

"South Africa's transport infrastructure has a direct impact on the growth of the economy, contributing 48% to the Gross Domestic Product," Kruyer said.

"Transport determines the efficiency at which we do business in our country and if enough investment is put into the sector we could see some positive growth in our economy." - Newsnote

21/11/17 MMEg a Dikgaling Kg 1 DCB 9 17 PAS

# To Lure Investors We Need to Expand our Transport Networks-MEC Motlhabane

Community Safety and Transport MEC, Dr Mpho Motlhabane called on communities, businesses, transport operators, SMME's, oversight committees and all law enforcement agencies in the Province to work together towards the expansion of transport networks and creating a crime, greed and corruption free environment.

According to Motlhabane, lack of transport networks and rampant crime are crippling the economy and scaring away potential investors from the Province and the country at large. "Crime has the potential to derail and stagnate prosperity of the South Africa's economic. The harm caused by crime has a significant impact on society

which results into drawbacks for the economy. The amount of money lost due to crime presents a great economic loss to our economy, which otherwise could have been used in other needed projects," said Motlhabane who reiterated the importance of working in an integrated and collaborative manner with all stakeholders with a sole intention

to ensure building a solid foundation in order to lure possible investors to invest in the province as well as boost the economy of Bokone Bophirima Province". "The solid foundation is the drastic reduction crime, dealing decisively with corruption, fraud and greed which are destroying our economy and scaring away



investors. We must all work on the implementation of the National Development Plan, Vision 2030 which advocates for zero tolerance to crime, fraud, greed and corruption."

"We need to create a conducive, attractive, safe and secured environment for investment to thrive and contribute positively to the economy and social cohesion," he said.

The Transport and Safety Lekgotla was particularly convened to highlight the importance of transport in creating job opportunities and economic growth. "We must leverage the critical role of transport in advancing economic growth and reducing historic inequalities, by providing maximum opportunities and ensuring that we provide an effective and efficient transportation that will result in heightening multiplier effects. This way, there will be better accessibility to markets, work places will be brought closer and additional investments will be realised," he concluded.

There were robust engagements with presentation by various speakers from the SETA, CADET programs, consultants, academics and departmental officials. Stakeholders like taxi associations, organised labour, bus companies, transport operators, women in transport networks; all had an opportunity to raise issues inhibiting accelerated economic growth and sustenance.

The Lekgotla successfully concluded business the following day, 10/11/2017 with a career exhibition were no less than 250 learners from villages, townships and small dorpias drawn from all four districts of Bokone Bophirima were bused in to receive representations from University, TVET colleges, SETA, Aviation Authority. These stakeholder presented a handful of opportunities and careers as well as about bursaries and funding within the sector.

Stalls inspections, viewing of animal carts, commuter and scholar busses, bicycles and light aircrafts were displayed. Lokaleng villagers were excited too to have benefited and taken part of the event hosted at the Mafikeng Aviation Academy located in the Lokaleng village.

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# Rustenburg experiences sharp increase in motor vehicle theft

ELFAS TORERAI

THE Rustenburg area has experienced a sharp increase in the number of stolen motor vehicles, prompting the police to issue a warning to motorists.

Other areas such as Klerksdorp, Brits and Mahikeng are also experiencing the problem but the police said more cases are reported in areas under Rustenburg.

North West police spokesperson Brig Sabata Mokgwabone said thugs were targeting parked bakkies.

"Investigation into these cases have shown that places such as Rustenburg CBD, Waterfall, Impala Shafts, Greenside, Luka, Marikana West, Mmaditlhokwa, Meriting Extension 2, Paardekraal and Ramochana are mostly affected," Mokgwabone said.

"A further investigation has revealed that bakkies are being targeted and are stolen generally during the night at parking lots.

"In some of the cases, it is alleged that complainants were drugged by unknown people, who then stole their vehicles.

"It is also apparent that some of the vehicles were stolen while taken for repairs," Mokgwabone said.



**MOTORISTS WARNED:** There has been a sharp increase in the number of vehicles stolen from parking lots. PICTURE:GETTY

He said motorists have been urged to take precautionary measures especially during this period of the year.

"Exercise caution at parking areas and to report unknown and suspicious people or motor vehicles to the police.

"Avoid leaving or parking vehicles for a long time at areas or streets that are not well lit and ensure that all vehicles

and motor bikes are locked and safely parked inside premises," Mokgwabone said.

Community members have also been urged to work together with the police and Community Police Forums to stop the increasing cases of property related crimes.

[elfast@thenewage.co.za](mailto:elfast@thenewage.co.za)

# Man in court for robbery

ELFAS TORERAI

A 33-YEAR-OLD man appeared in the Ga-Rankuwa Magistrate's Court yesterday after he was arrested for house robbery.

The suspect was arrested by the police in Klipgat on Friday.

He is said to have been part of a group of three men who attacked a 76-year-old man in his house before fleeing the scene on foot.

"The three suspects gained entry into a house through a broken window in Block K, Madidi, near Klipgat," police spokesperson Lt-Col Adèle Myburgh said.

"According to information available at this stage the suspects, after gaining entry into the house, confronted and assaulted a 76-year-old victim who they found in the dining room.

"The suspects hit the victim with an iron rod over his head and robbed him of his cash before fleeing the scene on foot."

However, the police managed to follow up on leads and arrested one accused soon after the incident but his two accomplices remain at large.

"He was expected to appear in the Ga-Rankuwa Magistrate's Court yesterday for house robbery.

"The investigation into the matter continues and more arrests are imminent," Myburgh said.

*elfast@thenewage.co.za*

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# Two men arrested for Murder of a teacher

**Mmabatho:** TWO men have been arrested in connection with the kidnapping and murder of a North West teacher, Thuli Ngwenya. The two were nabbed in Johannesburg as the North West police felt they had made a breakthrough in the murder case that riled Mahikeng and the country at large. Spokesperson Capt Yvonne Maqoboza said a dedicated team of detectives working together with crime intelligence apprehended the men on last week Monday and appeared briefly at Mmabatho court on charges of murder. Captain Maqoboza said "The police made a major

breakthrough by arresting two suspects aged 50 and 51 in a case in which Thulisile Ngwenya was kidnapped and murdered," She added . "The pair's arrest in Johannesburg, came after a thorough and intensive investigation by the team that managed to recover the deceased's cellphone." Ngwenya, 56, who was a teacher at Lekoko Primary School outside Mahikeng, was reported missing on October 22. The missing person's report was made on Saturday after Ngwenya did not return home after she had gone to one of the local banks earlier that day. Her car was



found parked next to the Mahikeng long distance taxi rank on Sunday. After days of searching, Ngwenya's decomposed body was found by a shepherd on October 25 near Bokone village around Mahikeng. "The suspects are expected to appear in the," Maqoboza said. Police

commissioner Lt-Gen Baile Motswenyane applauded the team for working around the clock to track and apprehend the suspects. She expressed hope that a successful conviction would be secured and that the pair be subjected to punishment befitting the heinous crime they committed.

# Hawks pounce on car fraud syndicate

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**CURBING CRIME:** The serious organised crime unit of the directorate for priority crime investigation in the North West arrested five suspects aged between 34 and 60, in Wolmaransstad for motor vehicle fraud, robbery and intimidation. PHOTO: SWS

ELFAS TORERAI

AN EARLY morning raid by the serious organised crime unit of the Hawks yesterday led to the arrest of five men accused of running a vehicle fraud syndicate in Wolmaransstad.

The five suspects are aged between 34 and 60.

Hawks officials were dispatched to the places of residence of each of the accused and swooped on them at the

The men are said to have run the syndicate since 2014, swindling money from many people.

They face charges of motor vehicle fraud, robbery and intimidation.

"The syndicate approached potential buyers of second-hand motor vehicles at car dealerships and promised them better cash deals for similar vehicles," Hawks provincial head Maj-Gen Linda Mbana said.

"A test drive would then be arranged

seal the deal with the requested cash payment after which the suspects would take the money and get away."

After numerous complaints, the Hawks decided to intervene.

Mbana said that those were cheated of their hard earned money came from different parts of the country including Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Johannesburg, Krugersdorp, Welkom, Ceres, Kimberley and Kuruman.

"Thorough investigations were con-

suspects with the sixth suspect already in prison for a different crime.

"During the arrest, items seized included 11 cellphones, R18 000, rounds of ammunition and several SIM cards."

The Hawks want all the assets acquired from the proceeds forfeited to the state. "Our goal was to ensure that we dismantle this syndicate from the top down and indeed the king pin was arrested," she said.

## 'Car theft gang' nabbed

Five alleged vehicle theft syndicate members have been arrested for fraud, robbery and intimidation in Wolmaransstad, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks) in North West said yesterday.

"The syndicate allegedly approached potential second-hand motor vehicle buyers at car dealerships and promised them better cash deals for similar vehicles. A test drive would then allegedly be arranged and thereafter, a meeting scheduled to seal the deal with the requested cash payment... the suspects would allegedly take the money and get away," said spokesperson Captain Tlangelani Rikhotso.

She said an investigation was registered following numerous cases being reported at the Mogwase police station outside Rustenburg, fitting the same modus operandi.

The syndicate members allegedly defrauded people from different parts of the country, including from Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Johannesburg, Krugersdorp, Welkom, Ceres, Kimberley and Kuruman.

Rikhotso said investigations were conducted, leading to the arrest of the five men yesterday. A sixth suspect was already in prison for a different crime.

"During the arrests, items seized included 11 cellphones, R18 000, rounds of ammunition and several SIM cards. The Priority Crime Specialised Investigations Unit of the Hawks is already working on ensuring that all the assets acquired from the proceeds of crime get forfeited to the state," she said.

The suspects are due to appear at the Wolmaransstad Magistrate's Court tomorrow.

- ANA

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## Vehicle theft bust

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PRETORIA, S.A.P.S. NW POSITIVE

FIVE alleged vehicle theft syndicate members were arrested for motor vehicle fraud, robbery and intimidation in Wolmaransstad yesterday, the Hawks in North West said.

"The syndicate allegedly approached second hand motor vehicle potential buyers at car dealerships and promised them better cash deals for similar vehicles. A test drive would then allegedly be arranged and thereafter, a meeting scheduled to seal the deal with the requested cash payment after which the suspects would allegedly take the money and get away," said Captain Tlangelani Rikhotso. - ANA