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Address by spokesperson of the department, Matshube Mfoloe, during a media briefing (10am) held today (Tues) in Mafikeng...

Date: Tuesday, June 07, 2011

Good Morning and welcome

I am pleased to announce that we have now advertised an open tender notice for the completion of the rehabilitation work on the road between Koster and Lichtenburg.

- Towards the end of March this year, we terminated the contract we had with the road construction company, Kaulani Civils.
- This company was awarded the R208 million tender to rehabilitate road and work in the beginning of 2009. But since then, work on the projects fell behind schedule on a number of occasions.
- That left us with no other option but to terminate the contract with Kaulani Civils for poor performance and their inability to meet targets.
- In terms of the revised extension, the Koster to Lichtenburg road was to have been completed by end of this month (June) but it was very clear to us, that target was never going to be reached anyway.
- That said, the department has instructed the Chief Directorate responsible for road infrastructure, to expedite the process of appointing suitable contractors, with the necessary capacity and expertise, to complete work on the 60km stretch of road linking Koster to Lichtenburg.
- We have to deliver a quality road and do it fast once the site is handed over to capable contractors.
- We owe it to hundreds of road users, who indeed can no longer hide their frustrations and the suffering endured on this particular road.
- It is even worse, for those who unfortunately do not have options of an alternative route to use to do business. The farming communities in the area have been affected and the same could be said for companies outside the province doing business in the North West on a daily basis.
- Works on the road has been divided into two (i.e.): A 50km stretch from Lichtenburg to

Koster and 10km portion from Koster towards Lichtenburg. We did this deliberately in order to give meaning to our new approach to unbundle huge projects to give more people an opportunity to also develop.

- We are very optimistic, that once all the tendering formalities have been completed in accordance with the rules and regulations, competent contractors with a proven track record, would be appointed for this huge task.
- There cannot be room for failure and we should be able to see progress in a few weeks from now.

Status with regards to the eviction of illegal occupants of state residential houses in Mahikeng

- Once again, I want to issue a stern warning to people currently occupying state residential properties illegally and continue to defy orders by the department to vacate such properties.
- We're referring to people who have never signed a lease agreement with the department, and or those who have not renewed their leases agreements as required annually.
- It cannot be correct for individuals to claim ownership of property that does not belong to them, and when they are threatened with eviction, begin a legal process to challenge government to look for and alternative accommodation before they are thrown out.
- There can also be no legal recourse for those who knowingly allocate themselves state assets and continue to display arrogance when asked to vacate such properties.
- The department was indeed encouraged by the views expressed by the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Henrietta Bogopane-Zulu on this particular issue. She said such culprits should be thrown out because they occupy state houses fraudulently.
- It has also come to our attention that there are tenants who have indeed signed lease agreements with the department but have fallen behind with payments amounting to thousands of Rands for a number of years.
- To this end, the directorate that deals with state immovable assets at Head Office has been requested to urgently compile a comprehensive list of state houses in Mahikeng and Mmabatho and to indicate which are currently illegally occupied.
- Once that information is received and verified, the department will begin with the process of evicting culprits, without having to go to court. The same process is also expected to be rolled out in other districts of the province.
- Occupants of state houses are therefore advised to check with the department

whether the profile of the property as well as the details we have captured on our database match the current status.

Status with regards to 10 bridges damaged by floods in villages around Madibeng Local Municipality in Brits in October-November last year.

- We are indeed grateful that the National Department of Public Works undertook to construct at least three community bridges in separate villages of Madibeng, Brits area.
- We had identified 10 bridges that required repairs and or reconstruction following the floods which hit the area towards the end of the last year.
- We are in the process of prioritising which of the areas are critical and that information would be given to the national department to continue with the projects.
- The community bridges building project is driven by the National Department of Public Works in partnership with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).
- With regards to seven other bridges, the department would have to ask for additional funds to reconstruct and or repair some of them.

Status with regards to road projects we are implementing for Mahikeng Revitalisation

- We are informed by engineers that all the road projects we are currently implementing as a form of the contribution by the department to help revitalise Mahikeng are on schedule.
- In fact, one of the five projects that is rehabilitation of a portion of the Vryburg Road which is 6.4km is more than two months ahead of schedule.

Status with regards to the revitalisation of Mahikeng

(EPWP)

- We are also pleased that the Deputy Minister of Public Works, during her visit to Mahikeng has supported our initiative to keep the capital city clean while at the same time we create job opportunities through our Expanded Public Works Programme.
- The support she pledged after her interaction with our ``Orange Brigade'', was to give us permission to increase by another 400, the number of beneficiaries for purposes of cleaning Mahikeng. This was previously agreed at Minmec where the provincial MEC

Mahlakeng Mahlakeng pleaded for an additional number of beneficiaries.

- This translates into 1 000 job opportunities created for the youth in Mafikeng.
- We also wish to call on residents of Mahikeng not to dump refuse in areas we have already cleared. This creates a vicious cycle and defeats the objectives of our interventions.
- The department also plans to meet the new leadership of the local municipality at an appropriate time, to persuade them to enforce some of the by-laws to prevent continued littering.

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