

ABOUT US

The eZasegasini Metro is the official eThekweni Municipality publication through which ratepayers and residents are kept informed about news, entertainment and perspectives in the greater Durban region. It is also a forum for readers' views. It hits the streets fortnightly on a Friday, with 450 000 copies distributed throughout the region. To contact us: eZasegasini Metro, PO Box 5588, Durban, 4000 Newsroom: 311 2290/81/84 Fax: 306 4603 Communications: 311 2279 naidoothrusha@durban.gov.za eThekweni Info Centre 0800 331 011 (toll-free) sizakala@durban.gov.za

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iTrump's Warwick triumph

SAMANTHA MOODLEY

ETHEKWINI'S inner city regeneration and urban management programme, iTrump, is making great strides in ridding Warwick Junction of crime and grime.

Trade in the area, which is a major retail hub, has become better organised, with shelters provided for traders, who now operate in designated areas.

Informal traders have been given space at the Brooke Street Badshaper trading shelter. And next month, the redevelopment of the shelter will be completed with the opening of offices and enclosed vending areas.

Mishmash

It's a far cry from the previous mishmash of wares that used to be sold on the pavements.

Now, the bovine head market, the muthi market (traditional herbs lotions and potions), and the early morning market (fruit and vegetables) all have their own designated areas.

Hoosen Moolla, of iTrump, said trade in the area must be supported but at the same time ways must be found to alleviate problems.

Moolla said: "In the past, traders would sell bovine heads anywhere along the pavement, with blood and discarded animal parts creating an eyesore. There would be no place for pedestrians to walk and makeshift shelters littered the pavements."



ROARING TRADE: The muthi market in Warwick Junction. Trade in traditional medicines here is a R220-million a year business – a measure of the area's economic importance

Picture: THEMBA KHUMALO

"But it was important that we found alternatives instead of just moving traders out."

Moolla said that informal trade provided useful goods to the public, helped many to generate an income, and reduced crime and poverty.

"This sector draws in a substantial revenue, with the muthi market, for instance, generating R220-million a year. It proves there is a

significant need for such business."

Another initiative launched in Warwick Junction thanks to efforts by iTrump is a buy-back centre.

The centre, which came into operation late last year, provides a place where collectors can sell cardboard waste.

Collectors make money; the boxes are recycled; and litter

is reduced, which is good for landfill sites.

A mealie cookers' area has also been established in the precinct.

"The cooking of mealies on the pavement breaks many by-laws, but at the same time it provides an income for many poor people."

"There was a piece of vacant land near the fire station (funnily enough) and

we built a fenced-in area, where people can cook mealies before hawkers take them to the city centre to sell," said Moolla.

He said projects in the area had been done with the community at heart. And at the same time an efficient, sustainable model has been developed that other cities could learn from.

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Community builders event

THE South Durban Basin Area Based Management programme will be hosting a Community Builder Awards Gala evening on 4 March.

The awards will salute those who have given to their communities and encourage other residents to do their bit to improve the area.

Nomination forms are available at the South Durban Basin office, municipal libraries in Merebank, Wentworth and Bluff, and at the office of Phakama.

Nominations close at noon today. For more details, call 031 461 3793/58. – Metro Reporter

South Durban directory launched

DERRICK DLAMINI

A SOUTH Durban Basin Brabys Business Directory has been launched.

It seeks to connect companies in the area to network and do business together, with a view to spurring economic growth and creating jobs.

It was published after a survey of Maydon Wharf, Bayhead, Rossburgh, Bluff and Congella. The survey, was part of the Durban Investment Promotion Agency's Business Retention and Expansion programme, which aims to help businesses become more competitive by improving their environment.

The book lists about 4 400 businesses, with additional detailed information on companies operating within the industrial hub.

A recent survey found that more than 60% of companies had been in the area for more than a decade and were aiming to increase their investment in staff over the next two years.

The Durban Investment Promotion Agency's Business Retention and Expansion Project Manager, Nondumiso Ntuli, said: "The book would make it easier for businesses to identify suppliers in their area of operation."

"Having suppliers on the doorstep helps cut trans-

portation and delivery costs." South Durban Basin Area Manager, Lee D'eathe described the directory as a "breakthrough and a starting point for permanent solutions."

'Well received'

He said: "As a reminder, we will be writing letters to businesses advising them to update their data regularly. It's a crucial initiative to link business in the area."

Moira De Charmony, of directory publishers Brabys, said: "About 6 000 copies were printed, coupled with 200 CDs. The distribution has just started and we are

dropping these books off at all businesses in the area.

"Judging by the initial response to the launch, it appears it has been well received."

Meanwhile, the Business Retention and Expansion programme's plans to put in place urgent interim mechanisms in the area to ease congestion, manage infrastructure, address the skills shortage and improve communication, are under way.

City officials and business representatives will meet later this month to draft a plan.

A call system for fault reporting is expected to be launched soon.

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Lions' Den skills polished

PATIENCE NGEMA

HUNDREDS of small business people attended a recent workshop hosted by the city's Business Support Unit to learn more about business skills ahead of the short-listing of applicants for the Lions' Den competition.

To avoid some of the problems of last year's competition, the unit invited applicants to the workshop, at the City Hall, where they learned how to draw up a

business plan. "We would like applicants to formulate their own business plans so they are able to chart their way forward with commitment," said Alf Boyley, the unit's Development Manager for Agriculture.

"When questioned by the judges, competitors need to know exactly what their business plan entails."

"We hope that the business people will take the knowledge that they have learned from this workshop and

apply it to their business plans."

Boyley had high praise for the competition and said it was proving a significant vehicle for developing small business in the city.

"It is the second year of this competition and ... the response has been overwhelming," he said.

One of the Lions' Den competitors, Badumile Dlamini, said: "This has taught me how to do plans to help grow my business in the right way."

Key plan under review

SAMANTHA MOODLEY and GOODWILL MAJOLA

A REVIEW of the city's most important planning document, the integrated development plan (IDP) took place at a workshop for councillors in Assagay last week.

The IDP is a five-year plan that guides the city towards achieving its long-term, 2020 vision, and seeks to tackle problems including poverty, low economic growth, poor access to services and low

levels of literacy and skills.

The workshop aimed to familiarise councillors with the nitty gritty of the IDP, as well as improving it.

The recommendations will be taken to ward committee workshops and a forum before the latest draft of the IDP is adopted in June.

Mayor Obed Mlaba urged councillors to contribute.

He said the IDP would "lay the groundwork for what needs to be done".

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