

# Slick A1GP effort a credit to our city

ON JANUARY 29, 2006, the A1 Grand Prix took place in the streets of Durban – the first World Cup of Motor Sport on the African continent.



**Obed Mlaba**  
eThekweni Mayor

within the sport. We only had two months to organise the event and build a new street circuit from scratch, but we attracted 105 000 spectators over the three days.

The 2007 race was even better, bigger and more streamlined thanks to the efforts of A1 Grand Prix team South Africa, the contractors, suppliers and everyone involved in the project.

Now that the 2008 race is here, and with A1 Team South Africa having tasted victory this season, including in Sydney, last weekend, South African fans are expected to flock to the track to support our team.

We pay tribute to the beachfront residents who are inconvenienced during this time.

We thank them for their patience and cooperation with officials who are trying their best to make their lives a bit easier.

The A1 Grand Prix is certainly a lot of excitement and glamour, but we know there will also be long-lasting economic benefits, which will translate into the sustainable growth that we seek as local government with a mandate to provide a better life for our people.

For us, in a developing country, where we are working to alleviate poverty, the magic combination of sport and tourism provided a great start to the year.

We were confident that by hosting this event, we would cement eThekweni's reputation as a venue for world-class sporting events.

We were right.

It is A1 Grand Prix time again, which means that the city is pumping with excitement as the structures go up and the racing drivers and their entourages arrive for "the Monaco of A1GP" – the only street circuit on the A1GP calendar, right next to the beach.

In the past two previous years, people were overwhelmed. Many believed Durban was Africa's best kept secret.

They couldn't wait to tell friends about the excellent facilities, friendly people and tourism opportunities, all within reach of the city.

The 2006 race won many awards

# New rates will be fair and equitable

IN THE past few months there have been many headlines making controversial claims about the new property rating legislation and its implementation.



**Michael Sutcliffe**  
eThekweni Manager

disability grantees, people who are medically boarded, owners of property within a disaster area as defined by Disaster Act, land reform beneficiaries, sporting bodies and public benefit organisations. These include welfare and humanitarian, health care, animal welfare, cemeteries, and religious organisations.

The second step is to publish the new valuation roll, based on the market valuation of properties.

For the past year we have had a team valuing all properties in our city, including sectional title properties as they will now pay rates individually.

This new valuation roll will be made public on 13 February and will be widely advertised.

Ratepayers can make queries or appeal the valuation if they believe it is incorrect.

The third step is for the council to determine how much money it needs to receive from rates.

Last year's budget indicated that rates may go up by 10% this coming year. Once we have determined how much money will need to come from rates, the actual amount of rates each property owner must pay will depend on the valuation of his or her property.

Some ratepayers may find their rates going up by more than 10%, but others may, in fact, find their rates going down.

Each step of the way we will be explaining to the public what we are doing and what rights they have to be consulted or even how they may appeal. If we take the process one step at a time the chances for confusing statements and comments being made in the media will be minimised.

Arguments have generally been made that because we are moving to a new system in which property will be rated on the basis of market values, and because those values will be higher than existing municipal valuations, then it follows there will be massive property rates increases.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, and by way of example, if the values go up by 400% and holding all other things constant, then the average rates randage should be only one-quarter of what it was under the old system.

The new Property Rates Act was introduced to regulate the powers of the municipalities to impose rates and to make provision for municipalities to implement a transparent and fair system of exemptions, reductions and rebates through their rating policies.

The Act provides for fair and equitable methods for valuing property and ensures the establishment of an objections and appeals process.

The first step in the process of implementing the new rates policy involved developing a rates policy.

This policy is the broad framework which must treat persons liable for rates equitably and take into account the effect of rates on the poor and include appropriate measures to alleviate the rates burden on them.

For this we will find ways to assist the indigent, as well as pensioners,

# DOWN TO THE SEA



**YOU can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf, a wise man once said. Annie de Vries, Bo Khuzwayo, Heather Klug and Mark Shepperson appear to have taken this philosophy to heart and enjoyed the great weather and waves on Umhlanga Beach during the holidays. Julie de Vries took the picture. Send your Durban photographs to eZasegagasi Metro, PO Box 5588, Durban, 4001; or e-mail naidoothrusha@durban.gov.za and we will publish the best high-resolution photos. Please provide your details and the names of the people in your picture**

## LETTERS

# Port polluters must come clean

WE SHOULD be ashamed of ourselves. Despite having pollution control authorities at all levels of government and quasi-government, we do not have the will nor the capacity to keep our harbour from being ruined.

City Manager Michael Sutcliffe and the couple of people he has working on it don't seem to be getting anywhere in solving the mystery of the poisoning of thousands of aquatic animals and birds in the harbour.

The days are passing and the culprits remain silent.

And why has no mention been made of the large amounts of bitumen-like oil (ship bunker oil?)

that's been contaminating the bay, certainly on Boxing Day?

Also, no mention of the red stain (ferrous oxide from ship de-rusting?), in the water near the dry dock that seem to be permitted.

Whoever you are, have a conscience and own up. Let the authorities know what you released so they can work out how to deal with it. And possibly help you get rid of your poison legally and properly next time.

Don't keep quiet and smile at the impotence of the authorities. Don't be a criminal. Own up.

**BRUCE EDWARD**  
Pinetown

# Well done!

I AM HUGELY impressed with the way the municipality yet again did a superb job managing its beaches during the holidays.

I was out for a morning run on the beachfront after the Day of Goodwill and it was spotless.

Durban Solid Waste workers had done an excellent job cleaning the area of litter from the previous day's festivities.

Each year the system gets better. There were folk in red T-shirts who took care of children, others in blue T-shirts offered information to visitors, and personnel in green vests, the SAPS and Metro Police, ensured security. An accolade to all those who coordinate and ensure we have a system that works well.

**MICHAEL VORSTER**  
Durban

# Outages: Affluent areas favoured

REGARDING the ongoing power outages, I was under the impression all areas were affected, as we all use electricity.

I work with people who live in diverse areas and to my horror I realised it was mainly Indian and rural areas that were affected.

People from Umhlanga and Durban North were honest enough to tell us their lights went off briefly – for not even an hour. Some said their lights had not gone off at all and when their electricity was switched off they were given pamphlets indicating

the times they would be affected.

Some units in Phoenix did not have lights for more than a day and the safety implications are scary. How do you explain this?

**M BUDHRAM**  
Phoenix

# Caring police officer

WE, THE undersigned, mature ladies, were heading south along the promenade from the North Beach enjoying our daily walk to be followed by a swim, about 5am recently.

An obviously caring Metro Police officer politely asked us what we were doing out at this hour. He suggested it was unwise

for us to continue on our walk. In fact, he suggested we should return home.

Thank you so much young man. Your act of kindness is enormously appreciated.

**ALISON WEBB and ANNE NODDINGS**  
Durban

# Water works

I AM A tenant at Mbona Heights, on Davenport Road. I want to extend a word of thanks to the water department for its urgent response when I reported a burst pipe last week. The team worked through the night to fix it. Keep up the good work.

**MITCH VAUGHN**  
Durban