

Excellence rewarded at 10th Ward Committee Conference

Ward Committees are established as a catalyst for service delivery at a local sphere of government in terms of the Municipal Structures (Act 117 of 1998). Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality (LNM) recently held the 10th Ward Committee conference over two days at Oasis Lodge in Mokopane to honour these service delivery foot soldiers as their 5-year term comes to an end with that of Council in 2016.

The Local Government: Municipal Systems (Act 32 of 2000) makes provision for public participation in Municipal processes of implementing and reviewing of Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and performance management monitoring. The conference was attended by municipal Councillors, officials, Ward Committee members, Community Development Workers (CDWs) and Traditional Leaders. In the spirit of cooperative governance, Speakers of Capricorn District Municipality (CDM), Cllr Maria Lekganyane, of Molemole, Cllr Moloko Moabelo, officials from Limpopo department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), Public Works among others graced the conference.

LNM Speaker, Cllr Nakedi Sibanda explained that the conference was held under the theme, *“Working together we can move Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality forward through public participation”*. Cllr Sibanda praised the path taken by Ward Committees, for their commitment and efforts which ensured that service delivery is enjoyed by the rural people of the municipality. *“Working hand in hand with Ward Councillors, you have been reporting on matters affecting the Wards you are serving. We really admire your spirit of public service and you have run a good race until the end”*, said Cllr Sibanda.

A report from municipality’s 29 Wards on delivery of services on areas such as water, electricity, housing, sanitation, roads, storm-water and drainage and social services including health, safety and security was also presented.

Various presentations were made regarding the capital projects for 2015/16, Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on elections, ESKOM on how to save

electricity, sector departments regarding Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) status quo in the municipality and Back to Basics Report.

The importance of capacitating Ward Committees as a way of improving their skills towards working with the communities in reinforcing Back-to-Basics model as adopted by the Presidential Summit on local government by putting people first “*BathoPele*” was also highlighted.

In her message of support, Speaker of CDM, Cllr Maria Lekganyane said, “As the country is celebrating 22 years of freedom and democracy, we must acknowledge the achievements made such far in dealing with service delivery challenges. Our communities want us to redouble our efforts in addressing the triple challenges which are unemployment, poverty and inequality as identified in the Integrated Development Plan”.

LNM Mayor, Cllr Ivy Phaahla applauded Ward Committees for their good work. “We thank you for being loyal servants throughout the term. Through ward committees and communities we have established a strong, accountable, transparent and resilient municipality”.

The Mayor further emphasised that, “There are massive developments like Lebowakgomo Mall and Zebediela Plaza. Many of our people have taken advantage of water and electricity infrastructure to further improve the quality of their lives. We will continue to intensify implementation of the Back to Basics programme in order to ensure continuous improvement on good governance and accountability”.

A gala dinner was held to honour all stakeholders including ward committees who made extra effort in ensuring that the municipality achieves its strategic objectives. All Ward Committees members were awarded certificates of appreciation as a way of honouring their five years’ service to the municipality. Overall awards categories were: Best Ward Committees, Best Community Development Worker, Best Photocopier Operator, Best official in Council Support, Best Manager, Best Senior Manager, Best Ward Councillors and Best Cluster Portfolio Committee Chairperson.

LNK Mayor, Cllr Ivy Phaahla congratulated all awards winners, saying, “The collective presence of municipalities here today brings meaning to the motto of the municipality which is ‘*Motho ke motho ka batho*’. We hope this will lead to an improved service delivery in the local sphere where others are also motivated to excellence”.