

Opening of Lepelle Nkumpi Fire station Welcome by the Mayor of Lepelle Nkumpi Municipality

Date: 5 August 2005

Honoured guests; friends and colleagues we are honoured that you chose to come and spend this day with us at the opening of this beautiful fire station. This is a land mark in our march on the road of democracy that came to realisation in 1994. It is a land mark as it reflects the fact that certain structures and services are not only reserved for an elect few in certain parts of the country. For so many years it had been accepted that an essential service like fire fighting was somehow not suitable to be built and operated in black areas. It appears like blacks were immune from the dangers of fires that are common in all communities or it was assumed that we had our own magical ways of dealing with them. I do not need to go into the details of the needless loss of life and property that we have suffered because of this. In Lebowakgomo we were given a slap in the face in that the former Lebowa government saw it fit to spend thousands of Rands on the construction of a fire station that never had one fire truck parked in its beautiful garage or drive out to put out a fire. We can imagine how a person felt whose property burnt down while just a few meters away there was a fire station built with his taxes.

When this fire station was built we started getting worried when it looked like it was going to be another white elephant in that it took a few months from its completion to where we are today. Our colleagues from the district municipality will remember the many calls they received from us and from the members of the public in this regard. We are however happy that ultimately we have been able to get to this point where we can officially have the station opened.

This comes at a very critical time when municipalities and government under general have come to the realisation that there is a great need to protect our investments. We should remember that when private investors consider putting up structures in an area one of the greatest considerations they make is the risk associated with investing in that area. The risk is not only in terms of sales not realised but also in the risk of loss of property due to amongst others fires. As a municipality we have seen this happen on a number of occasions - the recent one being the almost total destruction of the score supermarket just next to us by fire. It is obvious that when something like that happens other potential investors will consider how the municipality was able to deal with the disaster. It there can have a far greater impact than just loss to that one investor. We consider ourselves blessed in that in spite of our inability to deal with these threats our investors have stuck it out with us and more have shown an interest in investing here. The most recent of this is the MedLeb project.

We therefore today feel a little bit comfortable that we can be able to say to those people who come to invest here that we can be able to offer them some sort of peace of mind in the fact that we have some capacity to deal with fire threats. But this is not only limited to investors but also to our residents. We acknowledge that without residents there will not be any investors. Therefore our residents are the very reason why we do all these things. We can today say that they can rest a little easy knowing that we have the means to face the threats that face them.

With these words I would like to say to all our guests that you are heartily welcome. You can be proud of the fact that you will today be part of history in the making. We are also confident that all those from outside the municipality will find that the municipality and its people are ready to welcome you with open arms and you will hopefully make this your future home.

Please enjoy the day with us and may it be the dawning of a new era for Lepelle Nkumpi Municipality, the Capricorn District Municipality and the Limpopo Province.