

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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Flood repairs in full swing

KEN MCHUNU

ALMOST two weeks after floods battered KwaZulu-Natal, repairs are in full swing in eThekweni and many of the displaced have returned to their homes.

Some 520 residents from the hardest hit areas in the south of the metro were forced to flee their homes on the night of 17 June.

Billy Keeves, Manager of the City's Disaster Management Unit, said: "Residents had their houses inundated with water between ankle and knee depth. They were relocated to community halls and other emergency holding areas."

Areas affected included Umkomaas, Illovo, Isipingo Lagoon, Athlone Park in Amanzimtoti, and the Dakota informal settlement in Prospecton.

Keeves said most of the displaced had since returned to their homes, except for the 60 that were still housed at the Umgababa community hall at the time of going to press.

He said damage to eThekweni houses and infrastructure had been minimal, compared with the widespread destruction experienced by the Ugu and Umdoni municipalities, and the greater Port Shepstone area.

"There was no major damage in eThekweni, except for sporadic landslides in urban and semi-rural areas, and a couple of road wash-aways. Isolated homesteads experienced roof collapses and some had parts washed away in landslides. It was nothing catastrophic," he said.

He said Amanzimtoti was the hardest hit of the eThekweni municipal areas. Three major landslides occurred in

Amanzimtoti, sweeping away roads, sewer pipes and railway lines.

Damage was also caused to railway lines in Umgababa and Umbongontwini, "but reconstruction work is under way," said Keeves.

He said the casualties his department had identified were four pupils washed away in a bakkie on their way to school. Two of the bodies had been recovered and the other two were still missing.

Godfrey Vella, Manager of Drainage and Coastal Engineering, said his department had begun back-filling sewers on Oceanview Drive and on Impala Road, which were the worst damaged.

"Water reconstruction, repair works and general clean-ups are also under way," he said.

Vella said the floods had not disrupted repairs to infrastructure damaged in last year's storms.

eThekweni is also doing its bit to help its neighbours to recover from the floods.

On Tuesday, Cllr Nomvuzo Shabalala, Chairwoman of the City's Health Safety and Social Services committee, presented Cllr Ravi Pillay, Speaker of the Umdoni Municipality with hundreds of bags of clothes, food parcels and bedding.

The City's Special Projects unit had collected them from generous eThekweni municipal workers.

"Umdoni was one of the hardest-hit municipalities on the South Coast, with 12 deaths, 30 injuries and 2 000 displacements.

"We felt compelled to reach out to our fellow brothers and sisters to ease their pain with the little that we could afford," Shabalala said.

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Three major landslides occurred in Amanzimtoti



MAYOR Obed Mlaba's Golf Trust is in full swing. The initiative was launched in November by Mlaba and business partners to introduce golf to previously disadvantaged youngsters. Ten boys and girls from Sithokozile High in Clermont and Othwebe HP in Cato Ridge were chosen as the first beneficiaries of the trust. The youngsters have completed two lessons and will continue receiving instruction at Westville Golf Range. "The children are showing great interest and enthusiasm in the sport. This is not just about golf but life skills as well, which will help guide them even after the lessons are over. We may just produce another Tiger Woods from these children," said Mlaba

Picture: SUPPLIED

RDP house invaders sent packing

THE RDP houses illegally occupied at Ridgeview, Cato Manor have now been cleared.

Cllr Sbu Gumede, Chairman of the Council's Housing Committee, said the last batch of illegal tenants were moved out last Friday (20 June).

"Of the 726 houses built in the area, about 300 were

under threat by invaders," said Gumede. The houses are part of the government's slums clearance programme, which is being implemented by the council.

Gumede said some people felt the allocation process was unfair.

"They then use youths, who do not even qualify for an RDP house, to occupy

them illegally.

"We invite people who think there is fraud or corruption in our allocation process to report it," Gumede said.

Alleged corruption can be reported at police stations or to the city's Ombudsperson and Head Investigations, toll free on 0800 202 020. – *Metro Reporter*

Report roadside washing of taxis

THE Municipality is clamping down on the the illegal washing of vehicles on city roads.

The practice is rife among taxi operators in the South Durban Basin.

The area's Enforcement Officer, Len George, said taxi washers used water from public toilets, left taps running, and even blocked stormwater drains to collect water, shunting aside heavy

barriers on manholes to do this. The detergents also caused costly damage to road surfaces.

Report illegal washing by calling 031 361 0000. – *Metro Reporter*

City helps set up forum for port players

SOHANA SINGH

DURBAN'S maritime industry has a powerful new voice.

The Municipality's Economic Development Department recently spearheaded the formation of a maritime cluster and held the first of a series of workshops to gauge the views of industry leaders.

Members of the cluster will work together and share views, plans and experiences for the benefit of the industry.

"As the city with the largest port in South Africa, the maritime sector probably encompasses the most sig-

Harbour swells economy

THE Port of Durban is South Africa's largest port in terms of value of cargo handled as well as number of vessel arrivals a year.

It is estimated that the port and its related industries contribute more than 20% of Durban's GDP.

Durban accounts for 55% of the KwaZulu-Natal GDP,

nificant economic cluster in the local economy," said Trivi Arjunan, the department's Manager: Sector Develop-

ment. The cluster includes shipping, boating, cargo handling, storage, transport and logistics. Support

which in turn is about 15% of the South African GDP. Thus, in round figures, the maritime industry in Durban contributes 1.5 – 2 percent of the national GDP.

Depending on which sub-sectors are included, this points towards a contribution to the local GDP of between R25bn and R35bn.

services, such as ship repairs, communication, pilotage, customs clearing, inspection services, and marine insurance are also covered.

Critical

"The country is heavily dependent on international trade and it is critical that Durban's port is recognised as an international trade gateway.

The maritime cluster will ensure that this sector consistently operates at the better end of international standards," Arjunan said.

The department's Acting Head, Shunnon Tulsiram,

said: "The development and operations of the port and city are interrelated. To date, port planning and city planning have been undertaken in isolation of each other.

"To achieve a common vision for the sustainable development of the port and city in the future, and to ensure their successful co-existence, joint planning is essential," Tulsiram said.

The department has also launched a blog where all maritime-related issues can be discussed and commented on. See www.durban.gov.za/durban/invest-durban/port-city.