

Part of its War on Waste campaign, the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs (DEA), Barbara Thomson handed over 15 recycling trolleys to the South African Waste Pickers Association in Mooi River and a Kia bakkie to Songimvelo Recyclers in Msunduzi, KwaZulu-Natal on 20 and 22 April 2017.

Speaking at both the events, Deputy Minister Thomson highlighted the importance of supporting waste management initiatives, as they contribute to job creation and improving the quality of life for all.

“Recycling has enormous economic potential. Conservative estimates put the financial value of the formal South African waste sector at R15 billion. It is time that we wake up to this economic potential of recycling.”

Referring to the job creation opportunities in the sector, the Deputy Minister called on local businesses and entrepreneurs to explore the economic opportunities provided through waste recycling.

“Let us involve our youth and women in such interventions as they are most affected by unemployment and poverty.”

Songimvelo Recyclers employs vagrants and unemployed youth to collect recyclable material for recycling within the city.

“They have played a role in cleaning the streets of Msunduzi by collecting recyclable material and disposing of it at landfill sites,” said Msunduzi Mayor, Councillor Themba Njilo.

Councillor Njilo said the clean-up initiative by Songimvelo

War on Waste continues



Recycling trolleys handed over by Deputy Minister Thomson to waste collectors in Mooi River. Deputy Minister Thomson and Msunduzi Mayor, Councillor Themba Njilo handing over bakkie keys to Songimvelo Recyclers in Msunduzi. PHOTO: ZIBUSE NDLUVU

Recyclers and tools donated by the DEA would help transform the city.

“This is a dream come true for the city to take on a clean-up initiative. We’ve already started the cleaning process beginning at the

Ematsheni area and clearing up the streets.”

The DEA, in partnership with the Department of Public Service and Administration through its Tirelo Boshha Programme provided

the means to purchase a vehicle for Songimvelo Recyclers.

The vehicle is fitted with a customised trailer to increase the capacity to transport recyclable materials, and Songimvelo Recy-

clers founder, Hugo Ngcobo, said the donation came in handy, as it will assist them with their recycling business.

“Upon receiving a truck, we managed to keep Pietermaritzburg clean by opening up a mobile buy-back centre in the city and we also go around the city and buy recyclables in kilograms from the ordinary people who simply participate in the recycling,” Ngcobo said.

His co-founder, Ivan Khumalo, added lack of employment influenced their decision to start the company to ensure they turn waste into money.

The South African Waste Pickers Association, Groundwork and Petco are among the organisations that have partnered with the DEA to support emerging waste pickers.

Sibusiso Dladla, a founder of Mooi River recycling corporative said the trolleys handed over to waste pickers would make their work easy.

“We are thrilled to receive these trolleys and we hope that others who are doing the same work will be encouraged from what we have achieved and strive to do more,” said Dladla.

“The waste pickers in Mooi River in the past have converted retail store trolleys into convenient modes of transport to move the collected waste material to buy-back centres with ease.

“As a recycling corporative we want to grow, be able to create decent jobs, maybe in future be able to manufacture and produce products that people can buy,” concluded Dladla.

Inaugural South African Green Schools Programme takes off in Limpopo

THE Department of Environmental Affairs launched ‘South Africa’s Greenest Schools Programme’ at the Mosasane Baloyi Primary School in Limpopo in April 2017.

“The Greenest Schools Programme (SAGSP) is still in its infancy stage but our vision is to make it a leading environmental management and award initiative working with primary and high schools across the country,” said Deputy Minister Barbara Thomson.

“The care for, and protection of, our environment has to start at a young age and I would like to express my thanks to everyone involved in taking this proactive step to nurture in our younger generation an appreciation of the importance of environmental care and protection.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to meet so many like-minded individuals who share our passion for the environment and who are willing to contribute towards its protection.

“I am particularly pleased with the participation of so many primary and high school learners during the processes that led up to this point where we recognise and

reward them for taking stewardship of their environment.

“In this regard, a special thank you must go to the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), which worked closely with us on this schools-based awareness campaign pilot project.

“Through implementing this programme, we’re seeking to reduce our schools’ environmental impact in both everyday practices and surroundings and advance environmental learning.

“We will raise awareness about the problem of environmental plundering and how it affects their future. The programme will engender an appreciation for our environment by showing how it serves as the source of livelihood.

“We will turn our learners into environmental ambassadors and educate them on how to reduce and manage waste by having zero-waste and litter-free schools,” concluded the Deputy Minister.

As part of the SAGSP initiative, learners from at least 105 schools

in and around Limpopo province displayed their projects that focus on environmental conservation.

Participating schools presented the following environmental themes: Waste Management, Energy Efficiency and Conservation; Water Management and Conservation; Landscaping, Tree Planting and Beautification, Public Participation and Community Empowerment, Leadership and Institutional Arrangements to the Deputy Minister and MEC for Economic Development, Environment

and Tourism, Seaparo Sekwati.

The twelve schools that made it to the finals shared insightful but simple examples of how they and in turn other schools wishing to participate in the programme can green their schools.

Learners from PAX College shared how they have planted grass and shrubs to reduce soil erosion in their school in Polokwane. Intermediate phase entrant, Sudzulusani Primary School empowers and involves the public in its green school project by encouraging parents to assist with the vegetable garden.

The Blue Crane award recipient, Ramattho School shared how it uses sod covers over the grass and soil to protect soil from being washed away by rainwater.

Winning schools received prizes up to the value of R100 000, which were not given as cash but enabled the schools to choose projects, which further the objectives of the broader mandate of DEA, such as purchasing of water tanks, vegetable garden implements and seeds, initiating a recycling programme, installation of renewable energy, creating school and community parks.



Winners of the intermediate phase of the inaugural South African Green Schools. PHOTO: ITUMELENG MOTSEPE

THE WINNERS

Winners in the Intermediate Phase were:
 Mosasane Baloyi Primary School – Rhino Award – R100 000
 Rethusitwe Primary School – Renewable Energy Award – R75 000
 Ramaahlo Primary School – Blue Crane Award – R50 000
 Sudzulusani Primary School – Baobab Award – R40 000
 Dikgabje Primary School – Lake Fundudzi Award – R35 000

Winners in the Senior Phase were:
 Mopane Intermediate School – Rhino Award – R100 000
 PAX College – Renewable Energy Award – R75 000
 Phutikwe Combined School – Blue Crane Award – R50 000
 Lepono High School – Baobab Award – R40 000
 Sekoba Secondary School – Lake Fundudzi Award – R35 000