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State-of-the-Art Fire Engine to Meet City's Growing Needs

George Fire Brigade proudly welcomed a brand-new Fire Engine into their fleet recently, sourced from Scania, a renowned leader in transportation solutions. The vehicle underwent a remarkable transformation into a Fire Engine by Rosenbauer South Africa, utilizing cutting-edge technology and innovative techniques. This new Fire Engine is equipped with a major pumper featuring a built-in foam system, specifically designed to combat high-hazard flammable liquid fires such as gasoline, oil, and jet fuel, ensuring enhanced effectiveness and safety during firefighting operations.

As the urban landscape of George continues to evolve and expand, so does the demand for exceptional fire and disaster services. Recognizing this imperative, the acquisition of this advanced Fire Engine reflects the commitment of George Fire and Disaster Management Services to meet the evolving needs of a smart city and to uphold legislative requirements aimed at protecting residents. Director for Community Safety, Dawie Adonis, was presented with the key to the vehicle during a prestigious event hosted by the George Fire Brigade, attended by the Executive Mayor, Leon Van Wyk, MAYCO Members, Municipal

Manager Dr Gratz, Directors, and distinguished guests from Rosenbauer and Scania.

Ald Van Wyk expressed his pride in the municipality taking ownership of this vehicle. "Both George and Rosenbauer international are steeped in histories of over 200 and 150 years respectively. It is therefore fitting for George to have acquired the newest fire technology and equipment available from a world leader. We are blessed with a top-notch fire and emergency services team that are professional, alert, prepared and constantly focussed to be ahead of the game," he said.

Highlighting the significance of this acquisition, Director Dawie Adonis emphasized the importance of embracing technological advancements to effectively combat modern fires, both in urban developments and the surrounding wildlands cherished by the community. "Our fire officials will undergo comprehensive training conducted by Rosenbauer technicians as well as the brigade's own training officials to ensure proficient and reliable use of the equipment," Adonis stated.

Reflecting on the journey leading to this acquisition, George Fire Chief, Neels Barnard, recalled the humble beginnings of



George Fire officials in front of their new state of the art fire engine. In the centre of the back row are Johan Crause (Station Commander); Neels Barnard (Fire Chief), Dr Michele Gratz (Municipal Manager); Johan Brand (Divisional Commander) and Santa Sternsdorf (Station Commander). Kneeling in front with fire officials is Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk.

the George Fire Brigade's first Rosenbauer pump in 1989, emphasizing its continued reliability and service to the community.

"The addition of this state-of-the-art Fire Engine underscores the George

Fire Brigade's unwavering commitment to excellence in service delivery and community safety, ushering in a new era of firefighting capabilities for the city of George," Barnard said.

Thembaletu welcomes GO GEORGE

A total of 1112 passengers boarded buses on the new GO GEORGE Route 18A on Monday 6 November. According to Morné Lakay, Acting Manager of GO GEORGE, it was clear that a huge percentage of the passengers have already been bus users who previously joined the network of routes by either travelling into town by minibus taxi or walking over the N2 bridge to catch a bus in Parkdene.

"Usually, replacing an informal method of public transport with a more formal, scheduled public transport system has its own unique challenges in every community, but many Thembaletu people know



Luxolo Mbelu, Ayanda Nongxaza and Hlumelo Maso all work at Fancourt and can now take the R18A bus straight to their workplace.

the ropes and can even advise or guide their friends and neighbours to use the bus service," he said.

More information regarding the use of the system and trip planning can

be obtained by phoning the Call Centre toll-free on 0800 044 044, sending an email to info@gogeorge.org.za, or visiting www.gogeorge.org.za or the GO GEORGE Facebook page.



The bus terminus at the Jonga circle in Thembaletu is spacious and accommodates several buses waiting to depart. The buses make their turnaround to town at this circle.



Seen at the Western Cape Recognition Ceremony from the left are Melvin Koopman (George Superintendent for Water Purification), Ntombizanele Bila-Mupariwa (Provincial Head Department of Water Services), Dr Phakamani Buthelezi (CEO Overberg Water Board), Dr Badroodien (MAYCO Member Water and Sanitation, COCT).

12% improvement on Blue Drop Score

George Municipal Superintendent for Water Purification, Melvin Koopman was thrilled to attend a Western Cape Blue Drop, Green Drop and No Drop recognition ceremony held at the Hotel Verde, Cape Town in December. Koopman gladly received a Blue Drop Award for George Water Treatment Works (Old and New Water Treatment Works) on behalf of the Civil Engineering Services team.

George Municipality improved their Blue Drop score with 12% , from 2014, placing us third in the Western Cape and with a top score for a local and own-managed water treatment system. The overall average for the George, Wilderness, Uniondale and Haarlem Water Treatment Works is 94.95%.

The municipality also received an Outstanding No Drop performance, one of eight local municipalities.

No Drop Certification means that a municipality is accomplished in its water conservation and water demand

management practice and receives public accolade and acknowledgement of its excellence in water supply management against a set of strict criteria.

Summary of Results

■ 2023 Blue Drop Score **95.1%** awarded to George Water Works (2014 82.8%)

■ 2023 Blue Drop Score **AVERAGE 94.95%** awarded to George, Wilderness, Uniondale and Haarlem Water Treatment Works

■ **Outstanding No Drop Performance** (1 of 8 local municipalities)

■ Score of **84%** for **Total System Analysis (TSA)** for George New Water Treatment Works

■ All 4 systems (100%) in **low risk positions** (George - Old and New Water Treatment Works, Wilderness Ebb and Flow Water Treatment Works, Uniondale Water Treatment Works and Haarlem Water Treatment Works)



Front Row (From left): Mickayla Potts (Learner), Shakira Roberts (Learner), Kieron Meyer (Learner), Dantonio Olivier (Learner), Mr C Pots (Educator), Councillor Charlotte Clarke, Amy Lee Wanie (Learner), Lee-Wayne Spies (Learner), Burnutio Julius (Learner), and Abdul Malik (Learner). Back Row (From left): Dawie Adonis (Director of Community Services), Mr M Tait (Educator), Franklin Windwaai (Traffic officer), Chief Superintendent Lafras Boesak, Mr Ruban Lekata and Senior Traffic officer Edwin Felix.

Scholar Patrol competition winners

The George Traffic Department hosted a successful scholar patrol competition in October last year at the George Junior Traffic Training and Road Safety Centre, promoting child pedestrian road safety.

The competition started with a squad inspection by the judges which included a thorough inspection of uniforms as well as a whistle inspection, an inspection by the captain and then a practical test with the teams showing their paces. The five schools competing were, Delville Park Primary, Pacaltsdorp Primary, Life Academy, Heidedal Primary and New Dawn Park Primary. Pacaltsdorp Primary School emerged as the winner, followed by Life Academy and New Dawn Park Primary School,

in the second and third positions.

Congratulating the winners and participants, Cllr Charlotte Clarke highlighted the significance of the School Patrol Programme, an essential component of road safety education. "Not only does it regulate traffic, improve speed calming and facilitate safe crossing of the road, but also instils in the minds of our young pedestrians an awareness of the importance of road safety," she said.

Mr Adonis emphasized the importance of cooperation from other road users to ensure the safety of learners served by the scholar patrols. The responsibility of the scholar patrols is huge, and we are thrilled to see how committed these learners are to the safety of other learners.



The George Traffic Department hosted a successful scholar patrol competition.



Fantastic display at the annual friendly roadblock

George put on a fantastic display at the annual friendly roadblock held on 14 December 2023. Georgie from GO GEORGE, Ms Lauren Waring (Director Human Settlements, Planning and Development), Cllr Marais Kruger (Portfolio Councillor for Community Safety), Cllr Erika Brown (Ward 3), Cllr Marlene Barnardt (Chief Whip), Ald Leon van Wyk, Deputy Mayor Raybin Figland and Daantjie Kat from the George Traffic Services all participated on the day to receive visitors and tourists for the 2023 Summer Season.

Three Blue Flags

George Municipality was the proud recipient of three blue flags for the 2023 season for Wilderness, Herold's Bay and Victoria Bay beach. A pilot blue flag was awarded to Leentjiesklip beach with Gwaiing Beach and River Mouth awarded a Green Coast Award.

At the national launch held at Wilderness Beach, Dr Michele Gratz said that Blue Flag status offer

many benefits including improved tourism facilities, enhanced management of coastal ecosystems, increased awareness of the coast and capacity building of coastal municipalities.

"Blue Flag status has significant international merit, and the achievement of such accolades is important to stimulate and confirm international and high-end interest in the city and district as a desirable,

quality tourism and lifestyle destination. We thank SANParks Garden Route National Park who shares jurisdiction of Wilderness beach with the George Municipality."

The Blue Flag season ran from 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024 and compliance included high standards of water quality monitoring, public safety and lifeguard services, and well-maintained coastal amenities.



George Mayor Leon Van Wyk hoisted the official blue flag for Wilderness Beach, here he is with Helena Atkinson, WESSA CEO; Teyva Lotriet Senior Sustainability Programme Manager at WESSA and Dr Michele Gratz, Municipal Manager for George.

GEORGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COUNCILLORS



Ald Leon Van Wyk,
Executive Mayor PR
(DA)



Cllr Raybin Figland,
Executive Deputy
Mayor PR (DA)



Cllr Sean Snyman,
Speaker, Ward 28 (DA)



Cllr Marlene Barnardt,
Chief Whip, Ward 4
(DA)



**Portfolio Cllr Brendon
Adams, Community
Services: Social
Development, Libraries
& Sport, Ward 17 (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Marais
Kruger, Community
Services: Community
Safety, Ward 22 (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr
Jacquique Von
Brandis, Planning &
Development,
Ward 26 (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Theresa
Jeyi, Community
Services: Parks, Refuse
and Environment,
Ward 16 (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Johan
Stander, Civil
Engineering Services:
Capital Projects & BFI
PR (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Dirk
Wessels, Finance &
Strategic Services,
PR (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Browen
Johnson, Civil
Engineering Services:
Operating Aspects
Ward 23 (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Jean
Safers, Human
Settlements,
Ward 1 (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Nosicelo
Mbete, Electrotechnical
Services, PR (DA)**



**Portfolio Cllr Christiaan
Neethling, Corporate
Services & HR,
PR (VF+)**



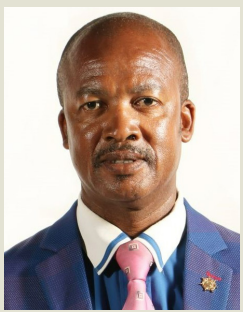
**Cllr Daniel Cronje,
Ward 2 (DA)**



**Cllr Erika Brown,
Ward 3 (DA)**



**Cllr Monique
Simmers, Ward 5 (DA)**



**Cllr Jayzee Jantjies,
Ward 6 (DA)**



**Cllr Vulindlela Mruqhli,
Ward 7 (ANC)**



**Cllr Samuel Vorster,
Ward 8 (PA)**



**Cllr Thembinkosi Lento,
Ward 9 (ANC)**



**Cllr Zukile Gom,
Ward 10 (ANC)**



**Cllr Sifiso Ntondini,
Ward 11 (ANC)**



**Cllr Eric Mdaka,
Ward 12 (ANC)**



**Cllr Simphiwe Toto,
Ward 13 (ANC)**



**Cllr Melvin Roelfse,
Ward 14 (DA)**



**Cllr Bonisile Hani,
Ward 15 (ANC)**



**Cllr Donovan Gultig,
Ward 18 (DA)**



**Ald Iona Kritzinger,
Ward 19 (DA)**



**Cllr Christo Alexander
Ward 20 (PA)**



**Cllr Siphelo Manxele,
Ward 21 (ANC)**



**Cllr Justin Fry,
Ward 24 (DA)**



**Cllr Jarques Esau,
Ward 25 (ANC)**



**Cllr Marchelle Kleynhans,
Ward 27 (DA)**



**Cllr Ebrahim America,
PR (DA)**



**Cllr Edmund Bussack,
PR (PBI)**



**Cllr Vivian Desmond
Carolus PR (PBI)**



**Cllr Charlotte Clarke,
PR (DA)**



**Cllr Darryl Coeries,
PR (PBI)**



**Cllr Johan Du Toit,
MPAC Chairperson,
PR (ACDP)**



**Cllr Enrick Figland,
PR (VF+)**



**Cllr Maria Greeff,
PR (PBI)**



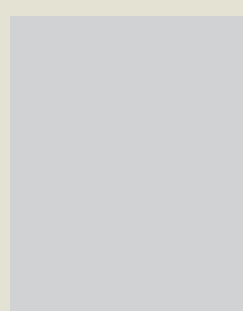
**Cllr Khayaletu Lose,
PR (DA)**



**Cllr Rosa Louw,
PR (GOOD)**



**Cllr Faith Mdaka,
PR (ANC)**



PR (EFF)



**Cllr Gert Niehaus,
GIPTN Chairperson,
PR (VF+)**



**Cllr Jerome Clive
Petersen, PR (PBI)**



**Cllr Hermen Philander,
PR (GOOD)**



**Cllr Pheliswa Qampi,
PR (EFF)**



**Cllr Thandiswa Qatana,
PR (DA)**



**Cllr Sedic Smart,
PR (PA)**



**Ald Gert Van Niekerk,
PR (VF+)**



**Cllr Roxaan Vorster,
PR (GOOD)**



**Cllr Regina Windwai,
PR (DA)**



Enhancing Community Safety with High Mast Light Installations



Mayor Leon van Wyk says the installation of these high mast lights is expected to yield safety.

In a concerted effort to address safety concerns and combat criminal activities, the George Municipality has successfully installed 30 high mast lights in strategic locations. These installations, situated in Thembaletu, Lawaaikamp, Parkdene, and Borchers, aim to improve lighting in high-density areas with historically low to no lighting, ultimately contributing to enhanced community safety.

The Executive Mayor of George, Alderman Leon van Wyk commended the Municipal Electrotechnical Services for the installation of the high mast lights saying that the installations are expected to yield several benefits, including crime prevention and improved Security.

“The enhanced lighting will act as a deterrent to criminal activities, providing communities with increased visibility and the ability to monitor cable theft and vandalism of municipal resources and property,” said Van Wyk. “Adequate lighting significantly reduces safety risks associated with nighttime activities. The high mast lights, with an effective radius of approximately 50 to 60 meters, will contribute to the overall security of the communities.”

The distribution of the high mast lights is as follows:

- Thembaletu: 18 high mast lights distributed across various wards
 - Parkdene: 5 high mast lights
 - Lawaaikamp: 4 high mast lights
 - Borchards: 3 high mast lights
- According to Kobus Wilken,



Switching on Portfolio Cllr for Electrotechnical Services Nosicelo Mbete and Mayor Leon van Wyk.

Electrotechnical Services management, this initiative was made possible through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) and a portion came from the George Municipal’s own funding. “The Municipality submitted funding requests to address the critical need for improved lighting and successfully secured approval from the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) for the installation of the 30 high mast lights. The MIG allocated a total of R17 million, supplemented by an additional R2 million from municipal funding,” Wilken said.

Portfolio Councillor Electrotechnical

Services and Fleet Manager, Nosicelo Mbete urged the public to preserve these important assets. “While celebrating this significant milestone, the Municipality urges the community to play an active role in safeguarding this essential infrastructure against theft and vandalism. The success of these installations relies on the collective effort of residents to ensure the longevity and effectiveness of the high mast lights,” Cllr Mbete said.

The Municipality is confident that these installations will contribute to a safer environment and provide residents with the assurance of well-lit public spaces.

R16 Million upgrade for Kaaimans River pump station

The Kaaimans River Pump station upgrade project started last year, aims to enhance the mechanical and electrical components of the pump station and contribute to sustained and adequate raw water storage in the Garden Route Dam. The project is scheduled to be completed in June 2024.

“Six (6) new submersible robust pumps will be installed in the sump in the river, which will abstract the water and pump it through strainers(sieves), to supply the six (6) new high-lift pumps. The pump station will operate in fully automated mode through sensing equipment which measures the river flow and adjusts the pumping rate according to the river flow rate, ensuring that at all times the environmental release of 35 l/s is sustained to flow down the river,” said Andre Scheepers, the Project Manager for Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) in the George Municipality’s Civil Engineering Services Department.

The Kaaimans River Pump station was originally constructed in 1972 and pumped raw river water directly to the Old Water Treatment Plant.

After the completion of the Garden Route Dam (GRD) in 1980, which receives and stores raw water from the Swart River and Kat River, the Kaaimans



Pumpstation fell into disrepair. It has since been upgraded and the main pipeline was changed to discharge into the GRD.

The Water Use Licence issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation authorises the George Municipality to abstract

a maximum of 2,77 million kilolitres per year and is limited to a maximum pumping rate of 405 litres per second at any given time. This represents approximately 22% of the annual sustainable yield of the Garden Route Dam.



Solar Power Initiative expanded to Traffic Lights

George Municipality has expanded its solar power initiative for traffic lights, marking the successful installation of solar panels in Pacaltsdorp.

This comes on the heels of the initial pilot project in Knysna Road and the Witfontein Road intersection in Blanco.

The solar panels are designed to charge batteries and supply excess energy to power traffic lights, contributing to sustainability and

reducing the municipality’s carbon footprint. This initiative aligns with George Municipality’s commitment to green processes and resource efficiency.

George Municipality remains committed to exploring additional opportunities for integrating renewable energy into its infrastructure projects, contributing to the creation of a more sustainable and eco-friendlier city.



Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a time when communities across the globe unite in the fight against this formidable adversary. In George Municipality, this spirit of solidarity took center stage as a colorful group of municipal officials, councillors and members of CANSA gathered in front of the George Town Hall for a March in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Day in October last year. The sight of men and women of all ages, dressed in shades of pink, was a testament to the power of unity when it comes to raising awareness about breast cancer. The event served as a reminder of the significance of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is more than just a calendar date. It is a call to action, a time to celebrate survivors, remember those who have fought valiantly but are no longer with us, and to reaffirm our commitment to making progress in the battle against breast cancer. The choice of pink as the dress code for the event was not just a matter of aesthetics but a symbol of hope, strength, and determination. It's a reminder that breast cancer awareness is not just about wearing a particular color for a month; it's about raising our collective voice, urging individuals to get screened regularly, and working towards a world where breast cancer no longer takes lives.

George Celebrates Khomanani Day

The Community Development HIV and Aids subsection celebrated Khomanani Day at Pacaltsdorp Community Hall by hosting a formal informative event and gifted some of the most vulnerable members of the community with food parcels and blankets.

Khomanani Day is a national social mobilization campaign focusing on the impact of HIV/AIDS promoting community action, partnership, and awareness. This day is annually celebrated on the 26th of October, supporting, and caring for those affected and infected with HIV/AIDS, with the theme

“Spread Love and Solidarity to Build Stronger Communities”. Motivational speaker, Ruzanne van Beulen, spoke to the community members attending on how to live a healthy lifestyle while going through whatever circumstances you are facing in life. A drama group, consisting of youngsters from Parkdene, demonstrated how to have compassion and how to treat your fellow human being living with a disease like HIV and AIDS. The George Municipality HIV and Aids subsection gifted vulnerable members of the community with 50 food parcels and 70 blankets, including children.



In the photograph are at the back officials from the George Municipality, Khanyisile Fortuin, Special Events and Vulnerable Population Coordinator, Willbedine Jordaan, Acting HIV and AIDS Coordinator and Veronique Ferndale Nutritional Centres Coordinator with some of the beneficiaries that received hampers and blankets on the day.



Some of the attendees of the World AIDS Day.

Commemorating World AIDS Day

In collaboration with the Department of Health and various stakeholders, the George Municipality HIV & AIDS Sub-Section hosted a commemoration event for World AIDS Day 2023 in December at the Rosemore sports field. The event brought together high school students, and mothers caring for orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), and featured health-related tests conducted on gazebos erected on the sports field. Ward Councillor (Cllr) Jayzee Jantjies of Ward 6 addressed the community, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a healthy community. The event included sports activities, motivational speakers, and the release of red and white balloons by

Portfolio Councillor for Community Services: Social Development, Libraries and Sport, Cllr Brandan Adams, and Ward Cllr Jayzee Jantjies in remembrance of loved ones who lost their lives to the HIV pandemic. The organizers conveyed a message of hope, emphasizing that individuals living with HIV/AIDS and using Antiretroviral medicine can still enjoy life and maintain a healthy lifestyle. World AIDS Day, observed on December 1st each year, has become a globally recognized health day, providing an essential opportunity to raise awareness, remember those who have passed away, and celebrate achievements such as increased access to treatment and prevention services.



Release of red and white balloons by Cllrs Adams and Jantjies.

Third consecutive Clean Audit

George Municipality is proud to have received our third consecutive Clean Audit for the 2022/23 financial year. Municipal Manager, Dr Michele Gratz noted that a clean audit is based on 3 pillars, namely compliance with legislation, performance outcomes and financial processes. "All of our municipal officials therefore play a role in ensuring that all three aspects are performed to the satisfaction of the Auditor-General. A special thanks to the CFO and his team and all of our officials for this great team effort. This is George's 3rd consecutive clean audit, and we strive to maintain this standard going forward".

Executive Mayor, Leon Van Wyk extended his congratulations to the Municipal Manager, chief financial officer and the entire team involved in once again achieving the clean audit on behalf of Council.

"We are very proud of the perseverance and tenacity of our team as the accounting treatment and technical interpretations and requirements have become more complex over the past decade, especially so for large municipalities."

Definitions:

Qualified Opinion – An isolated account/s balance/s or disclosure note may contain material misstatements as indicated in the audit report, but except for the qualification areas highlighted, the financial statements present fairly, or give a true and fair view, of the financial affairs of the municipality.

Unqualified Opinion – Is also known as an unmodified opinion. Unmodified opinions are expressed by the auditor when the auditor concludes that the financial statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. Therefore, the financial statements contain no material misstatements, but some findings may have been raised on either reporting on predetermined objectives or non-compliance with legislation, or both.

Clean Audit – The financial statements are free from material misstatements (in other words, a financially unqualified audit opinion) and there are no material findings on reporting on performance objectives or non-compliance with legislation.



Revolutionizing Water Rescue for a Safer Season



In a remarkable leap forward for water rescue operations in George, the addition of drones delivered by drones promises to be a game-changer. This innovative technology has the potential to save lives and significantly enhance emergency response efforts, particularly when dealing with swimmers in distress.

The concept is simple yet ingenious: outfit a standard drone with a "payload release" mechanism capable of delivering a self-inflatable floating device (weighing approximately 0.7kg) to a swimmer in distress. This mechanism is seamlessly attached to the drone as an add-on feature. The payload, in this case, consists of a self-inflatable floating device that, on deployment, automatically

inflates in the water, providing immediate buoyancy to keep the swimmer afloat until lifeguards or other rescue personnel arrive.

This technology allows for swift and efficient responses to water-related emergencies, significantly reducing response times when compared to traditional rescue methods.

Moreover, the drone's agility enables it to cover more extensive areas swiftly, making it invaluable in situations where time is of the essence. A further useful add-on will be a speaker, allowing our Mobile JOC to speak to the swimmer in distress, as well as the rescue team with the on-board camera providing visuals during the rescue. The inflatable device is re-usable and after retrieval is folded up and repackaged to be used again.

What makes this innovation truly groundbreaking is its emphasis on safety. The inflatable device not only aids the person in distress but also ensures the safety of the rescuers involved. Neels Barnard, the George Chief Fire officer, highlighted that this is a pioneering initiative in South Africa, never before witnessed on local beaches. He added, "The George Fire & Rescue Services team is constantly researching new innovations, and by harnessing the power of technology, we've added a vital tool to our water rescue operations that promises to save lives. As we look ahead to its practical application, we can only anticipate more lives being safeguarded, and swimmers in distress receiving the swift assistance they need."



George Fire & Rescue Services Chief, Neels Barnard keeps an eye while Station Commander, Santa Sternsdorff flies the drone at Wilderness Beach.

George Fire & Rescue Services Chief, Neels Barnard demonstrates the drogue anchor for the inflatable device.



Mzimkhulu Mabhoza, Buysile Ngemtu from the California Settlement and Ward Councillor Siphelo Manxele, with representatives from Buffalo Tanks, Jürgen Graupe, Co-owner and Manager: Sanitation, Ruben Graupe, Junior Project Manager and Siegfried Graupe Co-owner and Manager: Administration and Design.

Alternative Sanitation Solution for Informal Settlement

George Municipality recently rolled out the first project of an alternative sanitation solution, a bio-separator toilet system in California Informal Settlement, Thembalethu.

According to Wendy Mentor, Manager: New Housing at George Municipality, the system contains a tank that is completely submerged underground where the sludge is being treated and it disintegrates from there. There is no way that people can reach the tank. The system was approved by the Water Services Board, which tested the technology. "Our pilot system is going

excellently, we've had no complaints with the 13 toilets that have been installed," Mentor said.

Mentor said the California Informal Settlement was chosen as a pilot due to the need and shortage of toilets in this settlement and where the area cannot be connected to the sewer network.

Buffalo Tanks did the coupling of the toilets. They are anchored securely, and the raw materials used for the toilets are also manufactured in George.

The material of the toilet is also UV resistant, so the sun cannot damage it. It

is built so that no pipes or features can be vandalised. Monthly servicing involves only the adding of enzymes and bacteria into the system to assist the biological process and to make sure everything is clean and neat and working properly.

According to Lauren Waring, Director of Human Settlements, Planning and Development at George, this project aims to replace the use of chemical toilets (funding permitting) over the next three years with the new alternative sanitation technology as it is a fully flush unit.

After the award of the contract, a

funding request was submitted to the Department of Infrastructure for the roll-out to Informal Settlements where we cannot connect to the sewer system. Ward Councillor of Ward 21, Cllr Siphelo Manxele, thanked the Municipality for this excellent project. He said he is looking forward to seeing more of these projects in his ward and the rest of Thembalethu.

The end-users in the settlement are happy with this new technology and indicated that their dignity has been restored and that it is an upgrade from the chemical toilets and much more hygienic.

Title deeds for old Council and RDP houses

George Municipality is on a drive to intensify the issuing of title deeds to beneficiaries. The aim is to ensure that title deeds are issued to their rightful beneficiaries as soon as possible. The title deeds are mostly for old scheme properties and RDP properties that are already occupied.

All new title deeds are handed out when the houses are handed over to the owners. The Title Deed Restoration Outreach took

place in three wards recently – Blanco, Rosemoor, Parkdene and Ballotsview. A total of 78 clients visited the sessions and 44 title deeds were handed out to the registered owners of the properties.

It came to light that many of the registered owners have passed away and therefore these deeds could not be handed out. The official of the Section: Property Management explained the way forward to the families of those who passed on.



Ald Leon van Wyk, Mayor of George and Cllr Jean Sáfers handed over title deeds to beneficiaries, from left Elmarie Pietersen (left), Cllr Sáfers, Fransina Afrika, Ald Van Wyk and Gertruida Buys (far right), all from Blanco.



Cllr Charlotte Clarke hands over a title deed to Elna and Patrick Hardnick in Parkdene.



Hendrik and Maria Wylbach received their title deed from the Ward Councillor for Ward 8, Cllr Samuel Vorster. On the far left with them is Cyrlidene Fredericks and on the far right is Petro Botha, both officials from the Human Settlements Directorate at the handover in Parkdene.

2023 Global Entrepreneurship Week

For the first time in the history of George, George Municipality and other stakeholders are part of 208 countries that hosted a Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEW) Week from 13 – 17 November which provided local entrepreneurs and businesses as far as Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Cameroon and Zimbabwe a platform to network and gain invaluable knowledge about trade and the business world.

According to Dr Kosie Haarhoff, Deputy Director: Strategic Growth and Economic Development at George Municipality, Global Entrepreneurship Week is an annual flagship initiative of the Global Entrepreneurship Network that aims to foster innovation, empower aspiring entrepreneurs, and facilitate collaboration on a global scale.

Seeing the importance of entrepreneurship to global economic advancement and human welfare, in 2008, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation created Global Entrepreneurship Week. Since then, it has grown from a series of events happening only in the US and UK to expanding to over 165 countries. Global Entrepreneurship Week empowers entrepreneurs in every country and community around the world.

During the programme, participants from diverse backgrounds and industries gathered to exchange ideas, learn from seasoned mentors, and engage in hands-on workshops designed to refine their entrepreneurial skills. The event was co-hosted by George Municipality, SUFF (Southern Youth Film Festival) Academy and the Western Cape Department of Economic Development.

Haarhoff said George Municipality is one of the leading municipalities when it comes to the development of entrepreneurs and innovation.

The focus of GEW 2023 is to include

entrepreneurs who are disabled and a number of the sessions were dedicated to these participants.

He said, that now, more than ever, George needs innovative thinkers and problem solvers to address complex challenges. By nurturing and developing entrepreneurs, we are not only fostering economic growth but also driving innovation, creating jobs, and paving the way for sustainable development. Entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in shaping the future of industries and driving positive change in communities, Haarhoff said.

The GEW programme addresses topics like red tape reduction, financial literacy, entrepreneurial training aimed towards the youth as well as forex trading.

George Executive Mayor, Ald Leon van Wyk, had the pleasure of welcoming the attendees from as far as Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ghana and Cameroon to Global Entrepreneurship Week 2023 on behalf of the George Municipality.

“We are so excited to have more than 300

entrepreneurs attending this event to learn, network and understand the entrepreneurial spirit. Some came here to gather information on how to access funds for their ventures and businesses and some young entrepreneurs might want to gain knowledge on how to export their product.

“This platform opens all those opportunities and is a meeting place where people can network, share ideas and ultimately help our George economy. At the end of the day, we need businesses to grow, as well as startup businesses to provide income and provide goods and services to fellow citizens. It’s a wonderful opportunity for our emerging businesses,” Van Wyk concluded.

Cllr Dirk Wessels, Portfolio Councillor for Finance and Strategic Services said the hosting of the event is a strategic

“This platform opens all those opportunities and is a meeting place where people can network, share ideas and ultimately help our George economy.”

Uganda, Ghana and Cameroon to Global Entrepreneurship Week 2023 on behalf of the George Municipality.

“We are so excited to have more than 300

entrepreneurs attending this event to learn, network and understand the entrepreneurial spirit. Some came here to gather information on how to access funds for their ventures and businesses and some young entrepreneurs might want to gain knowledge on how to export their product.

“This platform opens all those opportunities and is a meeting place where people can network, share ideas and ultimately help our George economy. At the end of the day, we need businesses to grow, as well as startup businesses to provide income and provide goods and services to fellow citizens. It’s a wonderful opportunity for our emerging businesses,” Van Wyk concluded.

Cllr Dirk Wessels, Portfolio Councillor for Finance and Strategic Services said the hosting of the event is a strategic



An attendee at the event asks a question about financial assistance especially to get a business registered at an afternoon network session with George Mayor, Ald Leon van Wyk.



Addressing the attendees at the Global Entrepreneurship Network at the George Civic Centre are from left, Ald Leon van Wyk, George Executive Mayor, Dirk Wessels, Portfolio Councillor for Finance and Strategic Services, Quinton Coetzee, Branch Manager: SEDA in Garden Route and Central Karoo Districts and Dr Kosie Haarhoff, Deputy Director: Strategic Services at George Municipality.

move from Economic Development in the Municipality to engage with up-and-coming entrepreneurs and identify marketplaces where we can promote products from George and the Garden Route.

“We have a wealth of entrepreneurs in George and surrounds that are already conducting highly profitable domestic and

international trade. Thus, it was crucial to include foreign traders in addition to other regional participants in order to provide our young and aspiring entrepreneurs with a platform. Entrepreneurs will gain a thorough understanding of how to get their products into the market, particularly on a global scale, by utilising this networking platform,” Wessels said.



A proud James October stands with his title deed in hand after Portfolio Councillor for Human Settlements, Jean Safers, handed him his documentation for his new home after waiting for 27 years. With him in front of his house are from left, Brumilda Kirchner, Project Administrator at Human Settlements, October, the beneficiary of the new home, Cllr Safers, Sheen-Wayne Kiewitz from Human Settlements and Cllr Regina Windwaai.



Beneficiaries of the new houses and officials are from left, Jennifer Davids (beneficiary), Portfolio Councillor for Human Settlements, Jean Safers, Brumilda Kirchner, Project Administrator at Human Settlements, Hester Tamboer (beneficiary in the wheelchair) with her husband next to her, Pieter, and on the far right is Cllr Regina Windwaai.

Nine new homeowners at Metro Grounds Housing

George Portfolio Councillor for Human Settlements, Jean Safers, handed nine houses over to beneficiaries at the Metro Grounds Housing Project in April. Up until now 47 homes have been handed over to beneficiaries. In total, 436 homes will be occupied at Metro Grounds once the project is finished.

According to Wendy Mentor, Acting Deputy Director: Human Settlements, beneficiaries for

the Metro Grounds Housing Project have been taken from the Housing Demand Database. The beneficiaries are selected from those who have been on the waiting list for longest time, 60 years and older, disabled, farm workers, and persons residing in Informal Settlements.

Cllr Safers said a lot of these people come from difficult circumstances and their new homes could not have come at a better time. “I think there is

no better feeling than to own an asset and to be able to leave something behind for your loved ones. A home is something to be proud of and I am sure that the new home-owners will look after theirs,” Safers said.

Jennifer Davids, one of the beneficiaries, said she could not be happier. “I lived in a back yard dwelling and struggled with a leaking roof.” She is a single mother with three sons and two grandchildren.

Pieter and Hester Tamboer lived in a temporary structure before they received their home and before that they lived in an informal settlement. Hester, who is wheelchair-bound, said they have struggled with water logging and sometimes she couldn’t even move in her wheelchair. “We are just happy to have a proper house.” Their son and grandchild also live with them. James October, another beneficiary, has been on the

waiting list for 27 years. He will live in the house with his daughter and his grandchild. “I don’t have words to express my gratitude. I hear people talk about the small homes they are getting but my question remains: what did you have before? I also want to make it clear we, as residents of the Metro Grounds Housing Project, will not allow thuggery and gangsterism that is rife in other communities.”

Thembalethu New 66kV Substation is nearing completion

The construction of the new 66kV substation in Thembalethu, aimed at bolstering power supply reliability in response to escalating electricity demand, is progressing gradually and is anticipated to be finalised within this year.



Ripple Control Coupling Cell to control municipal equipment.

the Southern Cape, marks a significant achievement in the city of George's bulk infrastructure development. It demonstrates the municipality's commitment to facilitating growth and service delivery, attracting investment from both the government and businesses.

Construction Update
Despite initial setbacks, construction remains on schedule. Recent concerns regarding informal shacks situated beneath the new 66kV power line between SS Glenwood and SS Thembalethu may potentially impact the energizing of the power line and new substation, but the municipality is actively addressing this issue.

Key milestones include the completion of the substation building, installation of most electrical equipment, and placement of the 11 kV switchgear panel. Additionally, two 66/11 kV, 20 MVA power transformers have been successfully installed alongside switchgear and other essential components. Ongoing work involves the installation of electrical and control cabling.

Incorporating Advanced Technology
The substation incorporates cutting-edge technology, including an IEC61850 protocol protection scheme for enhanced control and protection, and DNP3 VER 2 protocol for communication between the substation and the control centre. Extensive use of fibre optic cables minimizes reliance on copper, enabling remote monitoring of alarms, CCTV security, and substation control.

Benefits of the New Substation
■ Provides reliable electricity to Thembalethu and enables future expansion.



66-11 kV 20MVA power transformer in the foreground with auxiliary equipment installed.



Aerial view of Thembalethu Substation.

- Creates job opportunities and supports growth in Thembalethu and surrounding areas.
- Reduces load on adjacent substations in Pacaltsdorp and George Industria, prolonging available capacity and providing alternative capacity during system faults.
- Enhances supply to SS Protea, SS Glenwood, and other areas in the Eastern region of George.

Background
The need for a 66kV substation in Thembalethu was identified over 20 years ago. The current project builds upon previous initiatives, including the Ballots Bay 11kV substation. The completion of the initial phase in 2014/15 paved the way for the current project, with the final cost expected to be approximately R77,900,000.00.

17-year-old street artist makes waves in Wilderness

George Municipality approved the Visual Artwork Management Policy in 2023 and was thrilled when Kaelyn Haffern, a 17-year-old student at Glenwood House High in George and street artist, approached the George Municipality and the Wilderness Ratepayers and Residents Association (WRRRA) offering her time and talent towards beautifying some of the building exteriors on Station Road leading to Leentjiesklip beach, Wilderness.



has a strong commitment to environmental causes. Exploring various artistic media is Kaelyn's forte, and she was excited to bring her street art inspired creativity to the George Municipal initiative. Ward Councillor Marlene Barnardt thanked Director for Human Settlements, Planning and Development, Lauren Waring who assisted Kaelyn through the municipal approval processes required by the Visual Arts Management Policy as well as Susan Burger of the WRRRA who arranged for the sponsorship of the paint.



From left to right, Kaelyn Haffern, Jemma Kelly, Cllr Marlene Barnardt, Susan Burger (WRRRA Exco) and Jolletta Eichweber (WRRRA Exco).



Photographed in the Link, George Municipal Main Building are from left George CFO, Riaan Du Plessis; National Treasury, Dr Letsepa Pakkies; Municipal Manager Dr Michele Gratz; Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk; National Treasury, Mandla Gilimani and National Treasury, Sibisiswe Mchani with senior officials from George Municipality and National Treasury standing.

National Treasury visits George

A delegation of National Treasury officials visited George in February for the 2023/24 mid-year budget and performance assessment which focused on the state of services including electricity, waste, and water and sanitation services.

A full day of interactive presentations by each directorate was held and followed by site visits to the existing 20 MI/d Water Treatment Works which has been upgraded, the new 20 MI/d module, a new residual handling facility and the clear water rising main which is in process of being upgraded. The group also visited the Garden Route Dam Pumpstation

suction pipe upgrade project and the 1Megawatt Peak (MWp) solar PV plant. CFO for George, Riaan Du Plessis noted that the session provided National Treasury with a valuable opportunity to get a clearer understanding of the practical day-to-day challenges the municipality deals with in ensuring effective service delivery in the current difficult fiscal climate of high interest rates and costs of living. The visit further gives opportunity for National Treasury to visit in person the projects that are funded by the various grants allocated in the Division of Revenue Act," said Du Plessis.



Garden Route Dam Suction Pipework : At pump mains connection chamber – Andre Scheepers, CES Project Manager (BFI) in in the photograph pointing out details to the National Treasury officials.



Clearwater Pumpstation – new pumps.

Easing of Water Restrictions from Level 2C to 2B

Following a special Council held on Friday 12 April 2024 it was resolved that, as of May 1, 2024, water restrictions in George will be eased from Level 2C to Level 2B. This means that emergency tariffs will no longer apply, and standard water tariffs will be charged.

Background
Stricter water restrictions were implemented in December 2022 due to the existing Water Treatment Works' inability to meet the demand for drinking water. To address this, a temporary water purification package plant capable of treating 5MI/day was installed. This plant served as a supplement during periodic shutdowns of the existing Water Treatment Works for maintenance, upgrades, and the ongoing construction of the new 20MI Water Treatment Works plant.

Upgrades in Progress
The George Municipality received a Budget Facility for Infrastructure Funding (BFI) grant of R1.107 billion from the

National Treasury in the 2021/22 financial year. The project, consisting of 12 different components, is expected to be completed within the next two years. The BFI project allows for the extension of George's water treatment capacity over two phases spanning three years (2022 – 2025). Phase 2 entails an additional 20 Mℓ/day extension to the New George Water Treatment Works (WTW), and Phase 3 involves constructing an additional 30 Mℓ balancing dam at the New George Water Treatment Works (WTW). The water restrictions imposed in December 2022 have been maintained up till now to manage the water demand, especially during frequent WTW shutdowns required for BFI construction. The package plant will continue operating until the completion, commissioning, and operation of the new 20MI/day plant. The progress of the 20MI/day extension will be reassessed again later this year, together with the possible impact of the seasonal peak for 2024/25 and the

ongoing population growth in George taken into account. If necessary, stricter water restrictions will have to again be reintroduced.

Monitoring Raw Water Resources
Raw water resources, affected by increased demand and drier than usual conditions will continue to be closely monitored. Despite the Garden Route Dam being refilled to 100% capacity due to unusually heavy rainfall on April 9, this does not influence the decision to ease existing restrictions. Water remains a scarce resource that must be protected and preserved at all costs.

Level 2B Water Restrictions effective from May 1, 2024, in the George city area, and not in Uniondale and Haarlem:

- The mechanical irrigation of gardens with municipal potable water is prohibited.
- Gardens may be watered at any time using a handheld bucket.
- Gardens may be watered using a

handheld garden hose only within specified time frames.

From September 1 to April 30: 18:00 to 20:00
From May 1 to August 31: 17:00 to 19:00

For retirement villages and facilities: 16:00 to 18:00 throughout the year

Even numbered households: Mondays and Thursdays and uneven numbered households: Tuesdays and Fridays

- The irrigation or watering of all sport fields is prohibited, except for specific instances.
- The washing of vehicles with a garden hose, except by commercial enterprises, is prohibited.
- The cleaning of ANY area by means of water is prohibited.
- The filling of swimming pools is prohibited, with exceptions subject to approved exemption applications.
- Where own water from a borehole or reservoir is used, appropriate notices shall be displayed.
- Applications for exemptions are to be submitted for approval.

Illegal Dumping in Stormwater Drains

George Municipality has highlighted the dangers of illegal dumping in our communities recently, but another form of illegal dumping is under the spotlight now. The dumping of litter and other items into toilets, stormwater drains, and sewer manholes causes a massive headache for the municipality. Overflowing storm water drains are generally found to be blocked by illegal materials and rubbish dumped directly into the drain causing damage and flooding down the line.

One of the main reasons for blocked drains and sewerage spills is the wrong stuff being flushed down toilets or thrown into manholes. Items that should not be flushed down toilets include baby nappies, sanitary pads and tampons, newspaper, cloth and fabric, fatty food or fat. Regular items that municipal staff have to clear from manholes include branches, tyres, rocks, mattresses and other solid items. So not only does illegal dumping into civils drainage infrastructure led to flooding, but it can also cause this infrastructure to fail.

Most recently the road surface and pavement structure of a newly built road

showed signs of damage which had to be investigated and it was found that a contributing cause to the failure was the condition of the subsoil drainage.

All of the stormwater structures alongside this street were found to be filled with illegally dumped rubbish and dirt which clogged the outlets of the subsoil drains draining into these stormwater structures. The subsoil drains could not function to protect the road layer works from subsurface moisture, which is one of the factors leading to the premature failure of the road.

Preliminary estimates indicates that the repair work could cost between R1.2-1.8 mill which would entail the reconstruction of the effected layer works, resurfacing the road as well as cleaning the subsoil drains.

The municipality appeals to communities to NOT flush unsuitable items down the toilet, and to help prevent people from throwing stuff down manholes.

Report blocked stormwater drains and sewerage complaints to Civil Engineering Services on 044 801 9262/66 during office hours or 044 801 6300 after hours.



Waste should be collected in refuse bags and placed for collection on your areas waste removal days.

Builders' rubble and waste not suitable for bags must be dropped at the municipal refuse site on the R102 (airport road).

If you can provide names, vehicle registration details or addresses of

alleged perpetrators who have dumped illegally and you are willing to make a statement in this regard, please report it to Law Enforcement at 044 801 6350 or sprins@george.gov.za. You don't need a photograph of the perpetrator, but it will strengthen the case for a warning or fine to be issued.

World Read Aloud Day

George Libraries celebrated World Read Aloud Day on 7 February at different schools and crèches. Rachel Williams, Manager: George Libraries, said that our libraries teamed up with Nal'ibali, the national reading-for-enjoyment campaign by reading the same story on the same day to all children in our communities. The story this year was *The Lost Kitten* by Stacey Fru. This story is available in eleven languages.

Williams said World Read-Aloud Day is all about books and reading. It creates an awareness of reading as an enjoyable fun-filled activity that stimulates our intellectual curiosity. "It is also a day where children are exposed to new authors and stories of cultural and educational importance. This day presents the perfect opportunity to grab a book, find an audience and entertain people using reading," she said.

The library staff visited different schools in all our areas for example Noll Primary School as well as

the schools in Haarlem, Uniondale, Conville, Thembalethu, Waboomskraal, Up with Downs, Motion Academy, Heelyd Speeltyd, Olympia, House, Outeniqua Primary and Blanco Primary Schools. Different crèches were also included in the campaign.

Why is reading important Williams said reading is important because it demonstrates to children that they are being cared for and it teaches them new words. It also exposes them to different experiences. She said in the case of story for the year the child learns to take care of animals. Children can also become story active because they can be encouraged to draw a picture of their favourite part of the story, or their pet. Children can also be assisted to make a list of different kinds of pets and how to take care of them.

National Book Week will run from 5 - 11 September 2024 and the Funda Mzantsi Reading Championship will be held from 2-7 October.



Angelina Figland from Waboomskraal Library read the Afrikaans translation of *The Lost Kitten* by Stacey Fru at Waboomskraal Primary for grade 3 to 7 learners in celebration of World Read Aloud Day.



At the Community Safety Forum Workshop are stakeholders front from left, Mayor Leon van Wyk, Lee-Anne Meiring, Senior Manager: Community Safety, Lt.Col. Nontsasa Mzwanele from Conville Police, Lt.Col.Kwena Magwai from Thembalethu Police, Kali Komzi from Thembalethu Neighbourhood Watch (Zone 1,4,6 and 9) and Gladmore Kabasa from Thembalethu Neighbourhood Watch. At the back are Khumbuzile Magobo from Thembalethu Neighbourhood Watch, Vuyani Mbaqa, Regional Manager: Department of Police Oversight and Safety, Zolile Lisa from Thembalethu Neighbourhood Watch, Mzukisi Skosana from the Department of Social Development, Xolani Henge, Chairperson of Thembalethu Community Police Forum and Cllr Marais Kruger, Portfolio Councillor for Community Safety.

Community Safety Forum

Executive Mayor of George, Ald Leon van Wyk opened the first Community Safety Forum Workshop in Conville held recently and said all stakeholders need to move into the implementation phase of the Community Safety Plan. He also highlighted the importance of community involvement in keeping everyone safe.

"Our economy is not doing so well, we need to look after ourselves. It's essential that we participate in the safety of our communities, in fact it is critical. Make your input into what we need to do now, so that we can move forward. Participation and collaboration are essential to work well together," he said.

Dawie Adonis, Director of Community Services at George Municipality, which includes Community Safety, said in his address it is clear that one of the strategies in our Community Safety plan is to engage with the partners that are present, including the police, neighbourhood watches, the Community Police Forums, Department of Social Development, Department of Police Oversight and Safety, SPCA and more.

Adonis said George had a 100 000 people increase between the latest census and the last one and that brings challenges to all stakeholders. Adonis said we need to align ourselves to address the difficulties of safety. "We must ask ourselves what we did right and what we did wrong up until now and enhance what we have done right," he said. He added that all stakeholders need to become proactive in their endeavours and approach and move away from blaming other stakeholders.

The work session, held over two days at the Conville

Community Centre, concentrated on areas Conville and Thembalethu on the first day and areas in the rest of George, Pacaltsdorp, Uniondale and Haarlem on the following day.

Lee-Anne Meiring, Senior Manager: Community Safety, said the stakeholders covered the Community Safety Plan during the work sessions, had inputs from the South African Police Service (SAPS) and inputs from the Department of Social Development and then they divided into smaller discussion groups. The main topics discussed were the Urban Design of George, the social issues in the bigger areas and law enforcement in the greater George.

Meiring said the workshops were a success with input being gathered from the community and safety role-players. An implementation plan will be compiled with the inputs and distributed for discussion. Those matters that can be handled will be done so through the Community Safety forum.

The George Municipality reaffirms its commitment to fostering a safe environment through collective action and shared responsibility. The Community Safety Forum Workshop represents a significant step forward in uniting stakeholders and citizens in the pursuit of a secure and thriving community.

Xolani Henge, chairperson of the Thembalethu Community Police Forum, said criminals are mostly involved in organised crime. He said he is happy that the Forum is a point of departure to working together in finding solutions for criminal activity.

Willem Frans, chairperson of the Conville Community Police Forum, said working together is of utmost importance. He said crime figures are so high that the police service cannot fight it alone.

OCC visitors impressed by GO GEORGE

Raven Benny, a wheelchair user for the last 24 years, has missed only one OCC to date. This was after he coincidentally happened to visit the Garden Route during the first race and was faced with closed streets and red flags as he entered town. Awed by the concept, Benny has been bringing groups of wheelchair users to the OCC ever since.

This year, he was intent on using the most affordable, available, safe public transport from KZN to George (using a long-distance bus service) and in and around George. He made email enquiries about the GO GEORGE ticketing system and where to buy cards before they embarked on their journey.

“We are in awe of the efficiency of the GO GEORGE bus service. We had time for six trips in all directions and found it safe and easy to use, accessible to navigate independently and surprisingly affordable. The bus service allowed us to circulate independently throughout the town during our two-day stay.”

Eighteen members of the GO GEORGE communications team pulled out all the stops to support participants and visitors, manning an information gazebo next to the demonstration minibus and telling visitors more about the service and its focus on universal accessibility. As always, the mascot Georgie and communication champions were there to cheer on the participants and pose for photos with “fans”. This time, they also participated in the fun go-kart race, making the finish line exhausted but chuffed with themselves.



Raven Benny led a team from Kwazulu-Natal, using only public transport to and in George and back home. To accommodate their five wheelchairs on one bus, some of the team members were assisted to sit on the seats while folding up their wheelchairs. With him is Shirnae van Coller from the GO GEORGE Call Centre who guided the group to get to the Transport Hub to top up their cards with trips.



George Deputy Mayor, Cllr Raybin Figland and mascot Georgie sent off the athletes with inspiring words of support.



George Municipality's Public Transport Oversight Official, James Robb (second from right), wishing the GO GEORGE go-kart team well before they “take on the open road in their first attempt at the coveted title”. The driver in front is Akhona Gxumisa and at the back from left are Tyron Jeyi, Thobile Simelele, Robb and Ryan Manuel.



People living on the streets gathered together on Human Rights Day. Standing from the left Captain Floris, SAPS; Sargeant Plaatjies, SAPS; Mr Fail, SAHARA and Mr Gelderbloem, Kidstop.

365 days of Human Rights

George Municipality marked Human Rights Day with a meaningful event involving 80 individuals living on the streets. The South African Police Service participated in the day with the municipality facilitating a dialogue between the police service and the homeless population.

The primary objective of the day was to reaffirm the rights and responsibilities inherent to all individuals, including those experiencing homelessness.

Attendees, which included representatives from the Police service, Kidstop, SAHARA, and CREMHOOG, collectively emphasized the need for a year-round (365 days) commitment to human rights,

rather than confining it to a single day of observance.

Asavela Mandongana, a Social Worker at the Municipality, addressed the gathering, highlighting the crucial message that homelessness is not a choice, and individuals should not be defined by their circumstances.

“We do not choose to be homeless, but we can choose to change our circumstances to become a better version of ourselves and reduce homelessness,” Mandongana stated, underscoring the importance of avoiding labels that can perpetuate human rights violations.

The event served as a reminder of the collective responsibility to uphold and protect the rights of all individuals within society. By fostering understanding, dialogue, and practical initiatives, George Municipality continues its commitment to promoting human rights and addressing the challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

Estelle Fredericks, who is actively involved in working with the homeless community, can be reached for additional information on upcoming Forum meetings or ongoing programs and projects aimed at assisting the homeless on 044 802 2000.

Pacaltsdorp Lights Festival a resounding success

The Pacaltsdorp Lights Festival was a resounding success and attracted between 900 to 1100 people inside and outside the Kaptein Dikkop Amphitheatre. Cllr Raybin Figland, Deputy Mayor of George officially opened the festive season by switching the festive lights on at the Kaptein Dikkop Amphitheatre. The line-up of artists and choirs that performed at the event focussed on the spirit of Christmas with well-loved Carols.

The Pacaltsdorp Minister's Fraternal with their spouses were part of the celebrations with Cllrs Theresa Jeyi, Marchelle

Kleynhans and Ebrahim America supporting the event on behalf of George Council. George Municipality thanked the Fraternal for their involvement and support of the festival.

The Festival remains a very important event on the yearly calendar of George Municipality as it aims to contribute to the start of a good and cheery festive season for all, showcasing some of George's best talent, entertaining the children and providing much needed opportunities to local traders that had food and arts/crafts stalls at the event.



Deputy Mayor Raybin Figland officially switches the Christmas lights on after the Pacaltsdorp Mass choir assisted him in the count down.