

## FEZILE DABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT USHERED IN NEW HOPE TO THE COMMUNITY



**The MMC of Local Economic Development Cllr. Kau Khumalo**

The MMC of Local Economic Development Cllr Kau Khumalo addressing the recently held Local Economic Development Summit in Kroonstad, told delegates that Fezile Dabi District Municipality is a large municipal area and is home to about 17.3% of the population of the Free State, and it is known as the grain basket of South Africa.

Khumalo said that the district is the only area in the province where manufacturing is the main contributing sector to the district's economy, because of SASOL. Apart from agriculture and manufacturing other key economic drivers are mining, construction, tourism and SMME development, however he emphasized that this district is no exception when it comes to unemployment and poverty, as the majority of the people in the district still live below the poverty line – earning an income below R1 600 per month.



**MMC Kau Khumalo told the delegates that they have initiated few partnerships in order address some of the challenges in this Municipality,**

MMC Khumalo told delegates that they have initiated few partnerships in order to address some of the challenges in this Municipality, "In acknowledgement of the seriousness of the problem of unemployment and poverty and the importance of forming partnerships, Fezile Dabi District Municipality has taken bold steps towards addressing these challenges, and this Summit which is held here in Kroonstad is a typical example of the District Municipality's pro-active approach, we have since established partnerships such as;

- The partnership with Rand Water Foundation for the Koppies Greenhouse Project. It is anticipated to erect 20 double span greenhouses. Currently the feasibility study for this project is being conducted.
- Sorghum growing project - Land (Farm Wildehondekop) owned by Ngwathe Local Municipality (Parys) was identified for the project. A cooperative consisting of six emerging farmers has been trained and registered as a legal entity. The cooperative is called Sizabantu Agricultural Primary Co-operative Limited.

This municipality has been identified as the first municipality to implement the initiative with the understanding that the programme will be rolled out to other local municipalities within the district. An agreement with Tiger Brands has been entered into– and they have requested 3000 tons of sorghum to be delivered to their plant in Potchefstroom”.

Khumalo highlighted that Entrepreneurial support in the district remains one of the very important priorities of his department, “One of our LED objectives is to develop and support SMMEs in our district as this sector is one of our key economic drivers. Every year we identify SMMEs in terms of our entrepreneurial support system policy for training and the purchasing of relevant equipment, in this regard we have a partnership with Flavius Mareka FET College for the training of the identified beneficiaries in basic and advanced management skills. Clearly we value the importance of capacity building and empowerment of our local people”.



**FDDM Local Economic Development ushered a new hope to the Community of this Municipality. MMC Cllr. Kau Khumalo attending the Summit.**

The long awaited District Economic Forum is finally becoming a reality according to Cllr Khumalo, “The terms of reference for this forum has been finalized and the first meeting will take place this month. The purpose of the forum is to establish strategic partnerships in order to ensure sustainable economic development in the district, I must highlight that we have formed partnership with IDC for the establishment of the Development Agency in this district, and IDC is going to fund the establishment of this agency. Currently we are in the process of appointing board members, the purpose of this agency is to implement high impact economic development projects”

Also forming part of the pro-active approach is the resolution to review and update the district’s LED strategy. Significant progress has been made in this regard. The following core issues will be addressed in the strategy:

- Supporting local enterprises and stimulating job opportunities
- Increasing income levels thus enabling residents to pay for municipal services
- Broadening the tax and revenue base of the local municipalities

- Developing a balance between pro-growth and pro-poor intervention
- Attracting outside investment

Attended by more than two hundred and fifty delegates drawn from different sectors of our community including, government, non-governmental organizations and municipalities, the summit was a success, and important strength and weakness of this region economically were identified and specific resolution were taken to address on some of the weakness, and capitalize on strengths and opportunities.