

Bakwena contributes to significant storm water upgrades in Zeerust

During heavy rains in January 2011, the Klein Marico River flooded and washed away part of the bridge linking Ikageleng Township and Zeerust in the North West Province. This highlighted an issue that the town has struggled with for some time. During heavy downpours, the main road of Zeerust in the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality has been subject to frequent flooding due to aging and inadequate storm water drainage.

Bakwena Platinum Corridor Concessionaire, operator of the N1N4 toll route, is contributing to the upgrade of the storm water drainage system in the main street of this Northwest town and the connection of the storm water system to the river. SANRAL which is responsible for the R49 route is also contributing to upgrade the stormwater system.

Construction on the R15-million storm water upgrades started in March 2015 and will be complete in February 2017. It involves augmenting the storm water system, the reconstruction of kerb inlet structures and resurfacing the main road. V&V Consulting Engineers designed the upgrades, which also include the provision of a secondary system on the R49 that links into a bulk drainage system ensuring effective disposal of water emanating from higher lying areas.

Says Jacques van Niekerk of G4 Civils, the construction company appointed by Bakwena to complete the works, "The replacement of the storm water reticulation is particularly challenging since the original plans are out of date. We found that the existing infrastructure was not installed according to good engineering practice and some of the storm water systems were not connected to the larger system. The existing system suffered from lack of routine maintenance and some of the pipes and kerb inlets were completely blocked, thereby preventing adequate drainage."

Uncontrolled storm water and wet road conditions are particularly harmful to the road surface, causing stripping, cracking and ultimately potholes.

Bakwena's contract as the concessionaire of the N1N4 routes make provision for community socio-economic upliftment.

Adds Liam Clarke, commercial manager of Bakwena, "As the toll concessionaire of the N4 in the North West Province we take great interest in the plight of communities along the route. These upgrades were very necessary for the continued economic growth of the area. In addition, we make use of local labour from the town of Zeerust, as part of the works. Up to 80% of this labour consists of previously disadvantaged individuals so the community sees the benefit from direct employment and skills transfer from the two year project."

Zeerust is a commercial town situated in Ngaka Modiri Molema district council in the Marico valley, serving the surrounding farming and mining communities. Approximately 240 kilometres northwest of Johannesburg on route to Gaborone, it lies on the N4, the main road link between South Africa and Botswana.

Cllr. S Senna, mayor of Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality says, "We are grateful to Bakwena for the support it has given our town and our community. It is also resurfacing the entire toll road between Zeerust through to Groot Marico and this is progressing well. The upgrades will certainly help the town and the surrounding communities."

Clarke concludes that the highway-resurfacing project, which kicked off in April 2015, would see the rehabilitation of nearly 40km of road at an estimated cost of about R250-million. The various improvements along the N1N4 route are part of Bakwena's ongoing commitment to maintaining these national routes.

Bakwena is responsible for maintaining a 95km stretch of national road between Pretoria and Warmbaths, as well as a 290km section of the N4 from Pretoria, through Rustenburg and Zeerust, to the Botswana border post at Skilpadhek.