



Keynote Address by the Sedibeng District Municipality Member of the Mayoral Committee, Cllr Mluleki Nkosi on the occasion of the Official Opening of the Randvaal Library on the 26th November 2010, in Sedibeng.

Programme Director:

Our Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring you greetings from Sedibeng District Municipality. It is with great pleasure that we came to this event. I rise in congratulations to our counterparts and constituent Local Municipality, Midvaal.

With great joy and pride in my heart, I take my hat off for the noble idea of this event. It is in the face of electronic onslaught being waged against our children and communities that the idea of building a Library in this digital age tugs at the heartstrings.

Programme Director, it as we are looking with keen interest to the more than 600 000 matriculants country-wide writing their exams that a question arises”Did we have enough well equipped libraries to prepare our learners?

The answer is invariably a resounding “No”. It is more fashionable to build gaming arcades and shopping malls for the wandering eyes of our youths than it is to build libraries.

It is with pride that I am reminded of my first entry into a library. The opening of a world hitherto closed to me was intoxicating to say the least. That I had so many books to explore held a fascination that I cannot explain today.

The opening of this library today, the second one to be opened in Midvaal in the past twelve months, heralds a new beginning for the children and grandchildren of Sedibeng in general, and Midvaal in particular, that the world is theirs to explore through the many books that fill this library.

A public or community library is:

- A local gateway to knowledge
- Provides basic conditions for lifelong learning

- A living force for education, culture and information
- A local centre of information, which makes all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to all its users.

Community libraries are community centres with the purpose to provide the entire community with educational, recreational and cultural **information**. One must not overlook the importance of information as a resource for development.

Information is fundamental to the process of socio-economic development. The quality of life of individuals (and a nation) is increasingly dependent on their capacity to absorb, act on and use information. Access to information:

- Allows individuals to make informed decisions that can change the course of their lives
- Ensures a competitive economy
- Promotes education and lifelong learning
- Promotes democracy and nation building
- Allows individuals to participate meaningfully in their environments
- Enhances personal growth and development
- Improves the educational levels of communities
- Empowers communities which leads to an improved quality of life

The above mentioned reasons highlight the importance of the provision of free internet access to people and their communities. More and more people rely on public libraries for Internet access for training and education, job-seeking, interactions with government, communication and entertainment.

Without doubt, the Internet, including e-mail and the World Wide Web, provides those connected to it with an unprecedented amount of information at one location.

The Randvaal library, as well as all other Midvaal libraries, provides free access to the Internet. This library currently hosts 4 computer workstations that allow internet access to the public. The Randvaal library also provides computers, without Internet to assist users with a variety of tasks including the following:

- Typing of letters
- Formulating CV's
- Admin for businesses
- Typing of school and research projects

In providing these facilities our aim is to close the “digital divide” that separates people who have access to computers, technology and the internet, and all the benefits and opportunities that go with it, from those who have no such access.

We trust that also this community will greatly benefit from the services that we are offering through the provision of this upgraded facility and access to advanced technologies and the Internet.

Programme Director, we hope that the community of Midvaal shall seize this opportunity with both hands with a view to make their mark on the world that does not take kindly to those unfortunate to be less schooled.

I thank you