

Executive Mayor's Foreword

We have just completed our successful Women's Month programme and are now entering the similarly significant historic month in the country and our Region, the Heritage Month. In our Region, we remember the atrocities of the 3rd September 1984.

Nationally, South Africans celebrate Heritage Day on the 24th September. This is an important celebration throughout South Africa and offers the people of the country the opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the diverse cultures of the country.

In our region, the 03 September 1984 (BLOODY MONDAY) marked the beginning of an uprising that resulted in the final push of the apartheid government led by Civic, Women, Students and Religious sectors. On the day, 72 people died throughout the region. The Vaal Uprising was largely driven by discontent over rent increases by local Councils. This marked the longest and most widespread period of sustained protest against the white rule in South Africa.

The National Party government responded by sending large contingents of riot squads, shooting people with live ammunition and rubber bullets, which resulted in a total of 72 people losing their lives on the day with many more killed in days to follow, and many political leaders arrested that led to popular trials like Delmas and Sharpeville six trials.

After the advent of democracy in 1994, the democratic Government declared September as a Heritage month. The events of September 1984 are part of a rich regional heritage which must be commemorated and preserved during the month. And this historical event has since been identified by Council to be on calendar of events identified to be commemorated during heritage month.

This month also affords the community of Sedibeng to celebrate the life, talent and contribution of its own in the choral music by David Khunou. This is done through that choral festival that is annually hosted at Mphatlatsane Theatre and has since grown to attract choirs for the SADC region. This is one of the appreciation programs in recognition of our local icons.

It is in this regard that I invite you all to observe and be part of this historically significant month programmes so as to ensure that we do not lose sight of its historic importance.

Objectives

- To remind our communities of the great suffering and loss of lives that accompanied the struggle for the liberation of our country;
- To profile the Sedibeng Region through showcasing its rich history;
- To honour our fallen heroes and heroines who died during the uprising;

- To commemorate the 27th anniversary of the Vaal Uprising in dignified manner befitting
- To acknowledge and recognize the legacy of the 1984 generation and share their experiences with the youth of today.

Commemoration Programme

In the month long history, in partnership with Local Municipalities, the program involves a number of activities which includes: Carnival and other cultural activities.

Memorial Lecture: the lecture will be conducted through a panel of speakers who will present on different perspectives on the subject matter under the theme” *“Reclaiming Our Heritage To Consolidate Governance In The Greater Vaal”* where after the presentations, the audience will be invite to interact with the panel.

The objectives of the lecture are defined by the broader objectives of the entire programme of the heritage month, and the lecture will be held on the **01 August 2011 at Sedibeng College of Education** (formerly known as Sebokeng College of Education). The programme will commence at 16h00.

School Visits: Identified community leaders and affected survivors will be deployed in various schools in the District. The purpose of this exercise is to educate the youth about the history of the Region with specific reference to the 03 September 1984 Vaal Uprising and role played by the Vaal then in our National Liberation Struggle.

Prayer Session: The prayer session will be held in partnership with the religious community in the District and the purpose of the prayer session amongst others, is to acknowledge the role played by our Churches in our liberation struggle in the country in particular towards and beyond 03 September 1984 Vaal uprising, eg Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church etc.

The session will be preceded by buildup programme of public representatives, political activist and the survivors who will be deployed to various churches across the District who will be sharing the experiences of 03 September 1984 Vaal uprising and the role of the church then and the current role of the Church in building a better society, the Church visits Programme will commerce on the **18 August** with woman’s prayer services and the Church service for the two Sundays of the 20 and 27 August 2011.

The prayer session will be held on the 02 September 2011 at Mphatlalatsane Theater the programme will start at 10h00.

Main Rally: The main rally will be held on the 03 September 2011 at the Bophelong Stadium, the programme will start with a **march** from Bophelong robots at 10h00 to the stadium where the main

rally will be held. The programme in the stadium will be two fold, namely; the cultural programme that will start at 09h00-11h00 followed by political programme that will start from 11h00-13h00 and later the cultural programme will continue till 15h30.

Khunou: Choral Music Festival: The festival will be held on the weekend of the 17-18 September 2011 at Mphatlalatsane Theatre in Sebokeng, this festival is in honour of the late legendary DM Khunou who produced one of the best known hymns to date *“Modimo re boka wena”*. The Choral Music Festival has grown to the extent of attracting a number of choirs from the SADC member state.

This year’s commemoration will be held under the theme: *“Reclaiming Our Heritage To Consolidate Governance In The Greater Vaal”*