

Chalking up vibrant skills drive for youth

GROWING our own people is built into the department's human resources operation and is seeing scores of young people engaged in skilled work while building stimulating careers.

MEC Thandiswa Marawu province that her corporate services division awarded 112 bursaries to scholars in 2016-17 which opened the doors to studies in civil engineering, architecture and quantity surveying.

The number of internships offered by the department was double, with 220 young people being taken through an induction programme which ran in all six departmental regions and at head office. There was also work for 100 TVET students.

All of this, said MEC Marawu, is part of the department's effort to curb the high unemployment rate among the youth.

She said youth unemployment in the province stands at 36%. One in three youths have no work.

While bursary students could expect to find work in the department upon graduating, bursaries were also offered to people already employed in the department.

She said the latest skills audit had revealed "capacity gaps" and the bursary and internship programme could fill them.

Employed women also increased from 34% to 39%.

"The will to ensure 50% represen-

tation is still there in the equity committee," said the MEC.

All these educational, infrastructure and roadwork targets were being drawn through a project management system developed by the ICT (information and communications technology section) and buildings unit.

She said the programme was giving managers a clearer view of the department's overall performance.

One advance being driven by the ICT division was to try and get 48 060 workers in the Extended Public Works Programme bank accounts.

The Postbank payment system had worked, but getting a bank account with all the benefits and banking bells and whistles was far more enjoyable, she said.

Sixty workers in the pilot phase were running accounts and 48 000 workers would be migrating to their own bank accounts in the next few months. They would be watching their wages going through into their account immediately and seamlessly.

The department pays a total wage bill of R25-million a month to workers in the EPWP.

In five years the department spent R30-million in tertiary bursaries for 250 students.

"More than 90% (225) of these students have been absorbed into the department or other provincial departments," said the MEC.