

R3bn roads budget now with transport

Departments in process of refining their identities

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A TOTAL of R3-billion of roads infrastructure budget and part of the extended public works programme (EPWP) has been moved from the roads and public works department to the transport department.

This, as roads will be moved to fall

under the provincial transport department, effective from next month. The move was authorised by former President Jacob Zuma when he signed the proclamation in August last year.

Public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu said more than a thousand workers would be moved to the transport department.

Transport provincial spokeswoman Khuselwa Rantjie confirmed that 1 278 staff members would be part of the new department.

The roads and public works department will be known as the department of public works while the department of transport will remain unchanged.

The process of transferring the roads function from the department of roads and public works commenced in June 2016, where a memorandum of agreement between the Office of the Premier, the department of transport and the department of roads and public works agreed on joint funding.

“As a result of this move, R3-billion for roads infrastructure and part of EPWP budget has been allocated to [the] transport department.

“With regards to district staff, a transitional arrangement will be implemented where there is a need for movement of staff – meaning that they will temporarily remain where they are,” Marawu said.

Rantjie said management of her department was split between transport and public works.

“At the heart of this move is a need to ensure collocation of transport sector functions under one department in line with the national Department of Transport,” Rantjie said.

Meanwhile, in her policy speech at the Bhisho legislature, transport MEC Weziwe Tikana said they would continue with the tarring of roads leading to tourism attraction destinations, hospitals and schools.

“We will commence with the upgrading of a number of strategic roads, which includes Mlamli Hospital road, Musong Road, Willowvale

to Dwesa Nature Reserve, R72 to Hamburg, East Coast Resorts road and Hluleka Nature Reserve road,” said transport MEC Weziwe Tikana said in her policy speech.

She committed the department to continue implementing the maintenance strategy across the local municipal areas of the six districts.

“The inclement weather experienced recently has also adversely affected bridges and smaller structures across the province.

“To ensure the safety of road users, the department commits to assess the extent of the damage and ensure that these structures are repaired to a usable condition,” she said. — zolilem@tisoblackstar.co.za