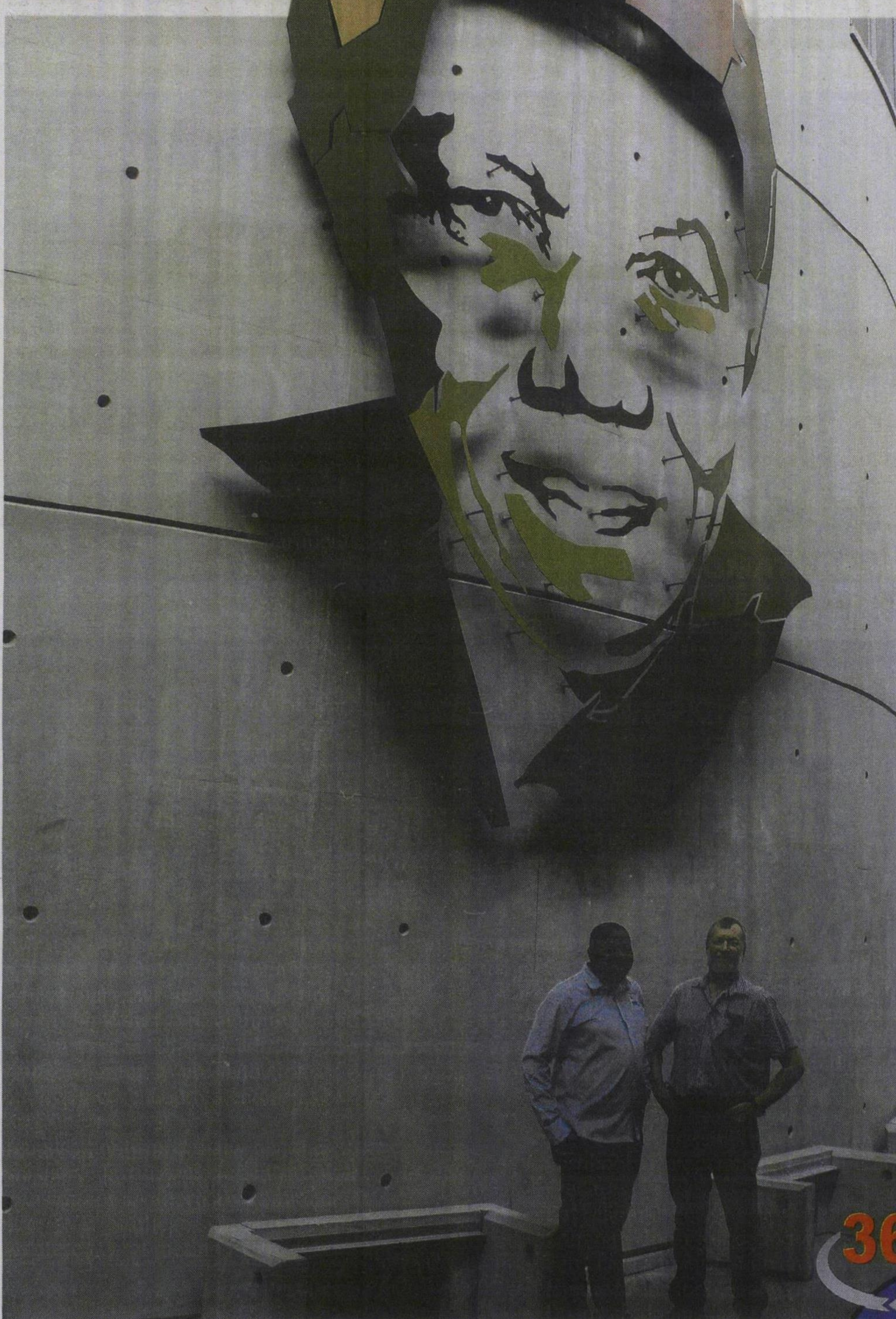




The entrance to the Mpumalanga High Court building.



Lesego Mashigo and Frans Lamprecht in the corridor separating the two buildings.

High Court almost ready for handover

Arisa Janse van Rensburg

MBOMBELA - "This is my pride, my baby. I have been here for four years now and I am so happy to see that this project is finished." These were the words of, the senior foreman of Group Five, the company constructing the Mpumalanga High Court, when he accompanied *Lowvelder* on an exclusive tour of the brand-new building on Tuesday.

The newspaper was also accompanied by Lesego Mashigo from the implementing agent, Independent Development Trust (IDT), who said they were excited to hand the project over to the clients, the Department of Justice and Correctional Services and the Department of Public Works.

The project initially started in October 2013 and was supposed to be completed within 24 months. This deadline was not met.

Last March the IDT set a completion date of October 3, but in September it was moved to December 10 and has now reached practical completion.

Lamprecht explained that the court consists of two buildings - one that will be used for court procedures and one that will be used for administration.

The court building boasts 12 courtrooms, six of which will be used for civil cases and six for criminal ones.

"The interiors of all the courtrooms

are finished in beautiful kiaat and the art and furniture were locally designed and made," Lamprecht said.

Access for judges to a specific courtroom is granted by fingerprint scanners for extra protection and judges' chambers include a separate room for their secretaries as well as their own bathrooms.

The administration building is made up of four floors that are divided into a west and east wing.

This hosts five governmental departments:

Family Court, Insolvency Court, Master of the High Court, the National Prosecuting Authority and Legal Aid.

Extra features, like a playpen for children of members

of the public who visit the court, and a 180-degree view of the city from the roof of the building, will definitely establish it as a landmark.

According to Mashigo, the minister of the Department of Justice and Correctional Services "wants the court to be open by the end of February. We are in an election process and I think they will definitely have it done".

At the time of going to press, the department did not respond to enquiries by the newspaper.

Mashigo also confirmed that when the contract is handed over to the clients, it will make provision for an alternative entrance through the TVET College side of the court, "although there is no timeline for this".

The interiors of all the courtrooms are finished in beautiful kiaat and the art and furniture were locally designed and made

360°

Take a virtual tour of the building

lowvelder.co.za

TIMELINE

2008	Designs for the High Court building are completed.
October 2013	Construction on the High Court building commences.
October 2015	The High Court is scheduled to be completed. It was, however, not completed due to unknown reasons.
June 2016	Completion is postponed to this date, but it did not open and there were still a lot of questions regarding the building's stormwater infrastructure and electricity supply.
March 2018	The Independent Development Trust (IDT) says the High Court is 95 per cent complete and will open on October 3.
September 2018	The IDT postpones the completion date of the court to December 10. They say previous delays were due to contractual issues that have since been sorted out.
January 2019	The High Court has reached practical completion and is ready to be handed over to the clients.



Inside one of the courtrooms.