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City of Ekurhuleni works to build the township economy

OVER the years, enterprises and markets ranging from retail, service industries, construction and real estate, manufacturing, transport, finance, creative industry, tourism, information and communication technology and green economy are steadily mushrooming in the townships.

In the aforementioned cluster of township businesses lie opportunities to alleviate poverty, job creation and maximising township economy. Although these are largely micro-enterprises with low capital and low skills bases, they have proved to uplift the lives of the people who stood up and seized the opportunities available.

Township enterprises are operated informally and provide a range of goods and services to meet the needs of township communities and beyond.

The City of Ekurhuleni now offers an online portal for the formal and informal business sectors. Through this initiative, the city aims at helping business owners gain access to munic-



BUSINESSMAN, artist and presenter Sibusiso Leope – also known as DJ Sbu – speaks at a stokvel indaba in Mamelodi.

ipal business services in the comfort of their homes or offices.

The online portal system will bring much-needed convenience when applying for trading permits and business licences.

Informal traders are urged to take advantage of this portal and obtain trading permits to be fully compliant to conduct business in the city.

The government believes that

township enterprises have a distinct and vital role to play in helping to create a vibrant socially inclusive, labour-absorbing and growing economy.

The city's Economic Development Department is in collaboration with various national and provincial structures, it facilitates job creation, skills development, poverty alleviation and enhancement of industrial competitiveness.

It focuses on arresting the flight of strategic investments by facilitating reduction in the cost of doing business within Ekurhuleni.

In addition, this department facilitates: the development of small, medium and micro enterprises and co-operatives; investment promotion, facilitation and retention; and extended public works programme and community works programme development and job creation programmes in the city.

One of the Economic Development

Department's strategic goals is accelerated and shared economic growth through skills development and enterprise support and development that improves the livelihoods of diverse communities.

People with a common interest in various businesses can form co-operative societies. The co-operative societies are welfare organisations which individuals join to augment their income-generating capacity in economic activities by joint endeavour. Once these are formed, the Economic Development Department in the City of Ekurhuleni will support the co-operatives' development.

Minibus taxis, in the absence of an adequate public transport system, have played and continue to play an essential role in the daily commuting of millions of township working class people to and from work and shopping outlets at affordable rates and employing more than 70 000 people in Gauteng.

Spaza shops are still a lucrative business in the township. In Gauteng spaza shops are a sector which generates R7 billion a year. This sector has historically played a role of a micro-convenient grocery store providing basic necessities to township residents within walking distance.

Burial societies contribute to the township economy; their aim is mainly to provide decent and dignified funerals. They operate as an informal funeral insurance cover at affordable rates.

In stokvels financial gains are in abundance. Stokvels have evolved with time from funding education of black children and providing credit to township entrepreneurs. Recently, there are stokvels ranging from property stokvels, wedding stokvels to mention a few.

In recent years townships are experiencing a rise in party décor, furniture manufacturing, clothing and textile and construction. | Ekurhuleni