



Publication: TheCitizenKZN - Main
Title: Business slams mayor's cost-cutting measures
Publish date: 21 Aug 2024
Page: 7

Reach: 44390
AVE: R 30104.65
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Business slams mayor's cost-cutting measures

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A Limpopo mayor has vowed not to use hotels and lodges for council functions in favour of municipal halls, stadiums and open spaces in an effort to cut costs.

But an umbrella body for the business-estates fraternity in the province, known as the Forum for the Limpopo Entrepreneurs (Fole), claimed he was "speaking rubbish".

"After they looted millions, they want to punish innocent business people? That is rubbish to say the least. It will never happen in this municipality," said Fole provincial chair Siviko Mabunda yesterday.

Polokwane local municipality mayor John Mpe said hotels and lodges were expensive and that with the current economic meltdown, he intends to save the money for service delivery.

Mpe, who also chairs SA Local Government Association (Salga) in Limpopo and the ANC Peter Mokaba region, was speaking during the handover of a 1.4km paved road in GaMakibelo Village in Moletji

outside Polokwane recently.

The road was budgeted at R10.2 million and has created 20 manual jobs for employees of the extended public works programme from around the village.

A fortnight ago, Mpe welcomed more than 5 000 mayors and speakers from the country's 257 municipalities for Salga's joint council sitting at the municipality's Jack Bote's Hall.

"When Salga said we are coming, they were baffled to be welcomed in a municipal hall. They thought our meeting will be held in a five-star hotel, but I said no," he said.

"When I told them we are going to a gala dinner, they also thought they were going to some fancy hotel. But they were only baffled to be hosted in another hall at the new Peter Mokaba Stadium, where we paid nothing."

Fole said Mpe was dreaming and that his plans will never see the light of day.

"If he dared try it, the business community will organise protest marches and make it difficult for him to lead this municipality," said Mabunda.

