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Emalahleni mayor delivers final state of the municipality address

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Emalahleni Local Municipality mayor, Nontombizanele Koni, delivered her final state of the municipality address (Soma) for the 2021–2026 term at the Dordrecht Youth Centre on Wednesday, highlighting achievements made over the past five years while outlining plans for the 2026/27 financial year.

Joining the mayor were council speaker Ncedisa Mtyobile and municipal manager Thozama Madotyeni, alongside councillors, traditional leaders, government officials, stakeholders and community members.

Before the official address, municipal leadership presided over

the opening of the newly established Chief Chicken Restaurant in Dordrecht.

The facility is expected to contribute towards local economic growth, create employment opportunities and generate additional municipal revenue.

Delivering her address, Koni reflected on the municipality's progress since 2021, describing the period as one marked by both achievements and challenges.

Among the municipality's major successes was the improvement in its audit outcome from qualified audit opinions in previous years to an unqualified audit opinion for the 2024/25 financial year.

She highlighted significant improvements in access to basic



Emalahleni Local Municipality mayor Nontombizanele Koni speaking during the Soma.

Picture: SPHOKUHLE NONGAUZA

services, including electricity, water, sanitation and refuse removal.

According to municipal statistics, household access to electricity increased from 78.5% in 2011 to 95.5% in 2022.

Access to piped water, flush toilets and refuse removal services also showed notable improvements over the period.

Koni further pointed to ongoing infrastructure development projects, including road construction, bridge upgrades, public sanitation facilities, electrification projects and sports infrastructure developments across the municipality.

In the area of economic development, the municipality supported local agriculture through livestock distribution programmes, including the provision of 70 rams to emerging farmers, while also assisting small businesses through various enterprise development initiatives.

About 20 small businesses benefited from support programmes aimed at stimulating local economic growth.

The municipality also reported the creation of about 350 employment opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) during the current administration.

Education was another area highlighted during the address, with matric pass rates in the municipality improving from 62% in 2021 to 88.2% in 2025, which Koni described as encouraging for the future of the municipality.

Looking ahead, the mayor

announced a total municipal budget of R347m for the 2026/27 financial year, with major allocations directed towards infrastructure development, road maintenance, electrification projects and waste management improvements.

Among the key projects planned for the coming year are the maintenance of about 15km of roads across various wards, upgrades to electricity infrastructure, landfill site improvements and the installation of smart metering systems.

The municipality also outlined major sector department investments, including water and sanitation projects valued at more than R70m and transport infrastructure projects worth R26.5m.

While celebrating progress, Koni acknowledged that several challenges remained, including declining grant funding, infrastructure backlogs, weak revenue collection and growing demands for services amid limited financial resources.

"We understand the frustrations of our communities regarding roads, water supply and sanitation challenges.

"While resources remain limited, we will continue working with all stakeholders to ensure these challenges are addressed progressively," she said.

Community concerns raised during the session included delays in road and bridge projects, water shortages and sanitation backlogs.

Municipal leadership assured residents that project prioritisation would continue to be guided by planning processes and available resources.

Concluding her address she said, "We have made meaningful progress over the past five years, but there is still much work to be done.

"Together we can continue building a municipality that serves its people better and creates opportunities for future generations."

The address marked Koni's final Soma of the 2021–2026 municipal term.

Notice board

The notice board is intended to help people advertise events and avoid clashes.

The event, its date and venue may appear free of charge for three months but these details must reach Bowes McDougall Inc by Monday to appear in that Friday's edition. Call 045-807-3800 to have your event placed in the weekly notice board.

- Schools close on Friday June 26.
- Rotary Club Steak Evening, Friday June 26.
- Parkrun on Saturday June 27, starts at 8am.
- Yacht Club Potjie Competition on Saturday June 27, starts at 8am.

THE Rep

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