

MUNICIPALITY TO LAUNCH SMART METERING PROJECT

MOKOPANE: In a bid to curb illegal water connections and to overcome problems of inaccurate billing of customers the Mogalakwena Local Municipality will launch the Smart Metering project during the 2018/19 financial year and the municipal council will engage the residents before the project implementation.

The municipality will invite all relevant stakeholders so that they are aware of the project and better prepared when municipal workers come to their homes for installation. Once this project is implemented the municipality will replace conventional water meters with prepaid water meters.

The smart meters will be rolled out in a prepaid mode at no cost to the customers. According to the municipality, prepaid smart meters are to be installed for all electricity users both large power and small power users making this roll-out probably the largest project to be undertaken by the municipality.

For a couple of years, the municipality has been experiencing serious challenges with regards to water and electricity losses as a result of burst pipes and illegal connections among others.

These losses accounted to millions of rands annually in revenue of the municipality. The other challenge is around billing systems as the water consumers have been raising this issue during our IDP Budget Roadshows.

“We have to change conventional meters with new technologies to address issues of human intervention (meter readers) and to improve the level of satisfaction to the consumers. The objectives of the project are to help the municipality to overcome problems of inaccurate billing and encourage conservation of resources like water and electricity,” said Mayor Matsemela.

“Furthermore, this project will secure revenue losses for the municipality and bolster our financial position going forward. This will enable the municipality to free up resources that can be used to improve service delivery in other areas,” added Matsemela.

Mayor Matsemela emphasised that the project aims to give power to the consumers because of its multiple benefits. Some of the benefits include: consumers having control over their usage or consumption, ease of access to purchases, avoidance of unanticipated black-outs and disruptions, customer service will be greatly improved through elimination of queries related to electricity billing, which account for the majority of customer queries, earlier recognition of faults will become easier through increased data access, illegal connections can also be identified quickly and there are also job creation and small business opportunities arising from system installation and operation of vending systems.

“We are content that this project is a significant milestone towards our objective to upgrade and improve the efficiency of services in the municipality. Our plea to our communities is that let us embrace new technologies. Already some of the new residential

settlements such as Extension 14, 20 and some parts of Ext 19 are on prepaid metering and they are enjoying the benefits of smart living,” said Mayor Matsemela.

The project is funded through Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG) from Department of Water and Sanitation.

This initiative is carried within the municipality's vision, “To be the leading, sustainable and diversified economic hub focused on community needs.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS