

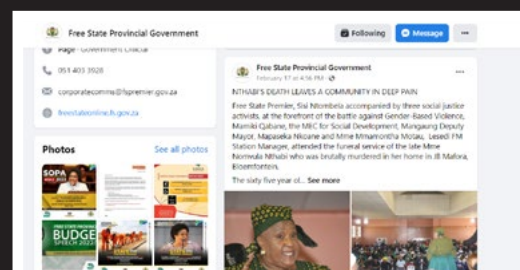
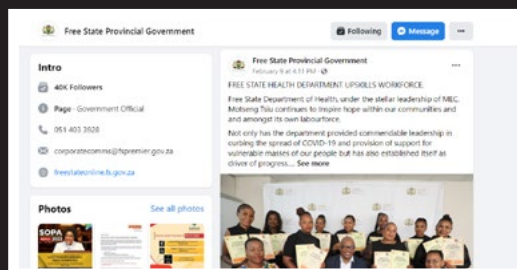
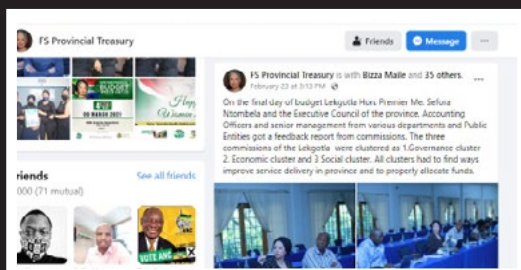
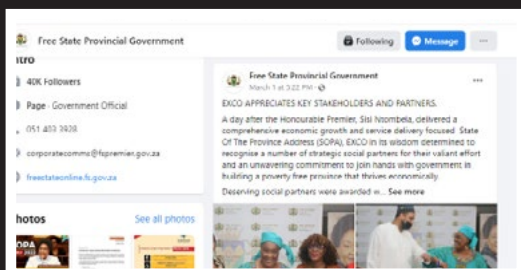
THE UPDATE



FREE STATE PROVINCE

“THE PULSE OF COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE IN THE FREE STATE GOVERNMENT”

SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS FEED



PREMIER SISI NTOMBELA DELIVERS A FORWARD-THINKING SOPA!

On 28 February, Premier Ntombela delivered a progressive State of the Province Address (SOPA) at the Dr Molemela Indoor Sports Centre, in Bloemfontein. This year the spotlight was on stimulating the local economy, alleviating poverty and unemployment, youth empowerment and bouncing back from the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Free State SOPA was in keeping with President Ramaphosa's remarks during the State of the Nation Address (SONA) where he highlighted the importance of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan in turning the tide of economic challenges. During her Address, Premier Ntombela announced various economic support programmes intended to strengthen the local economy.

Some of the support initiatives will include: funding, rental subsidies, provision of equipment, tax compliance, business plan compilation and support with completion of bid documents and tender opportunities.

Another key priority of this year will include the empowerment of youth, women and persons with disabilities.

“We want to see them thriving and successful,” said Ntombela.

The Premier urged young people to unlock their potential and take advantage of opportunities that are being created across the Province.



LEKGOTLA PAVES WAY FOR SOPA

Free State Provincial Government convened a two day EXCO Budget Lekgotla in preparation of the State of The Province Address. The robust engagement took place on the 22nd and 23rd February 2022 at Kopano Nokeng Resort in Mangaung, Bloemfontein.

EXCO Lekgotla is an important programme of government that seeks to stimulate robust deliberations in order to inform government priorities for the year ahead, give strategic direction and to inform the content of the State of the Province Address.

Proceedings were characterized by integral and frank engagements that had an imperative task of guiding and consolidating the work of government and responding

to the urgent task of delivering services to masses of our people across the province. Opening the EXCO Lekgotla, Hon. Premier Sisi Ntombela, had made the following input.

“Let this Lekgotla be the beginning of a process of ensuring that our way of doing things across departments is coherent, reliable, ethical, open, encourages participation, is well coordinated, transformative, professional, consistent, credible, impactful but most importantly, meets the needs of all our citizens. We must develop innovative ways to stimulate our economy and strengthen confidence in our ability to adhere to a fiscal consolidation path, improve deficiency of expenditure, whilst strengthening our revenue mobilization strategies”

STATE 2022 OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS



EXCO APPRECIATES KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS



A day after the Honourable Premier, Sisi Ntombela, delivered a very comprehensive economic growth and service delivery focused State of The Province Address (SOPA); EXCO in its wisdom determined to recognise a number of strategic social partners. The stakeholders were officially acknowledged at a breakfast ceremony at the President Hotel in

Bloemfontein. The private businesses and NGOs received recognition for their valiant effort and unwavering commitment to join hands with government in building a poverty free province that thrives economically. The Free State Provincial Government awarded certificates of appreciation to the deserving social

partners for their invaluable contribution in helping the poorest of the poor communities in our province. During some of the disasters that have devastated our Province, such as the recent floods that hit some of our towns various private stakeholders contributed aid towards survivors. The key stake-

holders that were lauded for their contribution to the Province included: National Lotteries Commission, Meals on Wheels Community Services, Al-Imdaad Foundation, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The South African Red Cross Society, iTau Milling, Sasol, Harmony and Tiger Brands.

HONOURING WOMEN IN POLICING

In a first of its kind, women-only Policing Service medal ceremony held at Boobiespark, Bloemfontein, Premier, Sisi Ntombela, honoured 168 female police officers for their service.

This historic event sort to appreciate not only service excellence by female officers but also served as a launching pad for various sectors to acknowledge the undeniable truth that women have made an important contribution in shaping and developing our country. These officers carried themselves with dignity and served our people with

unquestionable distinction over a period, ranging from 10-30 years of service.

“It gives me great pleasure and a sense of fulfilment to see women rise; by merit, in different sectors of society, particularly a demanding career such as the Police Service. This occasion is evidence that women are capable. Their continued defiance to yield to long held erroneous prejudices against them in society should be an inspiration to all women across the land,” said Premier Sisi Ntombela.



The premier extended her gratitude to Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Baile Motswenyane, who continues to lead the South African Police Service (SAPS) with absolute distinction in the Free State province.

She lauded her character and meticulous leadership, sighting the drastic decrease in crime as reflected by the latest crime statistics released by the Minister of Police, Bheki Cele recently as a proof of her excellence.

“Provincial Commissioner is indeed a symbol of female excellence and I urge all of us, men and women alike to support her in her efforts to make our communities safer” Ntombela added.

FREE STATERS STAND UP TO BE COUNTED



Premier Sisi Ntombela officially launched Census 2022, on 02 February at the Two Towers Church in Bloemfontein.

This Census takes place 10 years since the last one in 2011.

During her official address, Premier Ntombela expressed her pride in being an ambassador for Census 2022.

Through this process, government will have a clear understanding of, among other things, the number of citizens in our province and the number of people who are unemployed.

“Armed with this information, we can then plan properly how best to assist those among us who desperately need government intervention,” said Ntombela.

The Census process will assist government to plan better using reliable data.

All Free State citizens are encouraged to avail themselves and be counted.

Premier Ntombela also emphasized the importance of having homeless populations participate in the national programme.

She said, “the sad reality is that often they are forgotten and neglected, but by counting them, it will be easier to develop strategies on how to better their lives and involve them in the economy of the nation”.

Over 8250 fifty field workers have been appointed across the Free State to conduct the population count.

The Premier welcomed the temporary appointments that will provide much needed relief to the local economy.

“Our message is simple, I have been counted, have you?” asked Ntombela.

LITERARY GIANT MAPHALLA GETS PROVINCIAL PRAISE

On 25 February the MEC for the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (DSACR) Ms Limakatso Patricia Mahasa officially led celebrations of the Order of Ikhamanga that has found its way into the Province.

The Order of Ikhamanga in Gold was posthumously awarded to prominent Sesotho author, Dr Kgotsi Pieter David Maphalla in November 2021.

National orders are the highest award that our country bestows on its citizens.

The Order of Ikhamanga can only be received by South African citizens who have excelled in the fields of arts, culture, literature, music, journalism or sport.

In his lifetime Dr Maphalla authored over 40 books.

During the Provincial celebrations the Maphalla family officially handed the award over to MEC Mahasa.



In honour of the late prolific writer, Mahasa committed to establish an indigenous language publishing house in the Province.

“Dr Maphalla will never die while we live,” Mahasa proclaimed.

PUBLIC PROTECTOR VISITS FREE STATE

Public Protector, Adv. Busisiwe Mkhwebane and Deputy Public Protector Adv. Kholeka Gcaleka visited the Free State for a service delivery oversight programme.

The two day engagement with Provincial Executives was part of a month long nationwide Public Protector Roadshow.

It aimed to strengthen ties and foster collaboration and cooperation between organs of state including provincial legislatures, government departments, municipalities and traditional authorities.

During her time in the Province, the Public Protector met with the Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Hon. Ntombizanele Sifuba, the Provincial Executive Council, Director-General and Heads of Department in Mangaung.

