

# Umzinyathi District makes its mark again...and again

*Vusi Shabalala reports and pictures by Ntokozo MbathaNgcobo*

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It is a Government's call for enhancing skills within the Public Service. This call has not been shunned by the Department of Public Works.

Umzinyathi District makes its marks again...and again. This time it is about the results which respond to a training session which was recently attended by the departmental employees as Artisans and Plumbers while still under the employ of KZN Public Works during the 2012 economic and productivity year under review where they eventually graduated with pride. To add *cherry-on-top-of-the-cream* is that the graduates were undergoing their respective training under the mentorship of District Inspectors and the pride one refers to is that the officials have injected almost over ten year of service within government.

In response to the MEC's call in enhancing skills within the Department as per his budget Speech this year Umzinyathi District is proud to indicate that it has responded positively to the call of skills enhancement in the Public Service.

This achievement leaves the life improvement of the officials with upgrades from level 2 to Grade A (level 5) in terms of salary structures in which this marks an improved better conditions of living.

From the Desk of Ms Ntokozo MbathaNgcobo, the District Manager congratulatory words and wishes for the best including positive thanks that have been relayed by the Departmental Senior Management who has made provisions for such developments within the Core functions of the Organization possible and realistic.



**(Fltr): Mr SSG Makhaza (Electrical works inspector and also acting chief artisan superintendent); Mr CD Mqadi; Mr TE Sokhela; Mr MP Ndlovu; Mr P Buthelezi; Mrs NI Mbatha(District Manager); Mr TE Shiba and Mr ZP Phakathi**

During the photo shoot, the plumbers, line supervisor, mentors and district manager were very delighted with the success of the district in this typical achievement. It should also be acknowledged that this is just the beginning and the best is on the roll.



**Artisans with their mentors From left: Mr TE Sokhela[Artisan Plumber]; Far right: Mr MA Dladla [works inspector-structural]; Front: Mr CD Mqadi [works inspector-structural]**



**New Artisan Plumbers with their certificates  
From left: Mr MP Ndlovu; Mr P Buthelezi; Mr TE Shiba  
and Mr ZP Phakathi**

Appreciation is a key ingredient for a thriving workplace including the Umzinyathi District Office but one that is normally undervalued by many organizations. However, this is the sentiment from Ms Ntokozo MbathaNgcobo, the District Manager, who has shown her countless management expertise that through leadership the district could do the best and yet the best. In that main reason the much needed credit also goes to the Midlands Regional Manager, Mr Gcina Hadebe, who at most times and moments makes and provides room for employees to feel appreciated.

Equally so appreciation has the biggest impact when it is given randomly and that is the reason why the Umzinyathi District Office keeps on making a mark again and again. Furthermore, it has also been discovered that random reinforcement by management and supervisors more strongly anchors personnel or employee behaviors than consistent reward. Consider how one views a manager who arranges a surprise on Workers' Day compared to a boss who for no reason acts with a gesture of appreciation. This is similar to gestures of affection in intimate relationships. Compare the romantic

scale of a single rose gifted on Valentine's Day with one given on an ordinary day.

We need to acknowledge that many employees want to see change or growth of their positions and need to refresh and enhance skills, learn more for their career betterment. However, in order to qualify like the graduates did, it required commitment, patience, eagerness and dedication. Employees often need to brush up on skills to prepare for the best in future. Others may find certain aspects of their jobs challenging due to some unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, the skills enhancement approach offered by the District would require commitment from all the officials like those who graduated through small classes man-to-man deliberations by caring mentors who dedicated their efforts to helping employees in achieving their personal education and career goals.

Congratulations to the entire Umzinyathi District management and personnel for their support in raising the performance bar on the part of enhancing those much scarce skills to employees. This has directly and indirectly benefited the Department of Public Works through:

- ✓ Better preparing employees for organizational changes;
- ✓ Helping address skill shortages;
- ✓ Improving performance;
- ✓ Increasing job satisfaction, motivation and self-confidence;
- ✓ Reducing employee turnover and stress; and
- ✓ Supporting a healthy learning culture in the Department of Public Works.

In conclusion, one may agree that skills enhancement is an effective way to help

employees improve their essential skills,  
and it does not require a lot of resources  
to be successful. Opportunities are  
never lost, once you miss it, the next  
fellow takes it.