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KZN PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE LAUNCHES LIVE PROPERTY PORTAL TO TACKLE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND PROMOTE STATKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

Today, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure officially launched its Property Finder Portal to tackle unmaintained buildings and to promote and invite innovation for unused buildings owned by the department. The portal launch, which took place at the head office of KZN Public Works and Infrastructure, follows a successful conclusion of KZN Public Works and Infrastructure's audit of all its 10 067 properties inclusive of buildings and land parcels.

It also follows the department's back-end property tracking system which won KZN Public Works and Infrastructure the Most Innovative Government Department Award in the province.

During the launch, a live demonstration took place to demonstrate the portal's simple functionality.

This was also an opportunity to showcase the portal's features and abilities which include allowing the user to:

- Accurately direct a complaint to the relevant client department in the event of a dilapidated building
- Confirm and verify buildings and land parcels owned by KZN Public Works and Infrastructure
- Understand the occupation status of properties under the department's ownership
- Identify various property types
- Make applications for properties they would like to use

For KZN Public Works and Infrastructure the portal means the ability to:

- Swiftly act in maintaining and repairing buildings once a formal request has been received from client departments
- Exercise full transparency about the assets the department owns
- Minimize illegal occupation of buildings
- Solicit proposals from private sector players on the usage of unused properties owned by the department

During his address, MEC Martin Meyer, said the portal is a platform that will solve a lot of issues for department among which include a common scenario where members of the public do not know where to turn in order to lodge a complaint about building in a state of disrepair.

“KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is a creature of instruction. We cannot go into a building and repair it. It is that specific department using the building that must put a formal request for KZN Public Works and Infrastructure to come and carry out repair work. That department must also make funding available to us so that we can do repairs. Only then can our qualified officials conduct assessments and carry out repairs”.

“The portal is a gamechanger. When they put in the details of the buildings, they have an issue with the portal will tell them which department occupies that building and how to contact them so they can lodge a complaint. That department will then send us a formal request to come and do repairs. So, the portal helps direct community complaints and accelerates the maintenance process”, said MEC Meyer.

The Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, John Steenhuisen, also commended KZN Public Works and Infrastructure for its continued leading innovative solutions.

He said the department could direct businesses seeking locations in KwaZulu-Natal to the portal, allowing them to identify available properties and make enquiries directly.

Steenhuisen also highlighted the potential to repurpose unused government properties as centres for entrepreneurship, innovation, skills development and job creation. He said bringing together government departments, support programmes and potential investors in such spaces could create new opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurial start-ups.

“The next step is going to have to be bringing in and crowding in departments like the DTIC. This could help entrepreneurs and young people receiving government support to identify well-located and affordable premises,” he said.

MEC Meyer thanked the Head of Department, Dr Vish Govender, for leading a dedicated team which spearheaded leading interventions like the full asset audit and now the launch of the Property Finder Portal, which can be found on KZN Public Works and Infrastructure’s website, and that such innovations cement the department as one that continues to raise the bar and sets the example of transparent and clean governance to the benefit of the people of KZN.

Following the launch MEC Meyer led a delegation to a skills development centre in Sweet Waters, Pietermaritzburg, which is formerly a school. The portal will now make such initiatives easier and fast-track the process to benefit organizations and communities.

The Property Finder Portal can be found on the department’s website: www.kznworks.gov.za. It can be found by selection the Property Portal tab on the homepage.

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