

Lowvelder

Est 1886

Tel: 013-754-1600

R4,00 Inc vat

Dulux
let's colour
COMPREHENSIVE
Premchem
14 Old Pretoria



Carel van Wyk from Crocodile Valley, KLCBT president Oupa Pilane, municipal manager Neil Diamond and chairman of the KLCBT business chamber TJ Maré.

Mbombela on road to recovery

Municipal manager admits there is a long way to go

Arisa Janse van Rensburg

MBOMBELA - The City of Mbombela Local Municipality was in ICU last year, but now it is only in High Care and even though it is still in hospital, its condition has improved.

This was the analogy used by municipal manager, Neil Diamond when he spoke at the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism's (KLCBT) breakfast at Emnotweni Arena on Wednesday.

Diamond admitted that they still have a problem with paying creditors within the required 30 days, but that they have been able to reduce the number of days from more than 200 to between 90 and 120.

"I suspect that it will be another three years

until we will be able to pay accounts within 30 days, but at least we have made progress."

Paying them as soon as possible also resulted in saving on interest charges of R20 million or 40 per cent.

The three major bones of contention between the municipality and the citizens of Mbombela were addressed, namely service delivery, water and the municipality's Eskom account.

Diamond listed water as the greatest challenge the City faces. "This is a challenge that should have been taken more seriously sooner."

Land has been secured for a new dam and the concession boundaries of Silulumanzi will be extended to include the University of Mpumalanga as well as the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market. "However,

the water provision is not able to meet the demand. We have one of the highest wastages of water in the country."

Diamond is aiming for more efficient water conservation management and wants 20 per cent reduction in water usage. To help with this, the municipality is fixing all leaking taps and pipes.

The municipality's Eskom account has been reduced by R100 million but about R105 million is still owed. "Our average usage is about R90 million per month."

"I will never do anything to compromise the energy provision of the city, but I will not be bullied by Eskom any further and I will not

Continued on page 2