

All potholes lead ... to the Adopt-a-Pothole project

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Introducing the launch of the "Adopt-a-Pothole" programme in South Africa by the Empowerment Gateway Group. The project aims to create 20000 jobs and to repair 6 million potholes in the South African road infrastructure while meeting UN-MDG's guidelines.

South Africa, Tuesday 16 June 2009 – The Empowerment Gateway Group announced today that they have received the much-awaited authorization from the Govan Mbeki municipal council in Mpumalanga, to repair potholes in the roads under the jurisdiction of the council.

This authorization, the first of many, has enabled Empowerment Gateway to launch the long-awaited Adopt-a-Pothole programme.

The Adopt-a-Pothole programme is a new Social-Economic Enterprise, which addresses key fundamental needs in South Africa, being road infrastructure maintenance and the alleviation of unemployment and poverty in local communities.

The South African government has many demands on its limited resources in an unprecedented economic crisis facing the world. The government has issued numerous requests over the years for civic society and the business sector to assist government in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in South Africa. Empowerment Gateway has taken this first step in an answer to the calls by government.

Empowerment Gateway is now inviting the business sector to participate as sponsors and custodians in the Adopt-a-Pothole programme, because a good local road infrastructure is a vital component in the everyday lives of the South African population, but good roads need proper care and on-going maintenance.

The programme has been designed as a practical business and enterprise development incubator and it will recruit, train and mentor unemployed individuals as business unit caretakers, admin and support officers, and pothole doctors in the developing social entrepreneurship arena. The programme has the potential to create over 20 000 long-term (5-years or more) income earning opportunities nationally, while concurrently repairing over 6-million potholes over 5 years.

The impact for the South African economy will be huge and it will assist in mitigating some of the economic challenges facing the country.

The Adopt-a-Pothole programme, over and above addressing the serious issue of unemployment and poverty, will also assist road users in reducing typical costs associated with potholes.

Currently it is estimated that potholes are costing South African drivers over R20 billion in repair costs per year to repair damages caused by potholes, with the average repair cost, which includes replacement of vehicle parts and labour costs, being around R 5 000 per incident.

According to AA reports, vehicle parts most likely to be damaged by poor road surfaces include shock absorbers, axles, tyres and wheels. While it is acknowledged that the sudden jolt that results from driving over a pothole, can cause significant damage to other parts of a vehicle; the most concerning result is the effect of shock and distraction to the driver which often results in accidents and injury to its occupants.

In addition, insurance companies have confirmed that the state of the roads in South Africa has contributed to an increase in the number of insurance claims for pothole damage and they described the current situation as very serious.

This Empowerment Gateway Group initiative, the Adopt-a-Pothole programme addresses various serious issues that affect all of us today in South Africa. Not only will it reduce unemployment, but it will also ensure that potholes in the South African roads become a thing of the past with a pothole free road infrastructure in the future.

For further information about the Adopt-a-Pothole programme visit
www.adopt-a-pothole.org

About the Empowerment Gateway Group

Empowerment Gateway is a Social Enterprise, For-benefit (For-profit integrated with Not-for-profit) where the “benefit-to-all-stakeholders” focus of the group’s financial performance, results in achieving positive impact at all levels of the economy, through the holistic distribution of bottom -line earnings and adherence to international sustainability standards.

Empowerment Gateway is an emerging international consulting support organisation that focuses on the development of programmes aimed at reducing unemployment and poverty, social enterprise development, and the promotion of human rights, structured as a hybrid organisation with ownership and control being replaced by custodianship and leadership.

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