



Bell invests in education with new computer lab

Joint media statement by the Eastern Cape Ministry for Transport, Roads and Public Works & Bell Equipment

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"It is a privilege for us as a company to make a meaningful contribution to education in this part of the Eastern Cape and we trust that this computer lab will serve the 429 learners and their parents at the Port St Johns Junior Secondary School as well as be a catalyst to kick-start real achievements in education in South Africa."

So said Bell Equipment Board Member, Tiisetso Tsukudu, commenting on the official handover of a new and fully equipped computer laboratory to the Eastern Cape MEC for Transport, Roads & Public Works, Thandiswa Marawu in Port St Johns today.

The idea for the creation of a computer facility at the school was first mooted by the school's principal, Rian Erasmus and former ward councillor, Alfred Ncoyini. The councillor invited MEC Marawu to visit the school.

The school is among four "needy schools" adopted by MEC Marawu in response to a call by Premier Noxolo Kiviet's office that education was a "societal" issue involving parents, communities and business.

Bell Equipment became involved through Bruce Ndlela, the company's Director: Business and Public Sector Development who strongly advocated the merits of a substantial donation to fund the facility.

The 164 square metre facility comprises a computer room, classroom and two storerooms. A firm of SMME architects designed the facility while construction was undertaken by the joint venture of two Port St Johns-based companies, Kenani Trading and Yondiselekani.

With guidance from a steering committee headed by Zolani Mlamla (SGB Treasurer) and working with Vundla Management Services, the Port St Johns Junior Secondary School now boasts with a computer facility that can host 40 computers (currently 31 computers are owned by the school).

Assistance from Bell Equipment's Computer Operations Manager, Hercules Venter, working with Interconnect Systems Connectivity Solutions, planned the layout and installed the network and server(s).

"By donating the R750 000 needed to create this facility and assisting with management of the project, we at Bell Equipment believe we are showing our commitment by adding value to our country's education system from which we as employers, need to draw our future workforce," said Tsukudu.

Plans are afoot to allow members of the wider Port St Johns community to use the facility after hours for teaching literacy and numeracy skills.

In her address, MEC Marawu said: "As government and business, we share the goal of building a prosperous society, free of poverty, inequality and unemployment. We share the goal of promoting a strong and positive South African brand.

"In the past there has been a lot of debate about what is the role of the business sector in addressing social needs, and how government and business can work together to advance development and transformation in the country.

However she said that present world conditions are such that it is imperative that every citizen does all in his or her power to make a meaningful contribution towards change, growth and sustainable development.

She continued: "Today we are to answer a national question: "Can business and government work together to better the lives of all South Africans?"

"The donation by Bell Equipment is a classic example of cooperation between government and business. The social responsibility which has been rendered to this community and the school is the culmination of long standing relationship the company has with the Eastern Cape Government," said MEC Marawu.

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