



Gauteng Department of Housing

Media alert

Editors

EVATON RENEWAL PROJECT LIGHTS THE WAY WITH SOLAR POWERED STREET LIGHTS

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The township of Evaton celebrated the installation of solar powered street lights in Adams Road on 17 February 2009, when Executive Mayor of Emfuleni, Cllr Assistance Mshudulu officially handed over a South African solar lighting solution to the community of Evaton.

In a time of increasing costs of electricity, power shortages and a global energy crisis, the Evaton Renewal Project has shown that creative thinking and local solutions can light the way – using the power of the sun.

The Executive Mayor of Emfuleni, Cllr Assistance Mshudulu switched on the pilot solar powered lights in Adams Road, Evaton, on Tuesday, 17 February - the first of its kind in the Region. This kicked off the first phase of the project which will cover 3 kilometers of solar powered street lights. A total of 13.2 kilometers of solar powered street lights are planned for Evaton, as part of the Evaton Renewal Project.

Speaking to the community at the official launch of the project, Mayor Mshudulu said, "The solar street lights will cover the whole area of Evaton and uplift the area. Together we must make Evaton beautiful." Mayor Mshudulu said that the solar lights were guaranteed for 20 years and encouraged the community to work together to ensure that the lights are kept safe and in good condition. He also praised the Evaton Renewal Project for creative and innovative thinking to ensure that Evaton will always be full of light, even disruptions in the electricity supply and by finding service delivery solutions are environmentally friendly and cost-effective.

According to Mayor Mshudulu, the blackouts experienced since 2005, particularly in the first half of 2008, have highlighted the importance of sustainable and secure energy supply to achieve socio-economic development in Emfuleni Municipality. The supply of conventional means of energy has always been erratic in unfavourable weather conditions, particularly in Evaton.

Trevor Barber of Solar Gateway Africa, the supplier of the solar powered lights, said that a local South African lighting solution was manufactured in Port Elizabeth using the best solar panels and other components available on the market. "Meetings were held with the representatives of the community of Evaton to discuss their needs and a local solution was developed. The lights installed in Adams Road will give the community the opportunity to evaluate them and to provide feedback on their effectiveness. Thus far the feedback has been very positive," said Barber.

Barber also said that local Evatonians were used in the installation of the solar powered lights. "The installation of the 700kg poles have to be done using cranes and trucks, but every effort will be made to ensure that local labour in Evaton is trained and used in the project," he said.

Brian Monteith from the manufacturer of the solar powered lights, Envirolight, said that the benefits of installing solar powered lights were numerous. "These lights require no cables, they can work immediately and do not need to be switched on and best of all, they do not need any electricity. This means that street lights can be installed in areas that do not have electricity," said Monteith.

Adams Road in Evaton was targeted for the pilot project for this initiative, as part of the Evaton Renewal Project. Adams Road is defined in the Evaton Development Framework and the Master Plan as a key growth corridor for economic development that is already linked to key commercial entities and major social institutions. The cost estimates for solar power street lighting are similar to the costs of conventional street lighting, but the saving in monthly repayments, friendly environment atmosphere and the reliability make a huge difference.

The devices to be installed have the power efficiency of three consecutive days in the event of no sunlight and it has been produced locally making it user friendly for replacements in case of defaults in apparatus without unnecessary delays. The units are independent from one another, meaning that if one unit malfunctions the others continue uninterrupted.

According to Samantha Kaine the Project Manager for the Evaton Urban Renewal, “The Evaton Renewal Project is very excited to launch this environmentally-friendly and sustainable initiative. The project will continue to look at new and alternative technology that will firstly benefit the community of Evaton, achieve government’s objectives and make it a viable and preferred destination for investors into the area”.

End.