

Elias Motsoaledi Municipality loads up on Bell equipment

A commitment to make good on its promise of taking care of its citizens has prompted a local municipality in Limpopo Province to tackle its infrastructure challenges head-on.

The Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality covers the town of Groblersdal and some 136 villages in a radius of 150km around it. The Municipality is divided into 30 wards, serving its total population, which at the last count numbered 249 363 population with 60 251 households.

The creation of new infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure, such as gravel roads and storm water drains, remains challenging and to get a clearer idea of these challenges, we spoke to Ms Francina Morudu, the Municipality's dynamic Director of Infrastructure.

"To give you an idea of the enormity that we as the Department of Infrastructure in the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality face, we can tell you that we are tasked with maintaining some 1 320km of gravel roads and 51km of paved roads," she says. "Added to this are the facts that some of our outlying villages don't have access roads at all, let alone public spaces, sports facilities or well-maintained roads to schools and cemeteries."

The Department of Infrastructure is officially tasked with the maintenance of roads, the creation of new roads where none currently exist, storm water management, electricity supply, maintenance of buildings and workshop management. Water and sanitation falls under the auspices of the Sekhukhune District Municipality.

"We have been battling along with old and poorly maintained earthmoving equipment, which keeps breaking down and while we ourselves noticed this, such a situation in the eyes of our citizens could also not be tolerated as it sent out the wrong message in terms of service delivery," Morudu adds. "The one shining light in our fleet of earthmoving equipment though was a Bell 670G Grader which we had acquired in 2007 and has just never let us down."

In August 2014, the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality put out an official tender document requesting the supply of four graders and four tractor loader backhoes (TLBs) along with four, 10-cubic metre tipper trucks.

Dick Ngobeni from Fleet Horizon Solutions (Pty) Ltd, a company specialising in supplying this type of equipment to local government institutions, says the following: "We looked at the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality's financial structure, knowing that they qualified to tap into Municipal Infrastructure Grants and, being confident that Bell Equipment could supply exactly what was needed in terms of the graders and TLBs, we put in a tender."

"We chose Bell Equipment due to it being a proudly South African company, employing local people and having a large footprint, so ensuring sustained technical backup and parts availability," he says.

Fleet Horizon Solutions' tender was accepted and they in turn purchased four Bell 670G Graders and four Bell 315SK 4x4 TLBs from Bell Equipment before supplying it to the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality. Delivery of the

equipment took place at a ceremony in Thabakhubedu Ward 12, about 30 km from Groblersdal, at the end of April, attended by Her Worship the Mayor, Cllr Julia Mathebe, members of the Council and ward members.

"We're excited and proud to take delivery of this earthmoving equipment today and we're confident that dealing with a truly South African company such as Bell Equipment, we can fully commit to ongoing service delivery to our citizens of our towns and villages that fall within our Municipality," Cllr Mathebe says.

According to Ms Morudu, they have created four satellite offices within the boundaries of the Municipality to deal with infrastructural maintenance. Each satellite office will consist of a construction team and will be equipped with a Bell 670G Grader, a Bell 315SK 4x4 TLB and a 10-cubic metre tipper truck.

"We have signed a 36-month service contract with Bell Equipment for the technical maintenance of our equipment, which includes extended warranties to 6 000 hours and look forward to Bell Equipment assisting us with the training of our operators," she says.

"I should also mention that some of the criteria that were set in our adjudication process was that repairs be done without delay, parts be available in a user-friendly manner and quality of design and build be assured for our sometimes tough environmental conditions – all factors that Bell Equipment assured us they could confidently meet," she adds.



The Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality in Limpopo Province became the proud owner of four Bell 670G Graders and four Bell 315SK 4x4 Tractor Loader Backhoes at the end of April. At the official handover Bell Director: Business & Public Sector Development, Bruce Ndlela (second from left), presented a Bell Articulated Dump Truck scale model to Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr Julia Mathebe (third from right).

