

MALUTI-A-PHOFUNG WATER CLEAN TO DRINK

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MAP Water has been commended for ensuring that it puts in place adequate processes to ensure provision of safe water in its area of operation.



Providing clean water ... Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, Executive Mayor, Mathokoana Mopeli and Municipal Manager Stephen Kau holding the Blue Drop certificate

The Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, through its water entity Maluti-a-Phofung Water (MAP), is among 9A municipalities which were this year awarded Blue Status for its quality water which is considered safe to be consumed from the tap.

The Department of water Affairs' Blue Drop project is an incentive based regulation of the South African Municipal drinking water. It involves assessments of municipal supply water systems and related service.

The Executive Mayor Mathokoana Mopeli said during a media conference held at LaLa Nathi County Guest House in Harrismith last week Thursday that the municipality was recognised by the Department of Water Affairs for having in place adequate processes to ensure safe water supply.

MAP Water received the National Blue Drop Silver Award during the 2012 Blue Drop report Water Institute of Southern Africa Conference held in the Cape Town International Convention Centre last Month.

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The municipality's average national Blue Status score jumped from 72.9% last year to 87.6% this year. The score has increased year-by-year since the first Blue Drop report was released in 2009, when municipalities notched up a national average of 51.4%. In all, 153 of South Africa's 287 municipalities and 931 water systems were audited for this year's report.

However, Mopeli paid tribute to the late CEO of MAP whose leadership enabled the municipality to achieve the National Blue Drop Excellence Award.

"She showed us that nothing is impossible and anything can be done if we all work together and hard. We were faced with many challenges, some we still have, but through her leadership and hard work we overcame a lot. I believe that from the example she set within her team last year, more will still come.

We are proud of the team of Map Water and the achievements they brought to the municipality. I also want to assure them that they will receive all the support they need from the municipality to ensure that they continue to keep our water safe," said Mopeli.

MAP Water oversees the management of three dams within the district. MAP Water CEO Moratoe Mofokeng said he aims to bring the Gold award next year and Platinum in 2014 "I believe that I am not the only person hoping for the platinum award and that through the team I am working with, but it can be done," said Mofokeng.

Some of the biggest challenges faced by the team of MAP Water are water leaks and illegal water connections in the rural areas.

Maluti-a-Phofung Municipal Manager, Stephen Kau urged community members to help in reporting the leakages and illegal connections so they can be attended to and fixed on time.

"Achieving this award is not an easy work and the community should also get involved in ensuring that they receive quality water at all times. This can be done if they report leakages around their areas and stop illegal connections. We are experiencing challenges of water leakages around the some areas caused by community members," said Kau.

In this year's Blue Drop report, Ekurhuleni came out as the top scoring municipality – with a score of 98.95%, followed by the City of Johannesburg with 98.92% and Mogale City with 98.79%.

Ethekwini, Tlokwe in the North West and the City of Cape Town were the next highest scoring municipalities, respectively.

Water and Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa commended the Victor Kanye Local Municipality (formerly Delmas), in Mpumalanga, which increased its score from 18.26% last year to 80.07% this year. She also congratulated the Thembisile Local Municipality, also in Mpumalanga, which increased its score from 27.77% to 78.30%.

The worst scoring municipality Koukamma 5.6% and iKwezi 7.9% both in the Eastern Cape are among 15 municipalities that have received warnings over the quality of their water.

Private sector involvement is also said to be playing a key role of improving the management of water services.

Of the 98 municipalities that achieved the Blue Drop certification, 38 were serviced by water boards and about 20 by the private sector.

The top performing province is Gauteng with a score of 98.1%, followed by the Western Cape 94.2% and KwaZulu-Natal with 92.9% respectively.

The remaining six provinces all notched up scores below that of the national average of 87.6% with Mpumalanga ranked as the worst performing province at 60.9%, followed by Northern Cape 68.2%.

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