

**PROJECT BRINGS 490 JOBS**

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EMPLOYMENT: A tar road being laid between Warden and Standerton will link with Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. Internal streets in Vrede are currently being used as bypasses. PICTURE: GALLO IMAGES

Exactly 490 jobs were created by a road construction project in the eastern Free State in the Phumelela local municipality, the roads and transport department announced. The department made its announcement when it reported the progress on the road being upgraded between the small town of Warden in the Free State and Standerton in Mpumalanga.

The people employed on this project are from the local community and were hired to do jobs varying from general labourers, flagmen and women to operators of various construction equipment.

One of the conditions on this project meant to rehabilitate and upgrade the R34 and R546 roads between the two towns, was to have 10% of the construction value awarded to local emerging subcontractors.

“This has been achieved because 25 local emerging subcontractors have been appointed to complete various activities such as fencing, small concrete work and security services,” departmental spokesperson Saki Mohono said.

He said each of the community members employed on the project had received accredited training in road safety, road construction and maintenance activities.

“About 25% of the people employed are females and 80% are younger than 35,” Mohono said.

He said this was an important road in the eastern Free State as it linked the province with Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal.

At an estimated cost of R258m, contractor Edwin Construction is expected to complete the work that started in July 2010 by the end of May this year. The provincial roads R34 (Braklaagte farm to Vrede) and R546 (Vrede to Standerton) are the main east and west route for commerce and agriculture in central South Africa.

“The reconstruction of the 18km road includes extensive road widening, extended climbing lanes, four bridge structures and upgrading of four major intersections,” Mohono said.

He said the project also included the rehabilitation of 54km of the R103 between Warden and Villiers, the alternative route to the N3 toll road.

“At this stage, the road is approximately 88% complete,” he said.

He added that the two access roads to Vrede were complete and streets lights were also installed. Taxi and bus stops to Vrede township were also built for the Phumelela community.

“Some R246m has been paid by the department to contractors and local labour. The project includes innovative planning actions, such as the formation of a major cutting near Vrede which improves the road’s vertical alignment, with the establishment of a crusher plant to produce G1 base course material from the raw material removed from this cutting,” Mohono said.

Mohono said various internal streets in the town of Vrede were being used as bypasses for traffic. “This allows construction work to continue over the full width for long sections, rather than managing temporary one-way traffic through stops and go’s,” he said.

[Source: [www.thenewage.co.za](http://www.thenewage.co.za)]