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Business sector embarks on Rail & Road Safety Awareness Campaign

The South Durban Basin business sector and the eThekweni Municipality have formed a partnership to promote road and rail safety among school children in the area. A Road Show visiting 30 schools has been organised by a team of representatives from Engen, Mondi, SAPREF, Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA), and the eThekweni Transport Authority (ETA).

Throughout May, the Road Show will be taken to schools in high accident zones in the Merebank, Wentworth, Lamontville and Umlazi areas, and will comprise of an interactive presentation, highlighting road and rail safety. In the past three years, almost 600 children under the age of 14 were involved in road traffic accidents in the Merebank, Wentworth, Umlazi and Lamontville areas.

Statistics from the eThekweni Transport Authority show that the majority of these children were pedestrians and many were on their way to or from school. Twenty-eight learners were killed, 170 were seriously injured, and another 350 children were slightly injured whilst walking along and crossing roads in these Southern Durban areas. Fifty children were also injured as passengers in road accidents during this period, and five learners died as a result of their injuries. Throughout eThekweni, pedestrians aged 5-9 are most commonly involved in road accidents.

During the same period, youngsters were injured in train accidents, either as a result of crossing railway lines or train surfing. Impulsive youngsters participating in this activity stand on top of moving trains periodically ducking under and dodging exposed live high voltage overhead electric lines that provide electricity to the trains. Contact with the lines can result in instant electrocution. The children also risk being crushed if they lose their footing and fall under the moving train.

The awareness campaign aims to teach children how to commute safely and to refrain from being swayed by their peers to perform unsafe acts. A competition will be held in conjunction with the awareness campaign. The competition encourages learners to promote and develop creative road and rail safety messages and stand in line to win several prizes.

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