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MEDIA RELEASE
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Port Shepstone Techno Hub - Innovation Day

MECs, HCM Mayor and Port Shepstone Techno Hub to Launch an Innovation Day at the New Site

The KwaZulu-Natal provincial MEC for Economic Development Mr Sihle Zikalala, Social Development MEC Ms Weziwe Thusi and Hibiscus Coast municipality mayor Cllr Nomusa Mqwebu, in partnership with the Port Shepstone Techno Hub, will be hosting an Innovation Day on 30 June 2016 to introduce the innovative science and technology park to interested stakeholders, the media and invited members of the community.

As the first of four such Techno Hubs which are being developed in the province, the Port Shepstone Techno Hub will add a welcome new dimension to the area's traditional rural economy by providing a collaborative space for business and young entrepreneurs, thereby stimulating growth and creating opportunities. To achieve this the Port Shepstone Techno Hub has partnered with the provincial government and Hibiscus Coast municipality.

"The provincial government has identified a need for technological innovation and collaboration in KwaZulu-Natal. The four Techno Hubs situated in key areas across the province will promote a knowledge economy, drive socio-economic development and increase competitiveness.

"It also presents an ideal opportunity to create jobs and attract investment," explained Dr Clive Coetzee, General Manager: Infrastructure Management and Economic Services at KZN Treasury.

The Port Shepstone Techno Hub, which is already in the construction phase, has been identified as an ideal location for a Sports Academy centre of excellence. It is expected that training, research and development in sporting facilities will be housed in the innovation cluster.

The pristine environment that is the KwaZulu-Natal south coast is well known for its many tourist facilities and the Port Shepstone Techno Hub has already attracted an investor who is considering developing a hotel on the site.

There is another investor that will provide opportunities for upskilling people from the area in the hospitality and tourism sector. This will result in the Port Shepstone Techno Hub being recognised as a facility that delivers innovation to an industry that is a significant contributor to the local economy.

“It will focus on attracting local talent, provide training and skills development so that these persons will be well prepared and equipped to establish themselves or become employed in the hospitality industry,” added Coetzee.

In addition, the local government plans to establish a base at the Port Shepstone Techno Hub to provide local government services.

“We are extremely excited to host the first Innovation Day at the Port Shepstone Techno Hub on 30 June 2016 and have an interesting line-up of speakers who are passionate about innovation and technology,” explained GWI Group Project Director Basil Karstadt.

“We are confident that the Innovation Day will showcase the practical aspects of this unique project in which the private sector, public entities and academia can come together, collaborate and form partnerships in the space of innovation and technology,” added Karstadt.

Interested parties are invited to visit www.ps.kzntechnohubs.co.za for more information on how to get involved with this exciting project. **END**

Please contact Basil Karstadt at basil@kzntechnohubs.co.za for an invitation to the Port Shepstone Innovation Day on 30 June 2016.

About the KwaZulu-Natal Techno Hubs

The landmark provincial initiative plans to develop four Techno Hub sites in Port Shepstone, Newcastle, Pietermaritzburg and Richards Bay.

Each of the sites has a unique value proposition, focusing on a few key industries that are best suited to the location of these innovation centres of excellence.

The Port Shepstone Techno Hub has attracted a hotel and Sports Academy, Richards Bay is aligned with the marine industry while Pietermaritzburg's focus is on aviation and Newcastle has a strong manufacturing bias.

Opportunities are available for the private and public sectors, academic institutions as well as small, medium and micro enterprises.

Techno Hubs or innovation clusters have been successfully implemented in various developed and developing countries throughout the world, including China, Russia, the US and the UK.

Visit www.ps.kzntechnohubs.co.za for further details on this groundbreaking project.

For media comments contact:

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