

## This issue

### The Waste Information Today

A Quarterly newsletter that is aimed at communicating the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) Branch: **Chemicals and Waste Management** projects.

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Chemicals Management and Land Remediation Summit	P1
International Ozone day celebration: 16 September 2015	P2-3
Municipal Waste Support	P3

### CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT AND LAND REMEDIATION SUMMIT

The Minister of Environmental Affairs (DEA) Ms. Edna Molewa hosted a Chemical Management and Land Remediation Summit which was held at the CSIR convention Centre on 05 - 07 October 2015. The conference theme was: "Science in action towards an environmentally sound management of chemicals and land remediation". The aim of the summit was to create an information exchange platform for chemicals and land remediation stakeholders to strengthen chemicals and land remediation management in South Africa.

The Minister has noted in her address, that South Africa's chemicals sector is the largest in Africa with its complexity and diversity ranging from fuel and plastics fabrication to pharmaceuticals. The sector contributes 2.7% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The production and use of chemicals resulted in a need to vastly improve chemicals management practices to protect the environment and human health.

South Africa's Bill of Rights guarantees the right of all South African citizens to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing. In an effort to give effect to this right as enshrined in constitution within Chemical and Waste space, South Africa is a Party to various Multilateral Environment Agreements on chemical management and safety. Furthermore, the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 2008, (Act No. 59 of 2008) (NEMWA) also seeks to regulate contaminated land in the country in order to protect the environment and human health from harmful exposure of chemicals by providing reasonable measures, including the provision of the remediation of contaminated land as contemplated in Part 8 of the NEMWA.

The progress made by South Africa was acknowledged and recognised at the summit and it was also agreed that more still needs to be done to ensure sound management of chemicals and land remediation in the country. One of the success stories was that the department had received 579 notification for investigation of potential contaminated land for processing. Furthermore the Summit came up with 14 broad resolutions to strengthen chemical management and Land Remediation in the country which will be used to develop action plans that contain quantifiable targets.

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## INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OZONE LAYER: 16 SEPTEMBER 2015



*Community members taking part on Word Ozone Day fun walk*

The Montreal Protocol Convention under the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) seeks to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the ozone depleting substances (ODS). South Africa is party to both the Vienna Convention for the protection of Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the ozone layer. The International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is celebrated annually on the 16<sup>th</sup> September. This day has been marked by the UNEP to commemorate the 16 September 1987, when a group of twenty-four countries came together and signed the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer.

This year marked the 30th anniversary of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, an important milestone in the protection of the ozone layer. The theme for this year's celebration was **"30 Years of Healing the Ozone Together"**. The theme celebrates the collective efforts of the parties to the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol in protecting the ozone layer over the past three decades. The theme was supported by the slogan **"Ozone: All there is between you and UV"**. The supporting slogan highlighted the importance of the ozone layer in protecting life on Earth from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation from the sun. As a result of concerted global efforts, the ozone layer is healing itself and is expected to recover by the middle of this century. In addition, up to 2 million cases of skin cancer may be prevented each year by 2030 and significant adverse effects on agriculture, wildlife, fisheries and materials have been avoided.

This year, the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer was celebrated at Lesley Manyathela Stadium in Musina. The Department of Environmental Affairs hosted the event in collaboration with Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), Musina Local Municipality and Rigifoam (Pty) Ltd, a company that manufacture thermal insulation products, supply and the blending of Polyurethane chemicals for industrial use.



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The Deputy Minister, Ms. Barbara Thompson delivered to key note address during the event. Approximately one thousand five hundred (1500) school learners together with community members attended this awareness event. The event started with a 5 km awareness fun run/race which started at Venetia mine road and ended at Lesley Manyathela stadium.

In her speech the Deputy Minister stated that chemicals management in South Africa requires a combined effort between government and industry in order to effectively introduce environmentally friendly alternatives, i.e. non- ozone depleting substances. Other alternatives are readily available for our South African industries, hence the Department of Environmental Affairs engages with the relevant Stakeholders on a quarterly basis and when the need arises. This is to ensure both government and industry readiness and furthermore, to keep stakeholders informed of new developments around the relevant sectors from both a global and national perspective. The measures put in place by the Department are intended to ensure that the chemicals industry contributes positively to the South African economy in a sustainable manner.

Deputy Minister further informed the community of the practical things that individuals can do to help protect the ozone layer. This includes making sure that old refrigerators and air conditioners are disposed of safely by giving them to a recycling yard, taking care and not to damage the cooling circuit which contains the ODSs, ensuring that technicians repairing their refrigerator or air conditioner recover and recycle the old ODS so they are not released into the atmosphere.

She further encouraged learners and community members to be informed about ozone depletion through further reading, and suggest activities in their community to increase awareness of the problem and initiate local action.

DEA will continue to host this event on 16 September in the coming years to raise awareness on ODSs, to inform communities on how they can protect themselves from the harmful Ultraviolet (UV) radiation, how they can take part in preserving the Ozone Layer and also to encourage learners to follow career path on Chemicals and Environmental Management.

## **TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS ON SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

At the beginning of 2015/2016 financial year, the Directorate: Municipal Waste Support developed a training needs analysis checklist in order to identify areas where municipalities need assistance in terms of technical skills for the implementation of waste management legislation and policies. The checklist was sent out to municipalities requesting them to send their training needs in the order of priority. Local Government Support officials based in District Municipalities were instrumental in sending and gathering municipal responses on the needs checklist. Training topics were identified from the responses received and subsequently; a training manual was developed for delivery of training topics to municipalities.

Training topics identified included: Introduction to the Alternative Waste Treatment Guide, Diversion of organic waste through composting and National Domestic Waste Collection Standards reporting in terms of the Outcome 10.

The Directorate has targeted to train 200 municipal officials/councilors by the end of the 2015/2016 financial year. Over 150 municipal officials have been trained to date with training conducted at the following provinces: North West, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Kwazulu-Natal. Training will be concluded in the last quarter of 2015/16 financial year.

Municipalities that have not been trained on the specific topics above may send their requests to the Municipal Waste Support Directorate on email: [MMogotsi@environment.gov.za](mailto:MMogotsi@environment.gov.za) by no later than 31 January 2016.