

Lafarge Injects Millions Into Bodibe Village Lichtenburg, North West

As part of its Social Labour Plans and in an effort to assist in developing an economically sustainable eco-system within one of the communities it operates in, Lafarge officially launched a multimillion projects that will see the construction of state-of-the art Multi-Purpose centre which include offices for social services, a public library and early childhood development centre, and a Pallet Manufacturing Workshop Plant on 28 November 2018.

The proceedings saw the North West Finance MEC Wendy Nelson officially launching the multimillion rand Multi-Purpose project with Mayor Daniel Buthelezi and Lafarge CEO Rossen Papazov in collaboration with local tribal Kgosi Victor Matlaba with Ditsobotla Local Municipality and the Department of Mineral Resources at a tree planting and sod-turning ceremony at Bodibe village, outside Lichtenburg, North West.

The phased project will see the construction of a pallet-making workshop plant; a Multi-Purpose community centre, which will house tribal and community offices, a Day Care Centre and public library. The pallet-making workshop will afford members of the community with an opportunity to be trained and certified in pallet-making. In addition it will allow for a sustainable business that will provide services to a niched open market. The pallet project is scheduled to be operational in 2019 whilst the centre will be developed in phases commencing in the same year.

The project aims to create youth and women employment whilst alleviating poverty and creating employment opportunities within the community. With 76 percent of the 3 200 household earning less than R3 000 and dependent on Child Support Grant for survival.

Representing the Premier Job Mokgoro, MEC Nelson lauded Lafarge for the conceptualisation and implementation of the economic stimulating projects calling them key sustainable projects that will help confront what she termed “a thorn on the side of government”, namely the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

“What is more gratifying is being safe in the knowledge that government services will be accessible to the community at the Multi-Purpose Centre, once construction has been completed.

The creation of short and long term opportunities outside the normal mining space is testament to the fact that you are looking at the livelihoods and economic sustainability of this as well as other communities in the area beyond the life and existence of mining activities, as we all know that mining is not forever. At some point, these mining operations will reach their life expectancy, but communities have to live on,” said MEC Nelson.

Lafarge CEO Mr Papazov affirmed that the community social investment would go beyond legislative compliance with Minerals and Petroleum Development Act, and the company’s social labour plans.

The project would serve as catalyst to local economic development activities of the community with biased by the local Lafarge plant sourcing its services and supplies from the local villagers.

“We do not want to import people from abroad to come and work at our plant or even procure services from Johannesburg and elsewhere outside the village. We want to source our supplies and services from the local businesses with the necessary professional skills, capacity and knowledge to stimulate community economic development.”

Kgosi Matlaba thanked Lafarge for being mindful of the social and economic welfare of the community, asserting that the community has begun seeing changes in their lives and community, furthermore pledging full cooperation with Lafarge mining activities in the area.

“We are happy with the new partnership we have with the Lafarge mine, and appeal to community to unite and further work together to see the economic and business opportunities presented to the community”.

The project launch was also attended by ordinary Bodibe community members of the Tau-Rapulana Traditional Council who were duly encouraged by government stakeholders to set up cooperatives to maximise their economic participation in the mine procurement processes.

The South African Council of Graduates made a public pledge to help the community with cooperative registration and the placement of local graduates to help cooperatives derive entrepreneurial value from business engagement.