

Call for locals to benefit most

Dave Savides

THE slice of the R1,1-billion cake that will go to local businesses raised the main interest at a crowded information session for the Richards Bay Coal Terminal Phase V expansion.

Held at the ZCBF Park on Thursday afternoon, the Kingfisher Hall was packed with participants hoping to secure business opportunities as the project unfolds.

Among them were representatives of youth, female and disabled groups looking for inclusion in lucrative contracts.

The meeting was jointly addressed by RBCT, the Zululand Chamber of Business and managing contractor for the expansion project, Bateman Africa.

A 'watchdog' was called for after complaints that local companies did not receive significant financial benefit from previous major construction projects.

'Apart from the use of local labour - which in many cases is not in fact local

- there is little spend when it comes to procurement of supplies,' said businessman Cas van der Merwe.

The general consensus was that contractors and sub-contractors should 'first look here for quality supplies and quality service providers, before going outside the area'.

Joint ventures including local smaller businesses were also called for, along with the need for the transfer of skills, which would then remain in the region.

Progress

RBCT has in its 30-year existence exported 1,3 billion tonnes of coal and Phase V, due for completion in 2009, will increase output to 91 million tonnes, earning R6-billion forex annually and bringing R1-billion into Spoornet coffers.

RBCT was adamant that its reputation for reliability and quality standards will not be compromised in the

tender and construction process.

Site preparation and issuing of main tenders will dominate the next two months.

The awarding of major packages will be displayed on the RBCT website.

They include:

- new stacker reclaimer - R100m
- new tandem tippler - R60m
- conveyors - R200m
- rail works - R90m
- electrical works - R100m
- civil works - R210m
- pumps, piping, cable reels - R10m.

Manpower requirements will include safety officers, artisans, labourers, supervisors, foremen and administrative personnel. The Zululand Chamber of Business urged locals to register on the project database and said regular updates will be posted on their website <www.zululandchamber.co.za>





Participating in the ceremonial handover of the Zululand Chamber of Business database were Project Manager Bateman Africa - Jacques Steyn, Chairman ZCB SMMR Forum - Phiwo Thango, Project Manager Bateman Africa - Tom Liebenberg, President ZCB - Garth Macartney, RBCT Chief Operating Officer - Terry Haworth and RBCT General Manager Phase V Project - Steph van Jaarsveld