DEDEAT WELCOMES THE APPOINTMENT OF MEC SAKHUMZI SOMYO

The appointment of Sakhumzi Somyo as MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism would “provide the leadership needed to consolidate the gains obtained and thus take the provincial economy to greater heights,” department head Bongani Gxilishe said today.

In a statement, Gxilishe said the department welcomed the appointment as the new MEC was “very experienced and had played a critical role at various levels of government”.

Somyo served for more than a decade as an Executive Mayor of the Amathole District Municipality (ADM), was chairman of the Eastern Cape branch of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and a National Executive Committee Member of the Association.

The new MEC who holds a BA from Fort Hare and a Senior Primary Teacher’s Diploma, has also served as a member of the Amathole Water Board and a non-executive member of the Housing Development Agency, Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) and South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

Gxilishe said that new MEC experience in the field of local economic development (LED) would be particularly welcomed, pointing out that he had been at the forefront of securing R273 million from National Treasury for the revitalisation of five towns in the ADM.

The funds for a catalytic project were spent in Hamburg, Stutterheim, Dutywa, Butterworth and Alice.

In addition, the inaugural Africa Open golf tournament was held at the Fish River Sun during his term of office as executive mayor.

Gxilishe said the department was grateful to former MEC Mcebisi Jonas “who steadied the DEDEAT ship and provincial economy despite the economic downturn. We believe the groundwork has been done and are looking forward to work with MEC Somyo in taking the provincial economy forward.

“We would also like to congratulate the former MEC of his appointment as Deputy Minister of Finance.”