

# SASOL LAUNCHES NEW IEC IN THE FREE STATE



**On the 12th of January 2012**, an historic sod-turning event took place which started the process whereby Sasol will build an Integrated Energy Centre (IeC) in Maluti-A-Phofung. This will be done with the assistance of the Department of Energy, the Free State Provincial Government, and the District and Local Municipalities.

This landmark event was attended by Mr. Alan Cameron (MD: Sasol Oil), Ms. Dipuo Peters (Minister of Energy), Mr. Elias Magashule (Premier of the Free State), Dr Mzangwa (Executive Mayor of the Thabo Mofutsanyana District), Mathokoana Mopeli (Maluti-A-Phofung Municipality Councillor), Sasol team members and more than 4000 members of the local community.

The primary objective of an IeC is to bring sources of energy used in everyday life closer to the community. An IeC is a convenience facility that ensures that rural communities get access to most of the energy sources that they require for the daily requirements, such as gas, candles, petrol and diesel. The IeC's also include a convenience store that stocks basic food items. All of these products and services are provided in the locality of the community thus saving community members time and money to travel long distances to alternate outlets.

As a proudly South African company and a responsible corporate citizen, Sasol is committed to assisting the country to implement solutions aimed at poverty alleviation, job creation and capacity building. The concept of IeC's is just one of many vehicles to achieve this and improve the quality of life of all South Africans, including those in rural communities

In collaboration with the Department of Energy (DoE), Sasol is endeavouring to make energy more accessible and affordable to the rural communities of our country. This initiative also contributes to the country's important rural development efforts. The IeC's are just one of the elements that DoE is utilising to develop sustainable economic activities in rural areas.



# SASOL LAUNCHES NEW IEC IN THE FREE STATE

Sasol has so far set up five Integrated Energy Centers in different parts of the country. These are in:

- Caba Mdeni, 80 km from Matatielle in the Eastern Cape Province.
- Moshaweng, 100km from Kuruman in the Northern Cape Province.
- Mutale, located in Venda in the Limpopo Province.
- Ratlou, 55 km from Mafikeng, in the North West Province.
- Qunu 40kms from Mthatha, Eastern Cape.

The new IeC will be Sasol's 6th such development and there are a few more on the drawing board. The first IeC became operational in 2004, namely Caba Mdeni IeC. This IeC today operates independently, covering its own operational costs and has even declared dividends to the co-operative members, which were used to pay Eskom for electricity connections to the community households.

The ongoing community and municipal support, as well as the fact that Sasol directly supplies this IeC without a middleman, makes the IeC concept sustainable. However, for the IeC to be sustainable in the long term, it depends on the working together of Sasol Oil, the DoE, the Provincial Administration and the Municipalities, but most importantly the co-operative that operates the IeC.

This not only includes the building and the launching of the IeC, but also means ensuring that all the people employed in an IeC are properly trained to run it effectively and efficiently. The community is the beneficiary of the IeC: currently each IeC is controlled and managed by a registered community co-operative with a board of directors which is coordinated by the DoE and municipalities. As an IeC is an initiative "owned" by the community, it is vital that the direct benefits are felt by the community. The construction process creates many jobs for the unemployed with an emphasis on women and youth. IeCs, when combined, have created 75 permanent jobs. In addition, about 40 jobs have been created in other supporting business activities that develop as a direct result of the establishment of the IeCs.

The IeC projects have proved a phenomenal success in the provinces where they have been built so far and Sasol plans to roll out more IeCs, ensuring that they empower and uplift communities across South Africa.

The Ulundi IeC in KwaZulu-Natal is currently under construction and will be operational by July 2012. Services and SMMEs found at the IeCs include:

- Bakeries including equipment, stock, training and continuous mentorship
- Vegetable tunnels, including seedlings, training, co op registration and continuous mentorship
- Convenience stores
- Bank ATMs
- Library and computer centres, where students and the community at large now have access to books and computer courses
  - Cellular network towers and telephones which have enhanced access to communication services in these communities.

[Source: <http://tshwarisano.co.za>]