

Playing on the global field

Pietermaritzburg is a member of the South African Cities Network, formed of nine of the country's largest cities. The SACN has the aim of sharing information and expertise, and focuses on the role that cities have to play in the global and national economies.

"The trend towards greater global economic integration over the past three decades has resulted in significant changes to the organisation of economics and politics, particularly at the level of cities," says Brian Zuma, manager of marketing and communications. It therefore becomes very critical that expertise and information are shared among cities in the country, and the rest of the world.

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The Cities Network has made it abundantly clear that a prerequisite for attracting investment is well-managed cities, which are also essential for national competitiveness. The City of Pietermaritzburg is abuzz with the news of an economic boom. The people of this city have the opportunity to take advantage of this situation to better their lives. With more investors poised to invest in the city, as indicated by acting strategic manager for economic growth and development, David Gengan, city management should be able to sustain this experience, with more business opportunities, created for the city's people.

Being the administrative and legislative capital of KwaZulu-Natal, these opportunities are fast yielding positive results, in that city management is dealing with an influx of people into the city, which translates to improved sales in property and economic activity in general.



The president of the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business (PCB), Babu Baijoo, summed it up by saying, "The future welfare of our city depends upon the successful and strategic management of the current success, and creative planning for the future within the context of a clear vision of a metropolitan centre, a centre in which various elements that constitute economic success, social harmony and wellbeing are consistently complimentary." The memorandum of understanding between the city, the PCB, and the University of KZN (Pietermaritzburg) seeks to foster a partnership that enhances the capacity to propel this city to greater heights.

City management is fully aware that, as they continue to create partnerships with other cities of the world, in order to continue to entrench Pietermaritzburg as a global player, they also need to continue to strengthen the relationship with the cities of South Africa, as well as all other role players and stakeholders within the City of Choice. •