

PDT equips rural schools with solar

By Kaizer Nengovhela

Five schools in the Musina and Blouberg municipal areas were equipped with solar-power plants and a borehole by the Ponahalo De Beers Trust (PDT). The official handing over of the equipment took place at a function last Saturday (4th).

Mathipa Makgato High, Ratanang Special School, Alldays Secondary (all three under the Blouberg Municipality) and Musina High each received solar plants, while Rixile Primary, in the Musina area, received a borehole.

High electricity bills, coupled with load shedding, have prompted PDT to rope in solar energy to ease the strain on the local schools, and with the scourge of drought that continues to ravage the province, where many parts are still without a drop of water, the schools have not been spared.

Jolene Shaw, general manager of Knowledge Pele, said that the aim of the solar installations was to reduce the Eskom electricity cost at the boreholes to pump water. "The PDT Legacy Project not only addresses the energy, water, sanitation and IT infrastructure needs of schools but, importantly, seeks to create local skills for the long-term maintenance of this infrastructure," she said.

Shaw further said that PDT saw

this as an opportunity to contribute to needy schools. "Access to water is a basic human right. We felt it was important to empower the learners with a reliable source of renewable energy to improve their daily lives and allow them to sustainably operate their agricultural businesses into the future."

The principal of Rixile Primary, Mr Moses Chauke, said they were extremely excited about the donation. "It was a chaotic state here, with many learners losing their precious learning time waiting for water. This is a great relief to us as a school, and we wholeheartedly thank our sponsor for this generous donation. Water is life, and without water we cannot progress. This donation will go a long way in improving the lives of learners and educators at the school," he said.

The circuit manager of Soutpansberg North, Dr Ntavhanyeni Phaswana, said they believed that the development of the nation went hand in hand with the availability of proper facilities. "We have serious challenges in the country. The solar technology comes in handy, because we don't have to connect to the grid. We cannot be left behind because we are in rural schools. Only the people who are in the cities are moving ahead with the fourth industrial revolution. The ultimate goal is to make these schools to become smart as well, like we have smart cities," he said.



From left to right: Soutpansberg North's circuit manager, Dr Ntavhanyeni Phaswana, Adv Thandi Orleyn, Musina High's principal, Mr Abraham Legavha, and Jenilee Jaftha and Innocent Mabusela from the Ponahalo De Beers Trust, who handed over a brand-new solar-power system to the school last Saturday. Photo: Kaizer Nengovhela.



From left to right: Rixile Primary School in Musina's principal, Mr Moses Chauke, Soutpansberg North's circuit manager, Dr Ntavhanyeni Phaswana, and Eladson Banda (teacher) during the handover of the new borehole at the school on Saturday. Photo: Kaizer Nengovhela.



BB Chery Louis Trichardt sales manager Johann Schoonbee, standing with the impressive Tiggo 8 Pro Max 390T.

Chery's flagship new Tiggo 8 Pro Max boasts with some impressive features

Motoring News

New to the Chery showroom floor is the brand new Tiggo 8 Pro Max 390T, and if you are looking for luxury at an affordable price, then the Pro Max is definitely worth a second look and test drive.

The Pro Max 390T was launched in December as Chery's flagship Tiggo 8 model. The newspaper took it for a test drive last Friday and was quite impressed by it, both regarding engine performance and interior and exterior design. One thing is for sure – Chery has come a long way since launching its first entry-level models on the South African market.

The Pro Max was launched to compete against other luxury models such as the Kia Sportage and Toyota RAV, and it does not disappoint. The powerful two-litre engine is equipped with a seven-speed DCT automatic transmission with electric-assisted power steering and delivers an impressive 187kW of power at 5 500rpm and 390Nm of torque at between 2 000 and 4 000rpm. It has a gutsy engine with fast acceleration, almost no turbo lag and smooth gearbox transmission for both speed and towing (the Pro Max

has a 1 500kg towing capacity). Fuel consumption is 7,4 litres per 100km on a combined cycle (claimed).

As mentioned, Chery have stepped up their game on both the body work and interior and exterior design with sturdy body panels and luxury, stitched-leather upholstery. The cabin is spacious, with lots of backseat leg and head space, even for a six-foot-plus backseat passenger.

One of the cool selling points of the Pro Max is that everything is voice activated, from opening the sunroof, tuning to your favourite radio station or opening or closing a window. Keyless entry with remote and push-button start are more luxury features, allowing you to start your car from the comfort of your house and the Pro Max adjusting to your driving preferences, including climate control that comes standard.

Like other competitors in its class, the Pro Max also features three driving modes, including Eco, standard and sport mode – all controlled from your steering wheel or 12.3 inch digital instrument panel, as well as an 8-inch touch-screen ventilation control. It also has two wireless charging platforms for two cellphones and a top-of-the-range

8-speaker Sony sound system with Apple CarPlay/Android Auto.

The Tiggo 8 Pro Max also features an impressive array of safety features, boasting a Euro NCAP safety rating of 5. The vehicle comes standard with six omnidirectional airbags to protect the occupants from frontal, roll-over and side-impact, with other safety features, including ABS and electronic brake-force distribution, emergency brake assist, automatic emergency braking, electronic stability control, traction control, 3D cameras all round and much, much more.

The Pro Max definitely features all the bells and whistles of more expensive brands of well over R1 million. Yet the Pro Max starts off at a very reasonable R599 000 to R639 000 for the top-of-the-range model with sunroof. It comes with a 1 million kilometre or 10-year engine warranty, a five-year or 150 000km warranty, seven-year or 90 000km service plan and five year unlimited roadside assistance. All services are done inhouse at BB Chery Louis Trichardt.

For more information, phone BB Chery Louis Trichardt sales manager Johann Schoonbee at tel. 015 516 0294 or 066 319 0737.

Heavy rain causes extensive damage to roads

By Kaizer Nengovhela

Several damaged bridges and many roads in Vhembe's rural areas have had to be closed since Friday, 10 February, because of the heavy rain that fell over the area.

Residents who live in slippery mountain areas had to park their vehicles near the main tar roads because they were unable to reach their homes by car.



The Dzindi bridge between Muledane and Tsingwa after recent heavy rains. Photo supplied.

The affected areas include Makwarani, Maraxwe, Vhuthalu, Tshipako, Tshiwani, Tshidzivhe, Tshilungwi, Mudzidzi, Tshakhuma and others.

Motorists who use the main road from the mentioned areas had to drive with great caution as parts of the roads were badly damaged by the rains. Trees were uprooted in some of the hilly areas along the roads. Learners from Tswana and Muledane were forced to cross the still-flooding Dzindi River on foot. Many parents accompanied their children to help them cross the river, out of fear that they might be swept away by the current. "The water was above our knees, and we just clung to each other's hands," said one of the learners, Takalani Mushiana.

The spokesperson for the Vhembe District Municipality, Mr Matodzi Ralushai,

said that all four municipalities under Vhembe had been greatly affected by the rains so far. Some areas have no water as pipes were washed away. He said that the affected communities were now forced to use alternative roads to get to work or school and run daily errands.

"Most of the bridges have structural problems, while others are under water. We have sent out a disaster team, and we are visiting the different areas affected by the floods. We are pleading with parents to warn their children not to swim in the dams or play near the rivers, because there are a lot of crocodiles," said Ralushai.

He warned residents who live close to rivers and streams to evacuate to a safer place or higher spot when the water level rises. "When you cross a flowing river where water reaches above your ankles, turn back and use an alternative route. Never try to walk, swim or drive in swift-flowing water as it can sweep you off your feet. Do not drive over a low-water bridge if the water is flowing strongly across it," he cautioned.