

NEWS FROM KZN

“At the recent meeting of the Regional Executive Committee issues regarding training in the industry were discussed and it was decided to convene a ‘think-tank’ at the next meeting of the Regional Training Committee. Such meeting was held on the 6th August, and was attended by Raymond Van Heerden of Shukela Training Centre; Alan Ramasamy of Durban Metro Training Centre; and the ECA’s the National Director: Finance, Johnny Oliver, and the National Training Manager, Ms Cynthia Reynders.

The meeting was very productive, and issues such as the skills shortage, and problems being experienced with training were highlighted. Flowing from this, the ECA has decided to establish its own training centre in Durban.

Our Technical Advisor, Brian Bilton, embarked on a search for suitable premises and, after having viewed a number that were not suitable for our purposes, managed to locate premises on Stamford Hill Road which are not only very close in our offices, but are absolutely ideal for a training centre. There is adequate space for training, lectures, courses and even a trade test centre.

We have had a very positive feedback about this development from a number of our Associate members who have enthusiastically offered sponsorship of one form or another for the centre. Provided there are no snags, it is envisaged that the KZN training centre will be opening on 1 October 2008. All we need now is people to fill the training centre, so hopefully our members will now seriously think about indenturing apprentices. We are no longer going to have learners, as the ECA has decided that the apprenticeship system is preferable for our purposes and is far more likely to address the skills shortage.

Should you require any information about indenturing apprentices please contact either Cynthia Reynders at the National Office (phone 011 392 000) or Brian Bilton in the Durban office.

On the 1st September Brian Bilton and I attended an ‘Imbizo’ at Kwa Mbonambi which was hosted by the Department of Labour, and included dignitaries such as the Minister of Labour, Mr Membathisi Mdladlana, and the Acting Provincial Executive Manager, Mr Edward Khambula. The keynote address by the Minister was geared towards addressing the local community about the Occupational Health and Safety Act; the Employment Equity Act; the Skills Development Act, and employment conditions of farm workers which is now being debated by the Employment Conditions Commission. Brian Bilton and I had the opportunity of personally meeting with the Minister of Labour, who expressed his gratitude to the ECA(SA) for its assistance in the Province, and developing such a close working relationship with the Department in KZN. Interestingly, a Contact Information Directory pamphlet was distributed by the Department which contained the contact details of various Universities; FET Colleges; Private Institutions and Professional Bodies. It was a pleasure to note that the ECA (SA) was listed in the Professional Bodies category.”

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