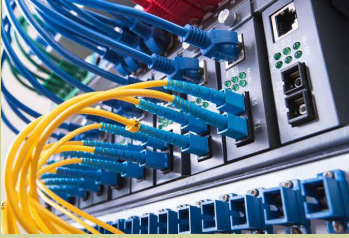




PG 2



High speed internet connection ongoing in Oljabet Smart town now 80% complete

PG 7



County First Lady Maria Mbeneka leads in celebrating International Women's day Laikipia Chapter at Ngenia

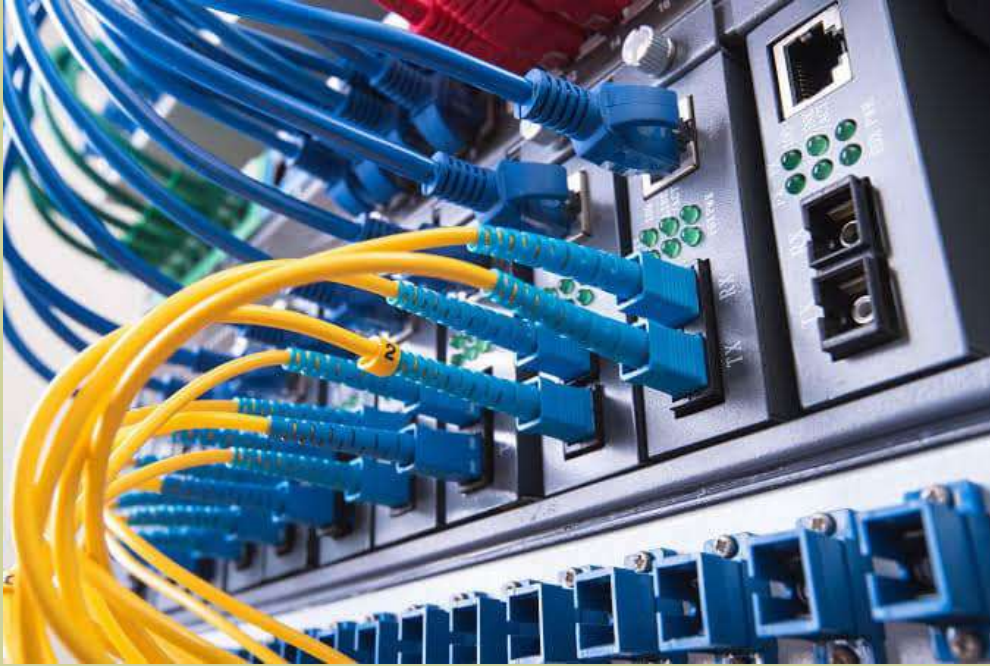
Drought Resilient Camel Breed Introduced in L. North



The Department of Agriculture has introduced 16 of the Somali Camel Breed in Laikipia North. The animals are more resistant to persistent drought experienced in the area, unlike the common breed

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Fibre Connectivity in Oljabet to Benefit Residents



People in Oljabet are set to enjoy high speed internet connectivity for their critical operations as the county government started installing fiber connection.

The process of installation of high-speed internet connectivity at Oljabet Smart Town is currently ongoing and will see Oljabet LHS, Oljabet Social Hall, County government offices among many others get connected to the grid.

“The programme is 80 per cent complete. The only bit remaining is connecting to the main grid,” said Sammy Linus, Director ICT in the county.

Fiber relies on light instead of electricity to transmit data, which facilitates much faster Internet connections that are capable of handling higher bandwidth. The fiber optic cable will make it possible to have;

- * Tele medicine
- * Improved Patient Access
- * Collaboration Between Medical Team
- * Real-Time Patient Monitoring
- * Online jobs
- * eGovernment services
- * Business process outsourcing
- * Open Oljabet town to the rest of the world

This comes after the county government of Laikipia invested on

rebuilding the small town of Oljabet to a modern urban centre through the Smart Town Initiative, one of the 12-point manifesto of Governor Ndiritu Muriithi’s administration.

Already, LHS Nanyuki, Nyahururu, and Rumuruti are under high-speed fibre optic cable, enabling real-time sharing of patient information between departments for quick action.

“Our aim is to ensure efficiency through high-speed network connectivity for the benefit of Laikipians seeking our services,” commented Linus.



Camel Breed Improvement Program in Laikipia North

Mollin Wanjiru

Laikipia North Sub-County is categorized as a rangeland and has been drastically affected by drought, pastures and water is scarce for livestock. To mitigate against the adverse effects of drought the department of Agriculture distributed 16 Somali breed Camels to Communal ranches in the area which are more resilient to drought.

The beneficiaries were drawn from 13 group ranches namely: Ilpolei, Ilmotiok, Murushoi, Kurikuri, Musul, Makurian, Murpuli, Koiya, Nkitoliti, Kijabe, Tiama-mut, Lekuruki and Ilgweni. The camel bulls will help them improve their camel breeds.

Officers from the department led by Mr. Pius Butichi- head of livestock, will continuously monitor and train the groups to ensure that they benefit from the program. Representatives from the group will also make a follow-up on the progress of this program. The program also targets other breeds including cattle, sheep and chicken. Bulls and Dorper rams have been distributed.

When these animals are moved to these far-flung dry season grazing areas, families that are left behind suffer because of milk unavailability and other related basic food requirements.

Why Camels?

- ◆ Camels are browsers and during dry spells, there is a scarcity of pastures in Laikipia North SC and hence what re-



The Somali Camel breed introduced in Laikipia north region

mains available for animals to feed on are the browses. Laikipia North SC has a lot of *acacias*, *commiphoras*, *Grewias* and other dense nutritious browses for production of camels.

- ◆ During dry spells when all livestock have moved to far flung areas in search of pastures and water, its only Camels that are found around homestead to provide for the families, the required milk producing around eight litres each.
- ◆ Camels can go for a very long period without water hence ideal for rangelands.
- ◆ They are able to still produce good amount of milk for households even when feed and water is scarce.
- ◆ During one of the public participation meetings in Laikip-

ia North and also a meeting with the area MCAs with the department on breeds improvement, the community requested for support in promotion of large stocks (Camels) Camels bring about a balance in **vegetation mix** (They feed on the tall browse, goats on short browse whereas cattle & sheep feeds on grasses). Camel production is a *Climate Smart enterprise*- hence ideal for ASAL areas.

The exercise was led by CEC Agriculture Madam Wangari Wachira accompanied by CEC finance Mr. Murungi Ndai and CEC Water Hon. Peter Matunge.

The objective of this program is to increase food and nutrition security at household level, better market access, more income to at household level and increased trade.

Laikipia Wards Connect Through Drainage Structural Features



The County Government of Laikipia has been constructing bridges and culverts especially in places that were previously impassable to promote communities' cohesion and security. From 2018, the government has put eight complete bridges, hundreds of culverts and foot bridges in different wards.

Presence of drainage features such as rivers, streams, gullies and valleys together with human factors like population, flood dangers and traffic in an area calls for a need to build trans-pass structures to fill the connect gaps.

The devolved unit has been building bridges on transport networks

in different wards to help the people to cross over from their residents to other wards to do their businesses. The structural design is determined by the nature of the physical barriers as well as the future consideration factor. Concrete and steel materials are used to ensure durability of the structures and safety.

Chumvi bridge in Mukogodo East, Shemani bridge in Laikipia west, Gachuiro bridge in Umande, Muramati bridge in Segera and Mukuri bridge in Nanyuki are some of the helpful connect structures put in place by the government for easier inter-wards movement and improved security. Rehabilitation of bridges is also being done to bring a new

look and increase their longevity. Lamuria Bridge for instance has been rehabilitated to improve its standard.

The bridges ease the hustle of the sick and pregnant women from winding around to access the vital services and instead go direct to a nearby facility using the shortest route, whether it is raining or not. In case of cattle rustling and theft, the security officers can quickly go after the criminals because of the bridges that make rivers and valleys passable.

Over small streams and canals, culverts have been constructed on highways, streets and railway to transfer the flooding water underneath to protect the roads, buildings and people's lives. People are able to deliver their products to markets with ease and other destinations, an advantageous support to economic state of Local 'Mwananchi'.

Crossing over busy bridges is risky and for that reason the county has also been constructing foot bridges for pedestrians to cross over safely. The foot bridges are structured with side guards to prevent unexpected falloff of people and animals. Lenana road Foot Bridge in Nanyuki is one among many in Laikipia.

Worthy Safaris at Il-Ngwesi Conservancy



IL Ngwesi Eco Lodge is a huge tract of land owned by many Masai villages, and gives them a source of income away from what they have been known- nomadic pastoralism. The ranch is located in the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch which lies north of Mount Kenya and covers an area of 16,500 hectares.

Its serene location, away from any towns and on the edge of Kenya's Laikipia Plateau, provides an escape plan from the busy urban areas.

The Lodge is sited on a rocky outcrop in the north-eastern part of the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch. From its position atop the kopje, it looks over miles of wilderness. A peace place with nothing but melodies of birds singing and other wild animals.

All the furniture in the lodge is built by the Masai from local materials, giving it the most natural outlook. An open-air dining

room, with a hand-carved furniture exists at the top of the kopje. A pool overlooks a waterhole and from here, sandy paths lead through the bush to the various bandas.

It has a total of six bandas built around the hillside. Each is unique and built around the trees

and contours of the hill. The spacious bandas and have wooden floors, hand-carved beds covered in Maasai fabrics and panoramic views. Trees support the thatch roof and hand-made chairs look onto the view.

From Nairobi, one can access IL Ngwesi Lodge by daily schedule flight from Wilson Airport to Lewa Downs followed by about an hour and a half road transfer or by private charter flight direct to the Il N'gwesi airfield, or by road via Ngare Ndare.

Activities from Il N'gwesi include game drives, nature walks and time spent in local Masai villages. For a wilderness experience, you simply can't beat it.

The Maasai touch in the conservancy provides the unique culture that is not only praised in the country, but has gone global. It is also a way of preserving and portraying the Kenyan culture to the world.



World Kidney Day: Frequent Checkups Only Way to End Silent Killer Disease



Staff take part in a screening exercise organized to mark the World Kidney Day. The exercise seeks to raise awareness on the need for frequent checkups to detect kidney diseases early enough

By David Serem

LHS Nanyuki joined the world to celebrate the World Kidney Day on Thursday last week, the annual global event that seeks to raise awareness on the importance of kidney on human health.

Scores of staff turned out for checkups which was dedicated for them this year, in what Renal Unit staff termed as a chance to remember healthcare givers who most of the time are left out to 'take care of themselves'.

The campaign also aims to raise public awareness on the impact of kidney diseases and its associ-

ated problems worldwide.

Kidney disease is a global concern, and Kenya has not been left out. The disease burden has been building up in the country, and may soon pile pressure on public health expenditures and infrastructure such as dialysis capacities that are already scarce.

As it stands, almost half a million Kenyans are living with chronic kidney disease, with more than 12000 having end stage kidney disease requiring dialysis. Out of these, only over 5000 are on dialysis, meaning there are thousands in need of the service but are still at large.

The health concerns

The onset and progression of kidney disease is preventable. The rising number of cases aside, an alarming concern is the fact that early chronic kidney disease has no signs or symptoms. A person can lose up to 90 percent of their kidney functions before experiencing any signs.

But even with concerted efforts, healthcare providers are concerned with the low uptake of the simple and cost-effective ways for early detection which involve tests for blood pressure and sugar levels as well as weight checks. High blood pressure are the most common causes of chronic kidney disease in adults, hence the need to have them checked every so often.

With early diagnosis, the worsening of the kidney disease to end stage kidney disease can be slowed down.

Transplant, the most effective treatment of choice for kidney failure, is costly and out of reach for most Kenyans. For families affected, this can drain fortunes and end up impoverishing them.

Chronic kidney disease is a silent killer, and is projected to be the fifth common cause of premature death globally by 2040.

International Women's Day Celebrated in Laikipia County



Laikipia County First Lady Maria Mbeneka led the International Women's Day Laikipia chapter at Ngenia hosted by Njata Foundation which is celebrated on 8th March every year. The hashtag of this year's celebration was #BreakTheBias to achieve gender equality in the world.

It envisions a world that is free of bias, discrimination, and stereotyping by encompassing diversity, and inclusivity of women in all spheres of life.

The day offers a special avenue to recognize the social, political, and economic achievements of women and rally the public towards equal treatment and representation of women.

As the country heads to general elections, there was a call for Kenyans to embrace women's leadership during the August polls. The theme of this year, "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow", resonates with the clarion call for more women to take up leadership positions in this year's general election.

Why celebrate international women's day

The UN General Assembly cites two reasons for celebrating. One is to recognize the fact that securing peace and social progress and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms require the active participation, equality, and development of women.

The second is to acknowledge the contribution of women to the strengthening of international peace and security.

Towards Realization of Smart Towns through Physical Planning

By Joseph Ndungu

The County Government of Laikipia through the Department of Physical Planning is currently preparing plans for various centers throughout the entire county. The Department has already undertaken first stakeholders' meetings in seven centers. These are; Ol Moran, Muthengera, Makutano, Mutara, Pesi, Mouwarak and Kiwanja Ndege. The Planning process being undertaken in partnership with the National Land Commission (NLC) aims at achieving well planned, tenure secure smart towns with effective public participation being the key driving force. Through this process, the public is able to convey their issues directly to the government and in turn the government designs development plans which are responsive to the problems raised.

During these meetings, the County Spatial Plan Coordinator, Dr. Jenifer Kinoti and The County Physical Planners Richard Muchoki and Michael Mudenyio have been sensitizing the public on what planning is, the importance of planning for both the locals and the future generations, the

“Members get the platform to speak their minds out and provide ideas on how they would want their town to look in terms of infrastructure and services the town centers will provide”

planning process and clarifying to them that they are currently on the first step which is first stakeholder meeting.

Members in these meetings get the platform to speak their minds out and provide ideas on how they would want the town to look in terms of infrastructure and services the town centers will provide. These proposals are given by the public in form of problems they are facing and the basic facilities they need. The most common challenges raised in these meetings include: insecure land tenure, inadequate water and food, poor roads, human wild conflicts, insufficient markets and slaughter houses among others.

Throughout these meetings, the County Coordinator, National Lands Commission, Ms. Grace Wairagu sensitized the public on the different types of land ownership which are community, public and private ownership and also the three steps of Land Allocation Process which include; Planning, Surveying and Allocation.

What Next?

The Department of Physical Planning is looking to clean the collected data by checking for errors, analyzing them, and coming up with an output which is a draft proposal development plan which shall be presented to the public at the second stakeholder meetings. On these second stakeholder meetings, the public shall agree or disagree whether the solutions have been provided to issues earlier submitted in the previous meeting. If they agree the department of will come up with a final proposal development to be submitted to the county assembly for final approval.