



# Laikipia

The official newsletter of the County Government of Laikipia

WEEKLY  
BULLETIN

## Laikipia's Hidden Treasure With a Potential to Transform Kenya

By Muriithi John

**L**aikipia's soils are hiding substantial mineral wealth that is enough to transform Kenya into an industrialized country if exploited.

A recent field survey commissioned by the County Government of Laikipia found substantial deposits exploitable minerals. Minerals of interest that were found include iron ore (haematite and laterites), bentonite, kaolin, bauxite, sepiolite, mica, vermiculite, marble and garnets.

Rocks such as quartz quartzites, granites, basalts, and phonolites that are used in the construction and building industry are in plenty.

Mining of minerals, oil and gas has always been prominent in the industrialization process in the world. Industrialization is one of the economic pillars in the Vision 2030.

The survey found iron ore in huge deposits across the county. Iron ores are mainly used for the production of iron and steel. Although iron itself may be employed in the form of castings, wire, rod, sheet, among others, for engineering and building trades there are many purposes for which steel is more suitable. This is mainly by alloying iron with varying amounts of other metals or non-metallic elements and subjecting it to various forms of heat treatment.

"Iron ore of igneous origin was found at Naibor/Mugwooni area where a sample taken from one location had 75 percent iron. The iron ore outcrop could be traced for a width of 100 metres while the north-south strike direction was traced a similar distance," says the report of the survey released early this year.

### Naibor/Mugwooni

Minerals of Laikipia 2020 Report says the density for bulk iron ore is 2, 88-0 kilogramme per cubic metre (2.88 tonnes/m<sup>3</sup>). Assuming a quarter of the outcropping anomaly at Naibor has 50 percent iron to a depth of 100 metres then the anomaly can yield 1.5 million tonnes of iron ore and three million tonnes at a depth of 100 metres.

Launch of The Minerals of Laikipia Reports on February 20, 2020



"But the quantity and quality are subject to confirmation by geophysical survey and coring," adds the report.

Although economic activities around mining and quarrying in Laikipia have grown from Kshs 81million in 2013 to Kshs 136 million in 2019 at current prices, mineral experts believe there is a huge opportunity to grow this further by exploiting the iron ore and other recently discovered deposits.

"This report is a first step to our future mining operations," Governor Ndiritu Muriithi said at the launch of the report, adding: "Our people have always known there are some valuable materials under the foot."

According to him the county is endowed with large patches of earth where, since time immemorial, blacksmiths would get materials needed to craft their weaponry and tools.

### Sagak Tech Enterprises

"This information has been known for a century at the very least. Now it is time to share it with a much wider audience using the modern science and methods," Governor Muriithi said. Laikipia is strategically placed in Kenya with the opening of markets further north by the Lapsset corridor. The revival of the Nairobi-Nanyuki railway line has made it a more strategic launching point for operations in the Northern Kenya, Southern Ethiopia and Sudan. Coupled with the mineral resources that have been found, the county is positioned as one of the best processing hubs. At the launch of the report early this year, Governor Muriithi said his government would be "as facilitative as possible for those interested in setting up mining operations and processing here in Laikipia, with

the understanding that it is these operations that create jobs."

In many place around the world, finding precious mineral sometimes leads to conflict and strife based on access or lack of thereof. The Governor committed that his government will ensure that the governance demands of all operations will be at the highest level.

### Portfolio

"The mineral wealth cannot be for only a few. We must ensure that the operations conducted in Laikipia are of the highest ethical standards lest we fall in what a famous Chinese Philosopher Confucius describes "in a well governed society, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a society badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.""

He emphasized that environmental safeguards in the mining operations will need to be there.

"We will not put our people in harm's way in pursuit of profit," he added.

Under its Innovation development programme, the County Government of Laikipia is building a big portfolio of local SMEs some of which are expected to grow to become consumers of minerals like the iron ore.

So far it is working with more than 450 of such SMEs among them Sagak Tech Enterprise which is making four-wheeler *tuk tuk*, which in the near future may need iron for to make parts.

Beyond big mining operations the government hopes that the report will trigger small scale mining operations that could offer hundreds of jobs to local people.

# County Government of Laikipia Waives Interest on Land Rates Defaulters



A representation of how people in Laikipia are utilizing their land

**T**he county government of Laikipia has announced a waiver of interest and penalties on outstanding land rates for the next two months.

Starting from December 7th 2020 to February 7th 2021, all Laikipia land rate payers have been allowed a 100% waiver of accrued interests and penalties on all outstanding rates.

The County Assembly has approved the move which is a reprieve for citizens who have borne the negative effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

The agreement has been arrived at after the approval of H.E Governor Ndiritu Muriithi, after the cabinet agreed to the proposal of Finance CECM-Murungi Ndai on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The same proposal was then taken to the county assembly whose members supported the waiver on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

Also, in consultation with the Laikipia County Revenue Board, it has been agreed that there is need to caution the land rate payers against the economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The government has also taken into account the need for all the citizens to make merry during the Christmas season, and have enough for January requirements, as students go back to school. It is in the best interest of the

government to ensure the protection of its people and for the citizens to reciprocate by paying what they owe the government.

All the land rates payers are asked to take advantage of this period to clear the principal rates in full within the two-month period.

Upon the expiry of the waiver period, the government will compel tenants of rate defaulters to pay rent directly to the Revenue Board until the rates and interests due are fully recovered without reference to the land lords.

The government will also withhold any development plans approvals until all outstanding rates are fully paid.

Defaulters will also witness the repossession of the land and the development in it. They will also face a denial from the government of renewal of any license or permits sought by tenants within a premise whose owner has defaulted on the land rates.

“Some people are making profits from the leased lands owned by the county government but they are refusing to pay the agreed rates. We will repossess such lands if they continue defaulting to pay,” said Mr. Ndai.

There is great deal that comes with making waivers to the tax payers.

The quantity of money paid in terms of the rates, interest and penalties is reduced which enables payers to make the necessary payments.

Also, more people who would have defaulted to pay are encouraged to pay the little amounts without the interests. The cumulative effect is an increased revenue from the rates during a waiver period.

In FY 2018/2019, the total collection was Ksh

110,813,459 indicating an increase of 144% over FY 2017/2018 when there was no waiver.

Compared to FY 2016/2017 when the total collection was Ksh 65,099,949 with a similar waiver, the FY 2018/2019 collection (Ksh 110,813,459) indicates a 70% increment.

From the analysis of FY 2018/2019 it is noted that the total collection over the waiver period was Ksh 53,119,138 indicating that 48% of the total annual collection was as a result of the waiver.

In 2019/2020 total collection over the waiver period was Ksh 34, 718, 361 indicating that 47% of the total annual collection was as a result of the waiver.

The county government has engaged debt collectors to help in getting the what defaulters have kept away from the government.

Defaulter may force the government to pursue their issue, something it does not want but might be forced to execute.

Payments can be done through;


Mobile money by dialing \*861#

Mpesa Pay Bill Number 313131 and Invoice number as the account number

Or,


Bank deposit-Cooperative Bank, Nanyuki Branch (Acc.Number 001141366378700)

For any inquiries, kindly contact The CEO, Laikipia County Revenue Board on 0757701850 or email [lcrb@laikipia.go.ke](mailto:lcrb@laikipia.go.ke)



**COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF LAIKIPIA**

LAIKIPIA COUNTY REVENUE BOARD  
P.O. BOX 1271-10400 NANYUKI.  
Telephone: 0757701850, Email: [lcrb@laikipia.go.ke](mailto:lcrb@laikipia.go.ke)



**WAIVER WAIVER WAIVER**

**WAIVER OF INTEREST AND PENALTIES ON  
OUTSTANDING LAND RATES**

With the Approval of H.E the Governor and the County Assembly of Laikipia, the County Revenue Board hereby **NOTIFY** all Laikipia County Land Rate Payers that 100% **WAIVER** of accrued interest and penalties on all outstanding rates has been **WAIVED** effective 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 to 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.

This is in recognition of the challenges occasioned by the Covid 19 pandemic, the demands of the Christmas season as well as January requirements.

The Expectation is that the rate payers clears the principal rates in full within the period specified.

**All the defaulters kindly note that after the Waiver period, the Government shall;**

1. Compel tenants of rate defaulters to pay rent directly to the Revenue Board until the rates and interests due are fully recovered without reference to the land lords.
2. Withhold any development plans approvals until any/all outstanding rates are paid
3. Repossess the land and the development.
4. Deny or decline renewal of any license/permits sought by tenants within a premises whose owner has defaulted on the land rates.

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# Revival of Mt Kenya Textile Industry Underway



Operations at Mount Kenya Textile Mill (Mountex) before its collapse. Efforts are at an advanced stage to revive it

**A**s Nanyuki turns a hundred years since its gazettement as a township, the national and Laikipia County governments have committed to revive the famous Mountex Textile Industry which had folded in early 2000.

The revival will see new jobs created in the county. It will also increase the economic status of people in the surrounding counties as most of the farmers for the raw materials come from surrounding counties.

As the CEC in charge of Infrastructure development in the county Joseph Shuel says,

the industry will open up the entire economy in the Mount Kenya Region and beyond.

The industry will bring in more jobs than it used to when before it closed down. In its peak seasons, the industry had created around 5,000 jobs.

“The new Mountex Textile Industry will create employment for people in Nanyuki going beyond 6,000. It will also give market to the cotton farmers in Laikipia, Meru and other counties in the region,” said Mr. Shuel. Farmers have already been sensitized to plant the right quality crops in readiness for the opening of the industry.

The revival comes as an alignment to the Big Four Agenda of the country; manufacturing. Manufacturing own products helps a county and country to be independent and avoid unnecessary importation.

It has been tough to make the revival efforts to bear fruits. The county officials realized that the land previously occupied by the organization is no longer tenable. Through the department, the county has now identified a 62-acre land where the revived industry is set to occupy.

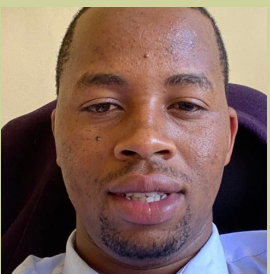
“We identified the Nanyuki quarry which has an area of 62 acres to relocate the Mountex Industry. We have done the feasibility study of the area and now awaiting the national government’s feedback,” said the CEC adding that the process has been affected and halted by Covid-19 pandemic.

The industry will have specialized factory for production of synthetic fabrics and will be the only one of its kind in East Africa.

As a preparation measure, Laikipia farmers have already received some high-quality cotton seeds ahead of the opening of the industry. Early November this year, the Chief Officer James Mung’ere received 540 kgs of Bt cotton seeds from Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA). Bt cotton is a genetically modified organism or genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to combat bollworm. Distribution of the seeds is still ongoing depending on the rainfall availability of the locality.

The county government has mapped out 11 of its 15 wards as viable areas where the plant can thrive.

## Milk Cooling Plant in Salama Transforming Lives



By Collins Keshine, Salama Ward

**S**alama ward residents are now all smiles after receiving a 3200-litre milk coolant from Laikipia county government in partnership with the national government.

The farmers now have an assurance of a market when they graze and get the produce.

The plant serves 77 farmers, delivering over 500litres of milk daily to a local milk buying company at a profitable price.

The farmers are confident that come next year they will have tripled the quantity of milk. Also they are aiming to cover all corners of Salama Ward and soon start producing Salama dairy prod-



ucts such as packed milk and yoghurts products. The coolant has improved the living standards of the locals through creation of direct employment of three people. Investors attraction so far they have collaborated with investors to open an agro-vet with animal feeds and supplements. The organized farmers are able to issue loans at affordable interest rates. The new investment has come to improve security in the area as people concentrate on their animals throughout. Group members have since been taken on training for better management of the investment to ensure its sustainability.

The farmers have expressed their gratitude saying they are now able to make savings due to improved demand and assurance of a ready market.

Their concern now include looking for means of buying more feed and distributing at lower rates to local farmers for more production.



The 3200-litre milk coolant in Salama Ward

# County First Lady Leads Virtual Celebration on World AIDS Day

By Nahashon Maina

**L**aikipia county celebrated the World AIDS day virtually on December 1 with focus being on the youths. The county theme was “Mbogi ya Kujinauwo” encouraging the young people to know their HIV status.

The event was presided by Laikipia First Lady Maria Mbeneka, who was the Chief Guest. She was accompanied by County Health Chief Officer Dr. Donald Mogoi, Director Health Dr. Ohas, Assistant County Commissioner Mary Kwamboka, Laikipia Lab Coordinator Samuel Gachuhi and Reproductive Health Officer Francis Ndora.

The emphasis was on the youths since they are the most affected in term of HIV infections in the county. According to the statistics, 2020 by the Department of Health, 92 new cases of HIV infections was reported in 2019 among youths. They were aged between 15 and 24 years.

In the same period, they recorded 14 deaths which they blamed on refusal by young people to take their medications.

There is need therefore for the youths to know their own status in order to avoid spreading of the disease.

While noting that the cases are high among the youths, Dkt. George Muchama stated that Laikipia HIV prevalence rate has decreased from a high of 7.9% to 2.7% as of this year. The Prevalence rate is the proportions of persons in a population who have a particular disease at a specified period of time.

“Going by this projection, within the next 5 years, our HIV prevalence will below 1% and we can avoid high cases among the youths by working together and reaching out to them to be responsible sexually,” says Dkt. Muchama.



The event aimed at creating awareness on HIV among young people, end stigma and discrimination against those living with HIV and improve the quality of their life through access to essential services that they require.

Dkt. Muchama noted that young people are getting sexual involved early and this has led to increase of teenage pregnancy in the county. The County First Lady, Maria Mbeneka also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic situation has heightened teenage pregnancy. She is of the view that there is need to have a candid conversation about sexual reproduction health to young people.

“We must face the problem head on and as parents we must agree on whether we have done our best, First Lady says. It takes a village to raise a child, everyone must play their part

to raise responsible children from church to the community members,”

She says that youth fails to understand the responsibility they have to themselves first and the society second.

“In as much as the problem is manifesting in our children, we play part to that outcome,” she emphasis.

On HIV transmission from mother to child during birth, the First Lady was applauded for her efforts through her Hongera Mama Kit Initiative. It has provided as an incentive to pregnant women to deliver in hospitals.

“I want to appreciate our first lady because her initiative has enabled many women to come to our clinic for check-up which has helped in prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT),” Dkt. Muchama said.

## Laikipia Country Music Singer Recognized at International Awards

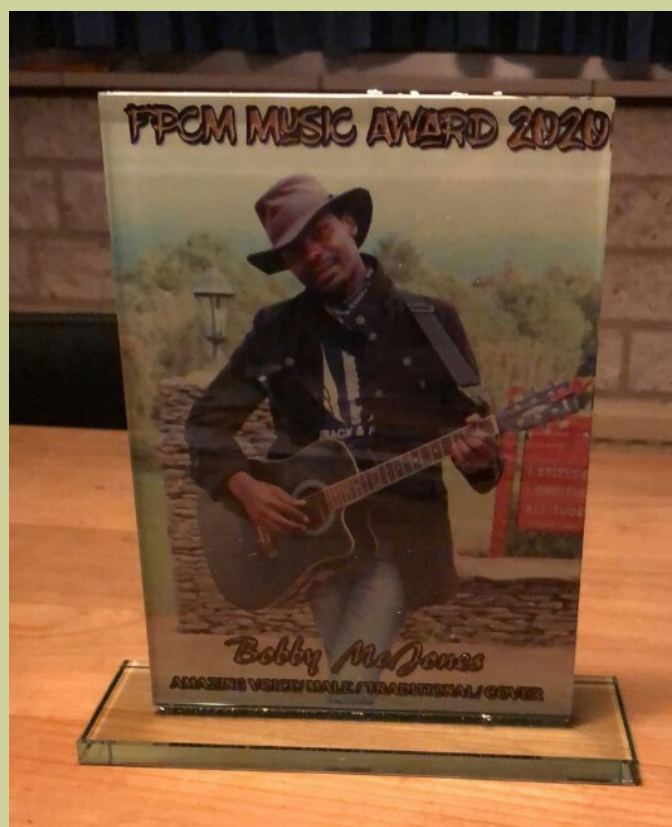
By Nahashon Maina

**J**ustus Obegi popularly Bobby Mc Jones is making a name for himself in the Kenyan country music scene and has been recognized with an international award.

Obegi, born and raised in Thingithu Ward, Nanyuki, was nominated in the Male Amazing Voice Traditional Country Music Cover Category. He was among many International artists from USA, South Africa, Kenya, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Australia, Germany and Canada.

He emerged the best in the category with an amazing cover song “Kiss an Angel Good Morning” by Charley Pride.

The nominees were set to walk to red carpet in Holland in November but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the event was held virtually instead. The award was orga-



The Award the McJonnes received

nized by renowned European music magazine Fair Country Music an expansion of the magazine which provide independent artists with a new platform to be seen and heard.

Obegi says that music has always been a passion of his from early age but started doing cover songs back in 2016. This is after his pianist Peter Mukiiri noticed his talent and encouraged him to pursue it as a career.

“Mr. Mukiiri has been an influential figure in my music career. Through his guidance and teaching I have become a better artist,” Obegi says.

He says that he has always be enthusiastic about the country music with his favourite artist being Charley pride. The next step is to release my first original song very soon,says Obegi.

“I appreciate the support of my fan base, my band led by instrumentalist and mentor Mr. Mukiiri, producer and guitarist Joost Kappe,” Obegi says.

# Turkana to Adopt Laikipia Model To Grow Own Source Revenue



Officials of Turkana County pose for a photo with their Laikipia counterparts led by HE Ndiritu Muriithi during the benchmarking visit

Turkana County delegates pause for a photo with some of Laikipia County Government workers

By Muriithi John

The exceptional performance demonstrated by the County Government of Laikipia keeps other counties admiring and having an urge to learn the secrets.

As such many counties come for benchmark exercises to get a glimpse of the behind the scenes to Laikipia's incomparable results.

Cutting across all departments, the series of benchmarks helps visitors to implement what unique undertaking Laikipia has to improve their own counties for a better Kenya.

As we head to the December holidays, delegates from Turkana county has joined visited for a learning exercise on revenue collection.

Led by the CEC in charge of Finance and Economic Planning Emahe Namuar, Turkana County top revenue officials on Tuesday December 8, 2020 visited to the unique measure Laikipia County Revenue Board uses that has seen a huge increase in revenue collection.

As Governor Ndiritu Muriithi's administration was taking offices in 2017, revenue collection stood at Ksh. 468 million. The current revenue board then set a target of Ksh. 800 million and surprised many by surpassing the mark in the 2018/2019 financial year.

The target for this year 2020/2021 is Ksh. 1 billion and the trend shows that the board will again make yet another surprise.

It is through such outstanding accomplishments that see most counties develop interest to learn from Laikipia's Revenue board on the necessities towards better collection methods without pinching the citizens.

Other than Turkana county, Meru, Nakuru, Makueni and Kiambu counties have benchmarked with the board in a span of three years.

As the board, headed by ... as the chairperson and Prudence... as the C.E.O, explains to the numerous visitors, there is need for organizational reforms, staff appraisals and contract-

ing based on performance for affirmation of quality results.

"We employ our staff on one-year contract and set individual targets. The contract is renewable upon meeting the set targets which enables our staff to work diligently for enhancement of appropriate revenue collection," says Ms. Wangari Wachira, the board's chairperson, adding that the board is an independent entity within Laikipia government.

Citizens are more willing to timely and voluntary pay taxes to the government only after producing evidence of where their money go. The County government of Laikipia has demonstrated appropriate utilization of taxpayers' money through development of Smart Towns, Solar lighting on various streets, tarmacking of various roads, especially on towns, among many others.

Another way the government shows better utilization of revenues collected is through the Economic Stimulus, whereby the government has enabled Laikipians to take subsidized loans by chipping in five percent for them.

The delegation who comes on peer learning in Laikipia get a taste of the unique involvement of the small but crucial details that make many counties make decisions that are not feasible.

"In Laikipia we believe in decisions based on data because you can never go wrong while using data.

delighted with new knowledge that will enable Turkana County surpass its estimated revenue collection.

The numerous visits from various counties is an indication of the improved performance in Laikipia as one can only learn from the best performers.



H.E Governor Ndiritu Muriithi with members of Kiambu County Assembly when they benchmarked and learn the best practices in revenue collection for optimal performance last year

## Laikipia Farmers Turning to Cotton in Readiness for Mountex Revival

**L**aikipia has huge potential to be a leading cotton producer, this is according to a report by the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries after successful completion of pilot project on cotton farming.

The pilot project was started back in 2019 and initially targeted 8 wards: Tigithi, Ngobit, Thingithu, Ol-Moran, Sosian, Salama, Rumuruti and Umande.

In each ward, the department enrolled one farmer whom they gave ordinary cotton seeds to plant in a ¼ acre trial plot. The department then carried out assessment of the performance of the crop through regular farm visits.

“During this initial trial, the 8 farmers whom we enrolled were able to harvest over 100 kgs of cotton. It was evident then that the crop could perform better, says Mr. John Hutu. Prices for the crop is targeted to be Kshs. 52 and Kshs. 26 for grade 1 and grade 2 respectively.

He says that the ordinary cotton seeds are susceptible to attack by pests which strains



A pilot cotton growing at Marura, in Segera ward has produced good results.

the cotton but a good variety like Biotechnology (BT) cotton is tolerant to pest's interference. This BT cotton will be planted in the next phase. They hope that the new variety of BT cotton will increase production as it is well adaptive to drought and hence well suitable for growing in Laikipia.

The success of the trial plots attracted interest from Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) which promised to supply the county with BT cotton seeds.

On November 20, 2020, AFA delivered 540

kgs of these seeds which the department is currently distributing to 331 farmers recruited for upscale production.

The department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries has mapped 11 wards which they found to be suitable for growing the crop. The distribution will involve three more wards; Nanyuki, Mukogodo East and Segera.

The department is targeting a total of 300 acres for the large-scale farming of the cotton within the county by the end of May, 2021.

“It was evident that the crop could do well in those areas, Laikipia East experiences short rains which would benefit the crop,” Mr. Hutu says.

The BT cotton seeds will be distributed to support the growth of the crop in Laikipia East and North which are favored by short rains season. In Laikipia West, the department will distribute the seeds to be planted during the long rain season.

“With inputs support and good soil nutrition, cotton crop can perform well,” says Mr. Hutu. The farmers will benefit from readily market as the AFA will be responsible for finding buyer of the crop. Plans are also in the pipeline to revival the Mountex industry which will ensure access to market for farmers.

According to the report by the department, the average height of the crop was 5.2 feet with good bolls formation. The report notes that in Bondeni village, Ol Moran ward, “Plant growth is vigorous and the area has a good production per unit area.” Hutu adds.

The diversification to the growing of the cotton will enable the county to create employment opportunities and benefit the farmers well. The good quality of the cotton will also ensure that they textile industry has enough raw material for the operationalization once the revival is complete.



The Acting Agriculture chief officer Mr James Mungere, County Crops Officer, Mr Arthur Njeru Maathai and County cotton desk officer Mr John Gichuki Hutu receiving BT cotton seeds from AFA on November 11, 2020. The seeds have since been distributed to farmers within Laikipia County.

# NTRH Celebrates Nanyuki @ 100 in Style



By Muriithi John

**A**s Nanyuki town celebrates a century this year, its main healthcare facility - Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital- is marking its 85 years of service.

The facility has been a critical player in the development of the town. Started as a Nanyuki Natives Dispensary and meant to serve Africans, the hospital has over the years grown to attract more partners including private insurance companies.

It is no longer serving the poor alone but has gained the trust of the wealthy alike through the provision of quality healthcare way above most private hospitals.

NTRH today prides itself through gaining accreditation from five insurance companies. Ordinarily, insurance firms accredit private facility as service providers, but the high quality provided at the facility has given the private com-

panies enough reason for a partnership. These companies are Kenya Alliance, Britam Insurance Company, Jubilee Insurance, AON Minet and NHIF.

Jubilee is the most recent firm of the leading medical insurance to certify the facility Insurance as one of their service providers in the region.

The development marks a critical milestone as it is a major endorsement of the quality of services offered at Laikipia's premier health facility by a key player in the corporate sector.

The facility has been deemed successful to provide credit facilities for Jubilee Insurance scheme members and their dependents.

Those insured by the Jubilee medical cover will no longer have to travel long distances in search of a private hospitals as they can access quality services offered by well-trained and professional staff at NTRH.

With the new agreement members will only be expected to produce the Jubilee Health Insur-

ance Limited Medical Cards (Smartcard/ Jubilee Wellness card) to receive treatment. Members seeking health services at NTRH for the first time with Jubilee cover, the only document will be their employment card, National Identification card or Passport for those whose names correspond to the schedule of members as they await issuance of medical cards.

From a district hospital in mid 1930s, the next elevation took place in the facility was elevated in 1957 when it became a District Hospital. It was not until 2012 when the facility gained yet another status on 12th July to its current status- Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital.

To date NTRH serves at least 500 patients every day, becoming the busiest in the region despite being a level 4 hospital.

NTRH has many reasons to attract the private insurers' confidence. The hospital has the state-of-art medical equipment to and a pool of well-trained professional medics and a strict organizational culture.

Unique equipment like the point of Care machine which produces results in at most two hours has been seeing many referrals, even from the private entities.

The modern renal unit, which is one of the cleanest and most quiet in the country, is ever busy with patients half of whom come from the neighboring counties.

Th facility now has an upcoming private wing to accommodate patients who want more attention form the NTRH staff or those who may have personal doctors attending them.

The hospital has grown to a Level V status having met the threshold of at least 300 beds, and fully functional ICU and HDU units. The services offered are far much ahead as those in a Level IV.

## Solio Residents Making Using Newly Installed Water to Change Their Lives for better



After the completion of the Solio Water project by the County Government of Laikipia, the residents are fast to maximizing use of the readily available commodity to change their lives.

The residents are now putting drip irrigation in their half-acre plots with to make money through farming.

The act will lead to better nutrition through access to healthy diet - vegetables grown in their own plots and also improve the their economic status through selling the surplus.

# Skaters Celebrate Nanyuki @ 100 in Style



The skating activity that took place on 5th and 6th December 2020 brought Nanyuki town to a standstill as observers gazed in amazement at the display of talents by Youth. Children also participated in the events, making them even more colorful.

