



# Laikipia

The official newsletter of the County Government of Laikipia

**WEEKLY  
BULLETIN**

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## Key Investments Reposition Laikipia Regionally



*The new 11.5 million litre Vivo Energy fuel depot in Nanyuki*

**L**aikipia is stealing thunder of the proposed Isiolo city, by positioning itself as the de facto nerve centre of the Kes 2.1 trillion central Kenya economic bloc.

In a big way never seen before, both the public and the private sector are investing in the hitherto neglected county. There have been particularly notably heavy investment by both national and county governments in transport infrastructure that are key enablers of the economy's take-off.

Whether it's by design or by sheer accident, the county has defied slowdown from Covid-19 pandemic to become a magnet for investment from both public and private sectors.

On August 28, Chief Justice David Maraga opened an ultra-modern court house and announced that another court will soon open in Rumuruti. The county government had just

completed a facelift of the previously dusty town by paving streets and the bus park with cobblestones that last for more than 200 years. It has also installed solar streetlights around the town, boosting security.

The opening of the court building came days after agriculture CS Peter Munya visited Nyahururu New KCC factory and announced its expansion.

Rehabilitation of the Gilgil-Nyahururu metre gauge railway is already under way. With its revival, west Laikipia is also set to reap the benefits of bulk cargo transport convenience for the area known for dairy and potato production.

The rehabilitation of the 240-kilometre Nairobi-Nanyuki metre gauge line is complete. Vi-

vo Energy has put up an 11.5 million-litre fuel depot in Nanyuki and is the anchor client for the rehabilitated line.

The railway revival, the ongoing facelift of Nanyuki airstrip and ongoing road projects all point to a county on the verge of commercial takeoff. According to the newly released Laikipia County Statistical Abstract 2020, bitumen roads coverage in the county increased from 203 to 383 kilometres between 2016 and 2019 alone. The Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) is upgrading the Rumuruti -Maralal to bitumen standards. It has done more than 60 kilometres from the Rumuruti side.

The road has opened the land for real estate development. Just A year ago the government completed the Kinamba-Sipili-Rumuruti Road. Also the Limunga Junction-Mutanga-Karaba-Sipili route has been tarmacked as has Mutanga-Karandi-Theria-Muchongoi-Marigat (Baringo).

Mr Ndegwa Gitonga, the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Laikipia Chapter attributes the new developments to a shift in approach to development by the current crop of leadership in the central region.

"I believe this region this time round has leaders who are driving the development agenda that is very distinct from the previous administrations," Mr. Gitonga said. "These are the desired fruits brought about by devolution." These roads have placed Rumuruti at the centre of the robust commerce. From a small trading outpost, the town is now the de facto capital of livestock business, attracting traders even from outside the country who



The busy Nanyuki Civil Airstrip which is undergoing an extreme makeover plays a critical part in Laikipia's tourism

*Continued on page two....*

# Optimism driving Laikipia's Investments Inflow Despite Pandemic

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transact millions of shillings every market day. The town is currently on a construction spree as investors rush to meet the growing demand for housing for commercial and residential housing. The Kenya Forestry Research Institute (Kefri) is constructing its 14<sup>th</sup> Regional research centre in Sossian ward to serve Laikipia and neighbouring counties. The centre will be used as a dry land research centre whereby local communities will be taught on the best trees to plant and in which areas as part of the efforts to achieving ten percent forest cover target. The county government provided land on which the centre is being built.

Kinamba and Sipili have tarmacked streets. The bitumen road also extends for seven kilometres toward Ol Moran town.

In Laikipia Central, the government has upgraded the Shalom Junction- Withare-Sirma-Karai – Lamuria (Ngarengiro)-Narumoru road. Also the Lamuria-Kiawara road is tarmac as is Karai-Kariguini-Nairutia road.

In west Laikipia, rural areas are teaming with new tarmac roads. For the first time in history, processors like Ngárua Millers can transport their products to markets with ease to Maralal and other centres in Samburu. Similarly they can take their products to other markets within Baringo County.

Commercial investments are coming up along the highways. A tour along the recently completed 30-kilometre Rumuruti Kinamba road justifies the observation. Vast expanses of previously idle land are paving way for horticultural, dairy and grain farms.

With this development trend, Laikipia is expected to reap the gains of its strategic location both in Cereb Region and northern Kenya. Its strategic position between central and northern Kenya, Nanyuki is set to be the region's logistics



Chief Justice David Maraga and Governor Ndiritu Muriithi open a modern court house in Nanyuki on August 8, 2020

boom town, handling fuel, construction materials and agricultural produce for dispatch to different destinations. In Laikipia north, the county government is opening up the area and link it to the rest of the new transport connections. The government is exploring a multifaceted approach to upgrade roads in the vast area. They include use of leased equipment and ordinary contracting.

It has contracted the National Youth Service to open up and gravel the Chumvi-Arjiju-Doldol road. This contract could extend to Kimanjo and eventually link the county to Isiolo and Samburu.

Statistics show that Laikipia's economy is responding to the infrastructural development.

The county's GCP jumped from Kes 81 billion in 2017 to Kes 98 billion in 2019, the highest leap in five years.

The private sector is responding to the improved business environment too. In Nanyuki, for instance, an 11.5 million litre Vivo Energy fuel depot has set the stage for heavy commercial investments presence in the town. The energy company is set to reap the gains of cheaper and safer transportation of the bulk cargo.

Tourism and hospitality sector has also registered significant investment. New hotels have been springing up. Luxury hotels brand Elewa has added to its portfolio Lodo Springs Hotel located in the 57,000-acre Loisaba Conservancy.

This year, Mugie also opened Governors Camp Hotel. There is also a Kes 1 billion hotel investment coming up in Il Ngwesi and a 48-room hotel in Nyahururu. There is also a newly opened hotel in Ngobit which is known as Kambi Msituni.

Mr Gitonga, however, thinks that there is still a lot to be done to ensure the impact of the new development is felt down to the grassroots.

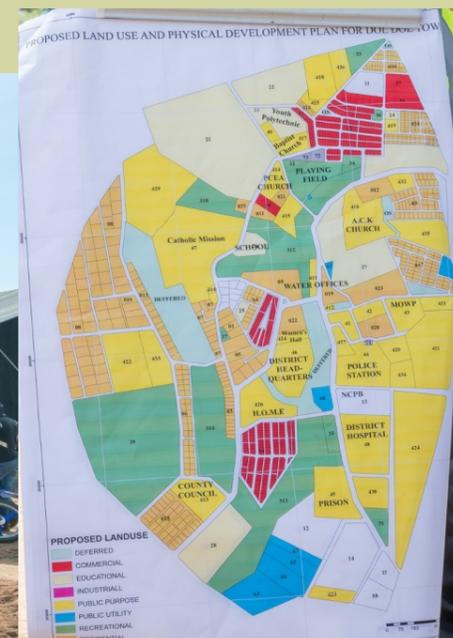
"It is true the railway transport is way cheaper than road, but we need some last mile connectivity to complete the convenience," Mr Gitonga said. "It should not be a nightmare for me to move my consignment from the rail terminus to the shop because it will defeat the whole purpose."

The Chamber is in talks with Kenya Railways to look for solutions to the hurdle. Extension of the railway closer to businesses and the affordable leasing of cargo holding areas are some of the options on the table.



A newly opened hotel in Rumuruti town

# Transforming Dol Dol into a Smart Economic Hub



Left: The main street of Doldol Town.

Top: An initial draft plan of the proposed Doldol smart town

By Muriithi John

The 18-kilometre Chumvi - Arjiju road currently undergoing construction will give Doldol town a new impetus by transforming it from a shopping centre to a major commercial hub.

The county government has contracted NYS to cover the first 18 kilometres from Chumvi Bridge to Arjiju. Initial works only involve mechanized construction, with murraining works set to pave way for the engagement of the local youth.

NYS is bringing in quality works with a big price advantage over ordinary contracting, with the average difference in cost per kilometer being over Kes. 600,000.

Area residents have already seen transformation take root around their areas.

"We thank you Governor Muriithi for making our Chumvi road passable through quality roads and bridges like Chumvi Bridge," said John Lukwawi, adding that there has been an excitement in the area for the construction of permanent classroom for the Oloruko ECDE.

Another resident, Ms Ether Namunyi, sees the road and Chumvi Bridge as a source of happiness especially to the pregnant women.

"Before the bridge was constructed, giving birth was a disaster because of poor roads, but now we see it as a blessing," she said.

The road, which links parts of Mukogodo East ward to the northern part of the county, will see Dol Dol develop to a commercial hub in the near future. It will also cut the distance from Mia Moja and Chumvi to DolDol instead of moving back to Nanyuki town.

Already, there are discussions with the locals on planning of the

town. Residents are given an opportunity to air their views on how they want their Dol Dol smart town to look like.

Through the Smart Towns Initiative, Dol Dol will have an elaborate service line and a dumpsite. This will ensure cleanliness as all waste will be collected into a common area for better disposal or recycling. NYS will help in making this a reality as well as improving the road going to Kimanjo.

"A designated dumpsite will ensure cleanliness in our to-be business hub," said Ms Loise Kimiri during a recent public participation on Dol Dol town planning.

Proper lighting of this town will facilitate economic growth through extended trading hours into late night and early morning.

Dust will be a thing of the past as the streets and markets are to be developed using an all-weather road technology. This will in turn improve hygiene in the area to be a place with healthy people free from hygiene related diseases.

Focus is not only on improving the town but also ensuring proper allocation of plots with title deeds, while revoking the illegal documents for those who may have grabbed land.

Once complete, the town will act as centre linking Laikipia to Kipsing. This will thus improve market for the county's products. The residents want the government to open up the road connecting to Kipsing gap where the resort city has been designated.

The ongoing road projects are set to establish transport and communication infrastructure to ensure livestock and fresh products reach market on time, further encouraging trade. Most of the area residents heavily rely on livestock products.



The Chumvi-Arjiju Road which cuts through the scenic Mukogodo Hills Forest is under construction by NYS. The road will link a large section of Mukogodo East ward to Doldol town and promote tourism

## National Government to Support County Efforts in Collecting Data

The Government will enact a law compelling county governments to establish a statistics unit in their system, Planning principal secretary Saitoti Torome has said.

He confirmed the Department of Planning will polish the County Statistics Bill for tabling to the national assembly to be enacted as law to build the capacity of counties in collection and use of data.

Mr Torome said his department will support the counties to establish units as statistics are critical when counties are preparing their annual development plans and statistical abstracts.

"I don't think there are many county governments that have actually established statistics units in their system but we'll make sure they do that because it will help them in developing their development plans," Mr Torome said. He spoke in Nanyuki during the launch of Laikipia County Statistical Abstract 2020, the third edition by Governor Ndiritu Muriithi's administration.

Mr Torome said the Public Service Commission has given his department a go-ahead to re-establish county planning offices where it will deploy a chief economist, a principal economist and a senior economist to be assisting the coordination of national government projects which are going on in the counties and also track down their implement. The economists, Mr Torome added, are expected to work closely with the KNBS and the county planning department to enhance consistent collection and use of data,



*CRA chair Dr. Jane Kiringai, Principal Secretary in the State Department of Planning Saitoti Torome, and Governor Ndiritu Muriithi during the third Laikipia County Statistical Abstract launch on August 20, 2020.*

reiterating that they will use the Laikipia statistical abstract as a model.

"We have started by re-establishing the original eight offices in Nairobi, Nyeri, Garissa, Mombasa, Kisumu, Kakamega, Nakuru and Embu," Mr Torome added.

Dr Jane Kiringai, the chairperson of the Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA), emphasized on importance of producing data consistently saying all decisions should be driven by data.

Saying that data forms a bedrock of the decisions her commission makes, Dr Kiringai warned use of opinions can trigger chaos and unrest. "You can create chaos and anarchy if very important policy decisions are based on opinions and everyone had an opinion. If you choose to throw away data and use opinion to make policy then you are going to cause cha-

os and anarchy," she said.

Governor Ndiritu Muriithi noted that the Statistical Abstract 2020 will help in understanding why Laikipia's economy was third fastest growing nationally and how to improve it. He called for a shift in mindset on the use of data by policy makers to design useful interventions, and urged investors to make use of verifiable statistics to make investment decisions. "We can make proper use of correct data to resolve issues pertaining development and resource allocation," the Governor said. Laikipia demonstrated the best use the latest data to make clear policies during the Covid-19 interventions such as the food aid and the subsidized loans for small businesses.

## Ombudsman Office to Bring Administrative Justice Closer

County has stepped up efforts to improve access to administrative justice after it partnered with the Commission on Administrative Justice to establish a regional office in Nyahururu. The move, the first by any county government in the country, has boosted the county government's profile in promoting transparency and open governance on its administrative operations. The move was realized after the commission agreed to the request by the county government to set up the regional office in the town, one of the few in the country. The partnership saw the county government allocate office spaces which the commission has been renovating to commence operations. The development will pave way for the people of Laikipia seeking administrative redress to access it closer home. Previously, those seeking the services of the commission had to rely on the services of the institution's Nairobi



*CAJ chair Florence Kajuju (2nd right) Administration CECM Rose Maitai (2nd left)*

offices, making the task too expensive and complicated for the common mwananchi. The step is part of the ongoing reforms to

the public service initiated by the county government. The objective is to ensure proper governance, and recognition of the obligation to promote access to information on development programmes, public resources, policies among other areas. "This is a deliberate move to tell the people of Laikipia that there is a place to report grievances for unfair administrative commissions or omissions," said Administration Executive Rose Maitai. "This applies for both government officers and the public seeking the services." The office, which is set to be operational in two months time, will boost access administrative justice for the residents of Laikipia and the region at large. "Laikipia County Government believes in collaborations with expert partners and agencies to improve public service delivery," said Rose Maitai. "We believe Ombudsman is the expert partner to provide administrative justice." The commission is one of the independent institutions established in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

# Why Nanyuki's Nina Yoghurt Going Places



**Governor Ndiritu Muriithi gets a yoghurt serving from Ms Penina Maina, the entrepreneur behind Nina Yoghurt. The Nanyuki based dairy SME is the beneficiary of business trainings and linkages under Laikipia Innovation Development Program (LIDP).**

By David Serem

**A**t a production centre in the outskirts of Nanyuki town, 15 workers are seen hard at work, turning tens of litres of milk into Nina Yoghurt, the main product line from the dairy venture Kiwama Enterprises.

A section of the workers load packages of the yoghurt, together with the dairy by-products in the form of butter and cream, onto delivery trucks for dispatch to the supermarkets and other retail outlets in Nanyuki and Nyahururu towns.

Nina Yoghurt retails in distinct flavours of vanilla, strawberry and natural, and is currently venturing into strawberry fruits and lemon grass to introduce a new array of flavours into the market.

Yet for Kiwama Enterprises proprietor, it has not been all rosy learning the ropes of entrepreneurship.

What started as an idea in the kitchen in 2004 with only five litres of milk has weathered the storm in the business world to become a promising dairy venture that it is today, but not without facing a collapse in between before a comeback in 2007.

Looking back, Peninah Wangeci Maina, proprietor of Kiwama Enterprises is proud of the growth the dairy processing enterprise has undergone over the years.

But while Ms Maina credits the success of the enterprise to hard work, her joining of Laikipia Innovation Programme has intro-

duced her to new business perspectives, exposures and links that have propelled her business into new horizons.

Kiwama joined Laikipia County Innovation Programme in March 2019, a step that Ms Maina says helped her shatter the production ceiling, venturing into new markets beyond the Kenyan market.

Ms Maina says the Innovation Programme has exposed her to new business perspectives that are accelerating the growth of her dairy venture. The programme has linked her to Kenya Industrial Estate, where she has managed to secure affordable loans to expand her business. Using the loans, she has acquired new machines to boost production such as a standby generator to plug inconveniences of power interruptions.

The dairy entrepreneur credits her growing financial literacy to the continuous trainings on areas such as stock investment facilitated by the county innovation programme.

Ms Maina says new markets are opening up, courtesy of the numerous exhibitions hosted by the county innovation programme that has exposed her to new potentials.

"We have had good progress. We have showcased our products in far places like Rwanda during a two weeks exhibition organized by the innovation programme in 2019," the dairy entrepreneur says, adding that she is currently expanding into cheese production to reach the new markets in the neighboring countries.

"We are grateful to the county government for

the training and the new business connections that have come with the exposure. We are glad to be contributing to job creation and county revenue growth" Ms Maina says.

Even at the height of Covid-19, Kiwama Enterprises has maintained all its 15 workers, a decision that Ms Maina says was informed by the need to protect their (worker's) dependents from the financial shock associated with job losses.

"Times are hard out there and we thought it wise not to abandon our workers at the hour of need," she says.

The entrepreneur attributes passion for her growth from humble beginnings, and calls out to the youthful entrepreneurs to be passionate in their business ideas.

"It is doable. The struggles will always be there, but keep the focus as the markets will respond," she says.



# County Government Taps Sustainable Solar Energy



*HE Governor Ndiritu Muriithi signs an agreement with officials of a firm that is seeking license to produce 40MW solar power in Rumuruti*

**L**aikipia is poised to reap the gains of the renewable solar energy as a cost effective alternative to meet its growing energy needs.

Focus is now shifting to lighting the urban centres with the clean energy. This is after the government made successful exploits in harnessing solar power to deliver water to thousands of residents who depend on water from boreholes.

Significant strides have been made in the recent past to equip new and existing boreholes with solar powered pumps. This has made availability of constant water a reality for many communities whose ways of life have been dictated by the availability. Solar power is a welcome change for residents who have endured years labourious manual water pumping.

The social economic transformation is evident as a result, as more pastoral communities now lead a more settled life. Community hygiene is also poised to improve.

Laikipia County is pushing the limits on the solar energy exploitation front of the solar energy even further. The county is leveraging on its strategic position on the equator to tap into the abundant energy source to light up the streets and markets.

Currently, test runs for the newly installed solar powered street lights are ongoing in various towns. The success of this innovative programme means a bright for the taxpayer, going by its affordability.

The new project will replace the exorbitant installation operation costs of the high mast flood lighting currently in use.

Residents of Mutanga, Rumuruti, Nyahururu and

Nanyuki are some of the proud beneficiaries of brighter streets and markets as the government rolls out the installation. The installation of the first 216 solar light poles across the county has commenced and is set to be completed by end of August this year.

According to Chief Officer for Administration

Charles Muiruri, it costs an average of Ksh. 220 to 250 thousand to put up one complete solar lighting pole. This is a significant reduction compared to 3.4 million shillings to install a single high mast light system. Add the operation costs, which is 10,000 shillings for a single mast per month in electricity bills, and the cost benefits realized become even more distinct.

In rough estimates, it means the cost of putting up a single high mast lighting installation is enough to cater for the installation of 14 complete solar powered light poles. The lowered operational cost is a step in the right direction on lighting up vast socio-economic spaces. It comes with additional advantages of reliability, and is free from the frequent interruptions that are a result of burnouts caused by power surges.

The electricity powered high mast flood lights have proven to be untenable. The high installation operational costs notwithstanding, the cost of repairs is proving to be more of an uphill task.

For instance, Olmoran trading centre has remained in the dark in the recent past after a power surge blew out the bulbs. Efforts to restore the installation suffered a major setback after the crane failed to reach the top of the 30 metre high mast, bringing the 200,000 shillings restoration operation to a halt.



*A solar powered borehole in Doldol, one of the many such projects using clean and renewable solar energy to avail water cost effectively*

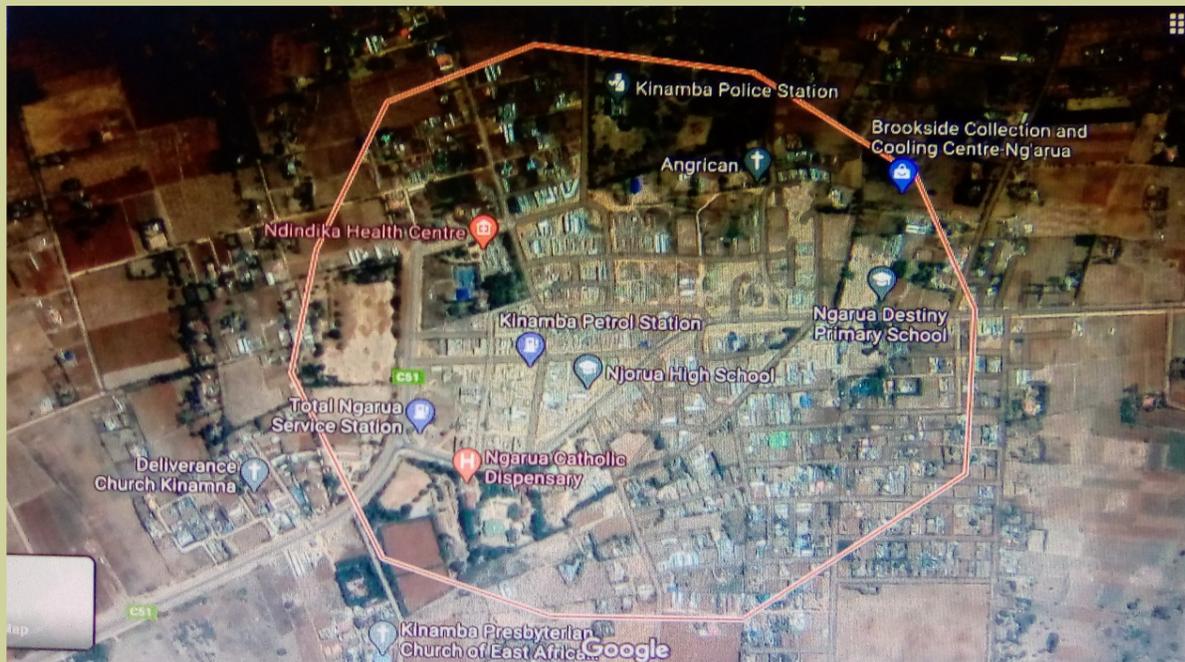
## Kinamba Water Project Kicks Off

**T**he long-awaited Kinamba water project in Githiga Ward has finally started. Contractors are on site giving hope to residents who have endured decades of biting water shortages.

The handing over of the project to contractors took place on mid-July 2020, paving the way for the drilling of the first three boreholes that will supply water to Kinamba town and its environs. Subsequent ones will then follow to ensure reliable year round availability of water in the rather dry area. The project, which will serve more than 9,000 people within the Kinamba environs, will see contractors avail ground water through drilling of boreholes. The waters will then be merged in a focal point through a network of pipelines for ease of distribution.

Some of the facilities that will benefit from this source of water include schools, hospitals and a police station. Residents of Kinamba Township and its surroundings will be the direct beneficiaries of this noble project.

Availability of clean water for production in this area will transform its economy with improved agricultural practices and yields, and enough water for livestock.



*Kinamba town will have reliable water source after the completion Kes 60 million water project initiated by the county government through KDSP is complete*

The project is set to greatly improve public hygiene, as the availability of clean water will in a big way reduce occurrences of hygiene-related illnesses and water-borne diseases. New developments have begun taking shape as many investors who previously shied away due for lack of water, troop back to exploit the new opportunities. Major industries are coming up soon and create a wide range of economic activities .

The project has been funded by World Bank in partnership with the national government through the Kenya Devolution

Support Programme (KDSP) following Laikipia County's exemplary performance in project implementation in previous allocations. A whopping Kshs. 60 million has been directed in the Kinamba Water project through the programme that is set to change fortunes for thousands of residents in this part of Laikipia West.

Other projects funded through KDSP in the county include Makurian water project in Laikipia North and Smart Towns in Rumuruti ward.

## Roads Equipment Leasing Programme is linking Production Zones to Smart Towns

**I**n Laikipia, two ambitious programmes are helping transform the transport infrastructure landscape at a pace only imaginable before. Smart Towns Initiative and the leased construction equipment programme are working simultaneously to deliver a robust transport network in urban centres and rural areas of the county respectively. The rural roads upgrade programme is linking farmers to markets in urban centres, whereas the Smart Towns Initiative is accelerating commercial activities as investors cash in on improved business environments. The equipment leasing programme will see the upgrading of more than 450 kilometres of roads in the first phase that ends September this year. This will happen in less than a year into operations according to executive in charge of Roads Infrastructure, Joseph Shuel. "We have achieved remarkable



progress despite an initial hurdle of limited equipment," Mr. Shuel said, adding, "We have raised our equipment inventory, so we expect to do more roads this financial year." The leased equipment programme is opening rural areas to commercial agriculture, accelerating large scale agricultural production as more investors move in to exploit the agribusiness opportunities the budding transport routes are providing. The two are complementing each other to deliver the government's pledge to create conducive environments for businesses to flourish. The Smart Towns drive has now achieved 1.2 kilometres of cobble-stone paved streets and bus parks in Rumuruti and Wiyumiririe towns each. Sipili and Kinamba towns now have 2.5 kilometres each of tarmac streets through collaboration with the national government. In Nanyuki town, over 7 kilometres of roads around business premises have been tarmacked. Nyahururu is the biggest beneficiary of the ongoing urban remake, with over 9 kilometres of streets tarmacked. The upgrades have revitalized commercial activities around abandoned business premises such as go downs in dilapidated backstreets. Oljabet town has been targeted for upgrade in the next financial year. Courtesy of Smart Towns programme, urban centres like Rumuruti, Sipili and Kinamba are now fast rising commercial hubs, as investors rush to put up commercial spaces to house expanding businesses and startups.

# Transforming Nyahururu's Businesses Environment



By Kevin Maina

Nyahururu is a major beneficiary of the urban roads upgrade programme under the Smart Towns Initiative. So far it has nine kilometres of roads that have been upgraded.

These are photos of the construction works at C77-Liberty Petrol Station-Nyaki –Aga Khan Hospital Loop in Nyahururu town that is improving the business environment in the area.

Shielded pedestrian walkways have also been constructed and well labeled to ensure safety for those on foot by minimizing collisions with other road users. Painting and signage works are ongoing. These include marking to designate parking bays, road signs to indicate bumps, pedestrian crossings and single lane roads. Some roads are cabro paved for durability. Drainage system is also in place to manage run-off water to avoid flooding within the business premises.

