



Laikipia

The official newsletter of the County Government of Laikipia

**WEEKLY
BULLETIN**

Scores of Laikipians Participate in Making of County Finance Law



Citizens raise their hands to contribute to county Finance Bill 2020 at one of the meetings attended by H.E. Governor Ndiritu Muriithi

Scores of Laikipia citizens came out to contribute to the County Finance Bill 2020 during a week-long public engagement across the county. About 4,400 Laikipians came out in 47 meetings held in all the wards, to give their voice in the Bill.

Citizens agreed with the proposals of the Bill and there was general consensus that the government should continue with the development mo-

mentum.

“The county government has done a very commendable job. The governor has really proved himself to be a capable hard worker by being in the office for just three years and bringing development never seen before in the region,” that was the common statement in most of the meetings.

The County government set aside 12th to 16th October 2020, to engage Laikipians in contributing to the government policies through at least 51 public participation forums. This is an indication that this county government upholds democracy and believes in listening and inclusion of citizens.

In this year’s proposal, the government has not done much changes. There will be no additional taxation on business permits and parking fees in towns. The market fees also remain as before.

Most of the issues citizens raised were answered on the spot by over 50 government officers who were joined by NHIF and financial institutions representatives.

One Mr. Mwangi said, “Thank you governor for the good roads especially the road in Ukumbusho now it looks like London. But elsewhere, why does the county government give contractors the mandate to murram various roads with no inspections. Don’t you like to know the conditions of the work they do while remaining in the office?”



H.E Deputy Governor John Mwaniki at one of the meetings in Ngobit ward

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A fruitful week of citizen consultations

In answering Mr. Mwangi, Governor Ndiritu Muriithi had this to say: "No contractor has been paid without first conducting a thorough inspection from county officers. In fact some contractors have been forced to redo work done that does not meet the standard. We have taken our contract supervisors for training to ensure improved quality of roads.

Another one, Ms. Peninnah commented, "Thank you for the construction of the Nanyuki Open-air Market and parking areas. Why are some people coming with their cars and converting the parking bays to a market by selling goods from car boots and making customers not to access the market. The answer given was, "Enforcement officers will be deployed to ensure that everyone sells inside the market for equality for the market sellers," said the Governor.

The Governor further spoke of the "twende Nanyuki" initiative that will be involving visitors coming to Nanyuki on train every Friday as a way of boosting business in the county.

On her part Ms. Ndung'u wanted to know if there are special considerations for people wishing to start businesses towards the end of the year. "How much of license will I be charged if I want to start a business now, considering we are only two months to the end of the year?"

There exists only one way to pay for the same and includes one year renewable annually and no matter which month one pays, it must cover the whole year. In the engagement also, it was noted how some people delay in payment of business permits waiting to pay when the year is end-



H. E. Governor Ndiritu Muriithi leading a team of County officers in engaging Laikipia citizens to make suggestions on the status of the Finance Bill

ing with hopes of paying less.

The end of public participation on the bill is not the end of taking citizen's views. People may also send their written memoranda through info@laikipia.go.ke or share their input via all available means; telephone, email, letters or via social media platforms.

The Finance Bill is still a draft and hence subjecting it to rigorous interrogation and engagement with citizens, provides a big window and opportunity to take in new ideas and align others as per the aspiration of citizens.

The importance of this exercise cannot be overemphasized. It is through such public participation exercises that citizens take part

in decision-making on how their county resources should be used.

An enlightened community on reasons for collecting revenues translates to payment of the same from the public in a willing manner. The government has assured the public that they will be seeing the value of their money that they contribute as taxes.

When a community realizes the need to pay taxes, they do so willingly without evasion and avoidance.

"Our primary aim is to broaden the tax base so that we pay less per person when all of us are paying," concluded the Governor.



A Nanyuki business woman gives her views during a breakfast meeting. (Right) citizens go through the Bill

Promoting Innovation in Laikipia



Some of the products produced by EM Naturals in Laikipia. The SME is among those being supported under the Laikipia Innovation Development Programme

The County Government of Laikipia

is committed to making the county a manufacturing hub that will be exporting surplus of the locally manufactured products and limiting exportation of raw materials.

The government is encouraging consumption of products made in Laikipia by Laikipians in a bid to promote small and medium businesses.

Through the department of Trade, Tourism and Co-operatives, the government formed a directorate tasked to handhold local businesses under the Laikipia Innovation Development Programme (LIDP).

To join the programme one has to be an innovator, even if it is at the ideation stage.

Headed by Ms Winnie Mwangi as the Director, the LIDP has so far helped 457 MSMEs, 142 in manufacturing, 136 in engineering and 29 support partners.

The programme aims at establishing original Laikipia brands and linking the entrepreneurs to financiers and markets as well as guiding them on patenting issues. All this is geared towards supporting and encouraging innovations and motivating many more Laikipians to develop technological advance-

ments.

The program has benefitted many innovators by changing their simple ideas into income-generating activities. Some have grown to venture in international markets. Trade department caters for trainings, trade fairs, and exhibitions within the county, nationally and even outside the country.

On 13th Decembers 2019, for example, the department took ten innovators to Kigali, Rwanda for the 20th EAC MSMEs Trade Fair. The ten the rest of the innovators.

Grateful

The entrepreneurs made sales, linkages, networks from different retailers in the EAC markets and received orders. They also learnt on product development, market access, standardization, business up-scaling, and value addition and cross border trading. The trade fair ran from 13th December, 2019 to 22nd December, 2019.

“We have had good progress. We have showcased our products in far places like Rwanda during a two-week exhibition organized by the innovation programme in 2019,” said Peninah Maina of the famous Nina Yoghurt.

The statement has been echoed by other entrepreneurs like Peter Mwangi who is the innovator behind the famous Laikipia Nyati Foot Wear. Other innovators who had problems with regis-

tering their business had endured lots of frustrations from Kenya Bureau of Standards (Kebs) may be because failure to know all the necessary requirements.

However, since joining the programme, the directorate acted promptly to help them with such documentation through a guided process.

“We are grateful to the County Government of Laikipia for facilitating us to get a Kebs certificate. We are now operating without fear,” said Ms. Wambui Mwangi, whose business Butty Box Limited, has been producing low-sugar carbonated drinks in different flavours. Recently 30 innovators successfully graduated to fully grown businesses that have penetrated the market outside the country with the help of the innovation programme.

Kebs

Laikipia government is determined to change the economic status of all citizens within the county and encourages everyone with a business idea to come out and join the programme.

Two hundred government officers have been chosen across departments and trained to hand-hold local business people.

Spike in Covid-19 Infections Worrying

A surge in new Covid-19 infections in the county has raised concern among county leaders.

Medics are attributing the increase to people's reluctance to adhere to the guidelines set by Ministry of Health of washing hands or sanitizing, maintaining of social distance and wearing of masks while in public places.

Laikipia County has in the recent past been reporting a high number of positive Covid-19 cases. On 21st October 2020, a total of 50 cases were confirmed in a span of 24 hours. On the previous day 43 positive cases were confirmed while on Monday 19th October 2020, 11 cases turned out positive. The 43 cases reported were mainly primary contacts who had tested positive previously. As at 22nd October, the county department of health had tested 6,703 samples since the beginning of the pandemic in the country in early March 2020. A total of 4,329 samples have been collected from Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital and 2374 from Nyahururu County Referral Hospital. Out of the samples collected, 410 have turned out to be positive giving a positivity rate of 6.12%.

According to CEC Health Dr. Lenai Kamario the number of daily positive cases has been ranging between 0-15 on average in the past but recently these numbers have been rising. In this regard the Department of Medical Services and Public Health calls upon the people of Laikipia to adhere to the preventive measures, guidelines and protocol. They should also be ambas-



Washing hands, wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing is critical to preventing Covid-19 infection.

sadors of spreading the message of use of masks, handwashing, social distancing and follow guidelines purporting to social gatherings to curb this ongoing spike in Covid-19 cases.

The County Government has put up measures in the hospitals including having 5 functional ICU beds and ventilators and 12 bed High Dependency Unit (HDU) to address severe cases. The Isolation centers al-

ready have the required beds to attend to those who do not meet the Home Based Isolation Care criteria.

The County Communication Centre Hotline numbers for any inquiry or assistance including reporting any signs or symptoms which are Covid-like are (0110094440 or 0783055343).

Laikipia Deepens Use of Systems

Laikipia is redefining service delivery through the use of systems to increase efficiency.

The county workers will now be filing their claims on Integrated County operation management system (COMS) platform to prevent undue delay in their payments.

This is a major win for the workers as supervisors have a seven-day window to act on the claims. If no action is taken within the period, the issue will be escalated automatically to another level of decision-making. Again here, it will be escalated further if still no action is taken after three more days. The third escalation happens after two more days. This particular fea-

ture has been added to the COMs/iCOMS mainly to enhance fairness and speed in the processing of claims by staff in all cadres in this organisation. It means that all officers responsible for approving claims will not be approving their claims first at the expense their juniors.

The claims are also tied to the timesheets which county staff fill on weekly basis capturing the work they have done for the week as part of their individual work plans. Staff performance appraisal have also been migrated to the online system together with the work plans.

Through the supplier portal the county is also enabling its suppliers to access personalized online services anytime, anywhere.

The simple to use portal will give you mobility to get the right information from the right source.

Entrepreneurs are able to access online supplier services and take control of all their transactions with Laikipia County via an intuitive personalized portal that keeps them updated in a transparent and trusted process.

Nanyuki Water Sewerage Company (Nawasco) has managed to map out all the water connections within its jurisdiction in a GIS to increase its efficiency in management and billing of its distributed water.

It has used the same technology in Solio Settlement Scheme.

Laikipia a Bedrock of Quality Beef Cattle



Cattle at Suyian Ranch, Laikipia

By Peter Mubari

Beef and Milk production in Kenya is the forte of pastoralists and large-scale ranches in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas.

Laikipia County is in a region whose natural vegetation and other characteristics of the area present favorable opportunities to intensify and leverage on livestock production.

According to the Laikipia County Statistical Abstract 2020, Dairy and Beef Cattle in 2019 were 294,620 in population. In relation to other particular types of livestock such as poultry, goats and sheep, dairy and beef are the preferred ones.

The livestock species play important economic and socio-cultural roles for the wellbeing of ru-

ral households in Laikipia County.

Economic roles are derived from livestock primary products such as meat, offal, raw fats, fresh hides and skins. Products from live animals include milk, eggs, honey, bee wax and fibres of animal origin. Farmers are able to contribute to the county's economy by selling these products.

Milk production in Laikipia County is also a major boost to the county's economy. The County Statistical Abstract 2020 indicates that in 2019, 32,699,907 litres of milk were produced. Farmers are able to sell these quantities of milk to the cooperatives and in turn it is packaged to make various milk products such as ghee and cheese.

Livestock production is closely related

with crop improvement. The animals produce manure that helps in crop growth and improvements of land productivity. The manure is organic and has more nutrients compared to the artificial fertilizers. Livestock is a source of energy providing draught animal power while manure improves soil structure and fertility as well as water retention. Livestock is also used to transport agricultural inputs and outputs and personnel.

The county government has been assisting farmers to access veterinary services in order to improve breeds of cattle, and thus increase export opportunities.

Adept

Enough funds have been allocated to support establishment of feedlots which is the modern way of rearing beef animals. There's also funds for capacity building to farmers, water sourcing, market finding and even in capital sourcing through banks partnership and County Enterprise Fund.

In addition, farmers and investors are going to benefit a great deal since the rates of transportation of livestock from the county has greatly reduced. Farmers will be charged Kshs 730 per tonne of cattle and Kshs 465 per tonne of small animals.

Laikipia remains one of the most adept counties in Kenya as far as livestock production is concerned. Laikipia is seeking for new ways in maintaining this ever growing trend of livestock production in the county.

Fresh Blood Injected Into Laikipia Workforce

As part of the reforms, guided by the need to provide services to the community in a swift manner, a team of young and vibrant officers have joined the Laikipia public service. Comprising 21 administrator officers 1 and five assistant directors administration services, the officers will be deployed to the community to ensure every Laikipia gets the necessary assistance from the government.

The team is currently undergoing vigorous training for improvement of relationship between the public and their representatives in leadership.

In one of their trainings, H. E. Governor Ndiritu Muriithi asked the officers to accept to be servants of the people and facilitate the public to grow economically. This will be achieved through giving an ear to the people to know the root -cause of any problem.

"You must put your money where your mouth is. Your work as

government representatives will be to mobilize the public into production," said the Governor.

The recruits will be expected to prepare their work plans that is in line with the strategic plan of the county, while making decisions based on data and not speculations.

"You will never go wrong with data. As a county we make all decisions based on the data, most of which we capture in our annual statistical abstracts," he said.

One of the many places Laikipia has used data is in the Lisha Jamii initiative to identify the most vulnerable and deserving people.

Also, to pay for the most vulnerable households' health insurance, the government used data to settle at 12,500 vulnerable families.

'Twende Nanyuki' Should become a Monthly Event

By Kuria Irungu

Laikipia County in partnership with Kenya Railways, local hospitality industry players and the Standard Media Group organised a once in a lifetime event, one of its own kind to ever happen in Laikipia.

The County made a debut with the new revamped railway line and ushered tourists to the Mount Kenya region for a three-day adventure packed excursion dubbed "Twende Nanyuki, Jionee Kenya".

Laikipia County is home to some of the best wildlife conservancies in the country and regionally. The home of rhinos, Ol Pejeta Conservancy partnered with the County Government in this initiative whose objective was to drive domestic tourism to Laikipia.

The adventure which took place between September 25th and 27th, began with an inaugural train journey from Thika to Nanyuki. Aboard the train which took off at 2:45pm on Friday, 25 September, 2020 was Her Excellency the First Lady of Laikipia County, Ms. Mariah Mbeneka. The train left Thika packed with guests among them members of the media and staff from Laikipia County. The CEC for Tourism, Biwott Tirop was in the company of domestic tourists aboard the train probably to experience the new touch of tourism, spiced with an adventurous six hour train journey. The newly revived railway line served the Twende Nanyuki team with an exceptional experience.

The train honked thrice as it left the station at Thika and tore through the pineapple farms before drowning in the hills and valleys of Murang'a County. Its wheels of steel screeched on the bridges of Sagana in Kirinyaga County offering those aboard a magnificent view of the magical scenery. The landscapes and sites presented a different side of the journey to *Mwisho wa Reli*, unfamiliar with many travellers who have been to the mountain side town for several decades. Aboard the train passengers were treated to Country Music by Bobby McJones in the company of his guitarist and bandmate Robert Jumba.

Every moment for the passengers aboard, many of whom including the writers were having a first time experience, felt like one was in the European subway somewhere in Lyon, France or London.

If wishes were horses we would all ride on one but for one lucky tourist, riding on the train was a wish granted. The train journey will forever leave an impact in the life of John Mwiruri who was picked along the way. His dream of hopping into the train for a trip to



Nanyuki came true through the Twende Nanyuki experience which awarded him with a fully paid trip for that adventurous weekend. He had wished for a train ride only but the answer to his prayer saw the ride accompanied with adventure, luxury and a first class treatment. As the train paused to pick Mwiruri, the passengers got treated to some sweet fruits to spice up the journey. Along the way the passengers had gotten accustomed to the waving and dances of children and people along the railway line, here it was different.

Fruit vendors along the railway line swarmed the wide windows of the train coaches each striving to make a sale. The scene here was familiar to what you experience with fruit and *mahindi choma* vendors along the highways if you are travelling via road. Life for the fruitpreneurs along the railway line is taking a different shape with the revival of the railway services along the route.

At 8:25 pm, the train honked as a signal that the journey was coming to a halt. This was about six hours since take-off. On arrival at Nanyuki railway station, the darkness had already fallen. Time seemed to have paused between Chaka town and Nanyuki. The passengers could no longer enjoy the view outside from when the night set in. The only thing that was left to listen to was the creaking of the railway line under the heavy metallic body of the train, packed with domestic tourists enroute Nanyuki for an excursion worth every dime and time. Even McJones and Jumba were now eagerly waiting for the arrival, the guitar had been laid to rest inside its safe.

His Excellency the Governor of Laikipia County, Hon. Ndiritu Muriithi ushered the train with the County's visitors on board. The drizzles of the cold Friday night did not hinder the County head in the company of other county officials, from extending a warm welcome to the tourists. The reception was to mark the start of the Laikipia experience best served at a time when the County is picking its tourism industry up from the harsh effects of Covid-19.

Tourism is at the heart of Laikipia County's economy and the impact of Covid-19 on travel schedules saw the tourism sector hit hard by lack of tourists. Laikipia County made a wise move with the Twende Nanyuki event whose timing was right to resuscitate the tourism sector.

The tourists got a chance to enjoy the big five before retreating for a cocktail and a sundowner at the Sweetwater Serena Camp. What a way to spend the weekend immersed in the deep wild on the mountainside.

The well planned weekend came to an end with a train journey back to Thika on Sunday the 27th. The tourists were dropped off at the Nanyuki Station for take-off at 11 am which was followed by another scenic return journey. It was a successful weekend for Laikipia's tourism and hospitality industry. For the adventurous souls who paid a visit to the county, it was a weekend to remember if not to be revisited.

MoU Sets Stage for Establishment of Nanyuki Metropolitan



Governors Mutahi Kahiga and Ndiritu Muriithi before the signing of the MoU at Jaqanaz Hotel, Narumoru

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Governors Ndiritu Muriithi and Mutahi Kahiga has set the stage for the creation of Nanyuki Metropolitan that includes parts of Nyeri and Meru counties.

Some Nanyuki suburbs fall in Nyeri and Meru counties administrative and it would only be sensible to offer the residents services from Laikipia.

Such areas include Cottage, Ichuga, Makutano and Katheri. Nanyuki water and sanitation company (Nawasco), for instance, provides these areas with water.

Similarly, Narumuro Level 4 Hospital which the County Government of Nyeri is constructing at Narumoru will serve residents of Solio scheme which is in Laikipia.

While the Solio residents will access quality healthcare, the hospital will also gain from increased NHIF capitation.

Signing of the MoU now creates a formal way of engagement on cooperation between Laikipia and Nyeri governments to provide service to citizens. A similar agreement could be signed between Laikipia and Meru county governments.

The new area that borders Laikipia and Nyeri counties is meant to bring services to people from either county without looking at the boundaries that have been set through the constitution.

The fundamental purpose for the existence of governments is to serve their people by way of initiating development projects aimed at improving the quality of life for their residents. This has made the two devolved units to come to the rescue especially to those living at the border points to have better services.

The two counties are members of the Kes. 28 billion Central Region Economic Bloc (Cereb). Therefore, there is a need to work together to tap investors in the two counties and boost their people economically.

The agreement signed by the two leaders poses a challenge to other counties to follow suit. A Kenyan citizen should not be denied a chance to access resources just because of sitting at a border. In any case, there exists no physical boundaries between counties.

Just as politicians extend their plea to ask for voter sympathy while looking for votes, the same should be expressed during service delivery.

“Residents of Nyeri County when they buy goats in Laikipia have been paying cess to both governments. This is double taxation that the MoU seeks to remove,” said Governor Muriithi. Revenue collection from the boarder points, as Governor Muriithi noted, will not be affected and may be collected by one government on behalf of the other.

“This merger will not affect the revenue collection of the two counties as one county can collect the revenue on behalf of the other and sub-

mit the same to the respective county. There will be more discussions and agreements on the same,” said Governor Muriithi.

Governor Kahiga piled up to the importance and timeliness of the MoU saying that unwarranted competition between counties is what has brought “a wedge” amongst people, hindering service delivery. According to him, Nyeri and Laikipia people are one. According to him, residents of both counties must never miss any service on the account of coming from one county, and not the other.

“Our Nyeri County Referral Hospital, may have more facilities than Nanyuki County Referral Hospital, and we should be able to share these resources.... Again, our Narumoru town here has no land for expansion or for building a sewerage system, if we must install a sewer system, we can only expand in Laikipia,” Governor Kahiga exemplified.

In the new agreement, there will be mutual visits, training courses and staff exchange programmes that will see leaders and other officers from the two areas interact freely and learn from each other in deliberate efforts to steer development.



The signing of the MoU at Jaqanaz Hotel in Narumoru

Statistics Show Laikipia's Economy is Growing

By Muriithi John

Laikipia County has a GDP growth rate of 8.9% while the national average growth stands at 5.6%. This trajectory is attributed to good organization leadership and flow of resources down to the grassroots.

Revenue collection has been on a sustained growth indicating 35% increase for the financial year 2018/2019.

The County Statistical Abstract 2020, points out to a steady county growth with an estimated County Gross Product (GCP) of KES 89 billion in 2018 and KES 98 billion in 2019 at current prices.

The county leadership has been moving in high gear to change the face of the county and create better business environment to raise incomes.

The county is in the process of training all its officers to be able to offer business development services within their respective areas of service.

This will enable the officers to move beyond outputs to outcomes that are impactful to the citizens.

"The main reason why government exist is to facilitate others to grow," Governor Ndiritu Muriithi insists.

The county officials are expected to guide local Laikipia SMEs to grow into bigger entities to create employment and higher incomes.

This means they must create an enabling and friendly business environment to facilitate growth.

Development comes when the county is able to produce goods and services for its own consumption instead of importing.



Construction of a road in one of Laikipia's urban centres. Such development are stimulating growth of the county and attracting new investment

In its latest survey on overall county business environment for MSEs, the Kenya Institute for Public Policy and Research Analysis (Kippra) ranked Laikipia among the top five counties.

The county has a vibrant innovation development program that has been hand-holding local innovators. To date the LIDP has helped 457 MSMEs, 142 in manufacturing, 136 in engineering, and 29 support partners. In the year 2018-2019 alone, the growth of licensed businesses grew by 6,000 an indication of a good business environment attracting investors.

In the recent past financial institutions are coming up to offer loans for people to start a business or add stock to existing ones after

Covid-19 devastation.

Latest County Statistical Abstract, indicates that agriculture remains the main contributor to the Laikipia Gross County Product with an estimated input of Ksh. 35 billion, a 44 per cent of the total CDP share. Wholesale and retail business come in second at Ksh. 7.132 million in 2017, up from Ksh. 4.3 billion in 2013.

Financial and Insurance activities, and Transport and Storage come in second and fourth place with an estimated GCP of Ksh. 6.275 billion and Ksh 5.904 billion respectively in 2017, up from Ksh. 31.17 billion and Ksh. 3.17 billion respectively in 2013.

The government has partnered with several banks to come up with a financial kitty of Ksh. 3.3 billion. Anybody wishing to boost their businesses is encouraged to apply for the loan. The county government will further reduce the amount a borrower will pay back to their banks. Laikipia government will be paying five per cent and the borrower seven percent instead of twelve. This is also a way to demonstrate the meaning of having SMEs at heart.

In the just concluded one-week public participation, the government involved the public in discussing matters taxation. The government intends to widen the tax base to allow more people to pay so that the general burden of few citizens may be shared.

The developments seen in one town like Nanyuki are reciprocated in all other towns like Nyahururu and Rumuruti. The latest business to open was Home Business Sacco in Rumuruti on 16th October 2020. Just a few weeks ago New Fortis Sacco and Chieni Supermarkets opened branches in Nanyuki town.



Nyeri-based New Fortis Sacco opened a branch in Nanyuki a month ago. Laikipia is attracting new investments due to improving business environment