

MAFUBE MUNICIPALITY OWES ESKOM R1.5M IN UNPAID ELECTRICITY

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The Mafube Municipality which includes Frankfort in the northern Free State owes Eskom about R1.5m in unpaid electricity tariffs.

The local authority faces imminent threats of power cuts if the municipality fails to pay the outstanding debt.

However, the key challenge is that many of the residents in this small town are very poor and cannot afford to pay for services. A door to door campaign known as operation Patala, meaning to pay, has been launched to encourage residents to pay for services.

The municipality is also faced with a collapsing infrastructure.

The Mafube Municipality is one of the poorest in the Free State. The majority of residents live in abject poverty exacerbated by unemployment and youth who drop out of school.

This adds to the number of people who cannot afford to pay for municipal services, increasing the financial burden of the municipality.

People like Neon Maria Mofokeng supports nine people with her pension. She cannot afford to pay for water and electricity.

The newly elected Executive Mayor, Jabulani Sigasa, has only been in office for four months and faces an uphill task in turning the Municipality's finances around.

The Free State Government has assessed the financial situation during a door-to-door campaign and admits that there's a crisis. It is therefore vital that those residents who can afford to pay for services, should do so for the general well-being of the community.

Municipalities have been urged to be financially independent by encouraging residents to pay for services. But provision is made to subsidise those who earn less than R2 000 a month.

[Source: www.sabc.co.za]