

WELCOME MESSAGE: THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JB MARKS LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



Firstly, allow me to welcome all the delegates to the 2017 SASRECON Conference, as the Executive Mayor, and on behalf of our people and Council, I am delighted that this conference takes place in our beautiful City. So it is befitting to announce to all delegates that as we have been waiting with bated breath the official gazette of the new name of our municipality by the MEC responsible for Local Government, Ms Fenny Gaolaolwe early this month.

The amalgamated municipality of North West 405 which includes Ventersdorp and Potchefstroom has finally received its name which is JB Marks Municipality. The municipality is named after a freedom fighter, a struggle stalwart and a teacher by profession and a former member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC and the SA Communist Party. JB Marks was born in Ventersdorp and he later died in Moscow, Russia in 1972. The SA Government under the leadership of President Jacob Zuma later send his body back home to be re-buried in dignity in his home-town on 22 March 2015.

It is not by mistake that the SASRECON takes place here in Potchefstroom as we are known as the North-West Province's "Home of Sport". The provincial headquarters of 17 of the most important sports are situated in this city. The City Council places a high priority on the establishment, maintenance and upgrading of the sport facilities under its control, especially to meet the variety of sporting and recreational needs of its youthful community. The Mooi River trails as well as other trails add extra colour and variety to these facilities available to resident and tourist alike.

Potchefstroom has played host to two world cup winning teams, [cricket](#) and [football](#) respectively, and has thus become the home away from home to many international athletes and teams. Potchefstroom is the only place in the world with a perfect balance between altitude training and quality training at 1400m. The fact that Potchefstroom has no large scale factories it has very clean air. The city also boasts with one of the lowest crime rates in [South Africa](#). All of this is perfect for international athletes. Athletes and professional sports teams train at the HPI (High Performance Institute of Sport) of the [North](#)

[West University](#). As the City we hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup winners, Spain. The team during the duration of the World Cup they stayed in our City and used our state of the art facilities at the University.

[Cricket](#) is a very popular sport with [Senwes Park](#) being the Home of Cricket for the [Highveld Lions](#). Potchefstroom hosted matches during the [2003 ICC Cricket World Cup](#) between [Australia](#) and the [Netherlands](#), Australia and [Namibia](#), and also between South Africa and [Kenya](#). Potchefstroom were also co-hosts for the [2009 Cricket World Cup Qualifier](#). [The Proteas](#) chooses Potchefstroom on a regular basis as their destination for off season training camps. And, from time to time Potchefstroom will also play host to the Australians during off season cricket camps. During the [2003 ICC Cricket World Cup](#), [Australia's cricket team](#) chose Potchefstroom as their home base. They also went on to win the World Cup.

[Rugby](#) is arguably the most popular sport in Potchefstroom. [Olën Park](#) is the main rugby stadium and is mostly used for Rugby Union matches by the [Leopards Rugby Union](#) in the first division of the [Currie Cup](#), as well as the [Vodacom Cup](#). The stadium is also used for [football](#) matches and has hosted a few matches for the [South Africa under-23 football team](#). [Jomo Cosmos](#), a [PSL](#) team, recently relegated to [NFD](#) also uses the stadium to host some of their matches. There is also the [Fanie du Toit Sports Grounds](#) located on the [North West University](#). The main rugby field on the sports grounds have also seen a few games of the Leopards. It also plays host to the PUK's (NWU) Varsity Cup matches which always sees a full house of locals and students supporting the Pukke (NWU) rugby team.

As we welcome and appreciate to be the hosts for the few days, this conference will contribute and boost our local economy, please make use of our attractive and beautiful malls, restaurants and chesa-nyamas in the townships. Remember the wise words of our late former state President, Nelson Mandela, when he said, "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair." It is in this context even today I say, let the struggle continue to transform our various sporting federations. 2017 is the year of former ANC President and stalwart, OR Tambo under his name, let us deepen unity of sports and let us be united as South Africans.

Cllr. Kgotso Khumalo

Executive Mayor

JB Marks Municipality