

PASSING THE TORCH

By NJABULO NGCOBO

SIX businesswomen who have successful businesses were honoured and have passed the torch to help other women!

Gauteng's economic affairs MEC Paul Mashatile praised the winners of this year's Passing the Torch awards.

Mashatile, who started the awards in 2005, said the aim was not only to honour the women who contribute to the province's economy, but also to ensure skills development and transfer throughout the province.

He said: "The provincial government is committed to ensuring that women who are making a difference receive the recognition and applause that they deserve!"

Mashatile also congratulated the other 11 finalists for their "vision, passion and their determination to play a positive role in building the province".

"From humble beginnings, many of those we are honouring have defied all odds and are running businesses.

"They created employment for others."

One of the winners, Thembekile Mnisi, owns a construction company called Siyavuna Trading. She said she was ready to light the way for other women who want to make it big in business.

"When we are busy working hard to make our businesses successful, we never thought that there are people out there recognising our work.

Mnisi said it was not easy to work in the male-dominated construction industry.

"There were many challenges but networking with other women through workshops organised by the Department of Housing helped me a lot," she added. Siyavunah Trading has now become one of major construction companies in the province and among its major projects are the building of three schools.

Mnisi encouraged women not to be one-man-for-himself operators, but to share ideas with other women in business so that they can learn how to deal with challenges.

Mashatile finally announced Kerryne Neufeldt of I-Slices South Africa as the overall winner of the Passing The Torch award.

Successful women in business were rewarded for their efforts in creating employment!



ABOVE: The Winners of the 2008 Passing the Torch Awards held at Sandton Convention Centre last week are (from left to right) Thembekile Mnisi of Siyavunah Trading; Makwerela Madiba of Retladirela Pottery; Kgomotso Matsunyane of TOM Pictures, Kerryne Krause Neufeldt of I-Slices was also the overall winner; Idah Ramalekana of Idah's Fashion and Dikeledi Mashigo of African Dawn Risk Solutions.

Photos by Robert Tlapu

RIGHT: Gauteng MEC for Finance, Paul Mashatile speaking at the ceremony.



Sandy Ngema was the programme director at the awards.

'There were challenges, but networking with other women helped me a lot' – winner Thembekile Mnisi