

Science site boost for KZN

Lungelo Mkamba

MATHS and science education for KwaZulu-Natal's rural pupils has been given a massive cash injection with the opening of a new multimillion-rand science centre in Newcastle, and a portable school science laboratory that will travel to remote schools.

The Madadeni Science Centre at the Majuba FET College in Newcastle was developed with private funding – steel giant ArcelorMittal SA gave R6.9 million for its development – while the Department of Science and Technology funded the mobile laboratory.

KZN's head of education, Nkosinathi Sishi, said science and technology drove the economy and it was imperative that all children be given access to science education.

Themba Nkosi of Arcelor-

Mittal said the science centre provided classrooms, laboratories, interactive exhibitions and curriculum-linked science and maths instruction. It would cost an additional R4.4m annually to run the lab, he said.

Local teachers would benefit by receiving training to “enhance overall ability”.

“Corporate SA has to assist the government, specifically the Department of Basic Education, in developing maths and science literacy in previously disadvantaged communities,” Nkosi added.

The first pupils to test the exhibits were delighted.

Khanyisile Malaphile, 14, a Grade 8 pupil at Phendukane High School near Newcastle, said she would spend a lot of time at the centre and choose the subjects when she reached Grade 10.