

6 BUSINESS Swazi Observer Tuesday December 15, 2009

BUSINESS UPDATE



Royal Jozini Big 6 officials pose with umbutfo during the company's end of year party at Lavumisa on Saturday. (Pics: Teetee Zwane)



Jozini staff enjoying themselves during the company's dinner.

JOZINI PROJECT **DELAYED BY WATER, ELECTRICITY CHALLENGES**

By Teetee Zwane

DESPITE having had a great year of progress, the Royal Jozini Big 6 project is a year behind because of water and electricity challenges.

Director Jim Brown says even though progress on the project has been fantastic this year, their biggest challenge has been the availability of electricity in the area. He said, however, they were working hand in hand with the Swaziland Electricity Company (SEC) and SwaziBank to solve the problem.

"Despite some challenges we have had, we're pretty well on track," he said during the company's end of year party at Lavumisa on Saturday.

"Electricity is our biggest challenge but we're working with SEC and SwaziBank to bring it from Nsoko to Lavumisa."

Brown said some of the plans that were delayed by this problem included construction of a 200-bedroom five star hotel, which cannot be done without adequate electricity supply. However, he was hopeful that next year the project would see more progress.

On the other hand, the director said despite the global economic crisis, Jozini had achieved a lot this year.

Great year

"It has been a great year even though the world has had a deep recession and many projects in South Africa are in trouble. We have achieved most of our objectives and completed a lot in terms of infrastructure."

He said this included completion of 30km municipal water works, 60km electrified game fences, 45km road works, entrance complexes, the first of administration blocks, accommodation for rangers and security, management housing and most importantly,

construction of the first of five game lodges. "We have secured commitment from investors for construction of 250 lodges at a value of about E600 million to E800 million," said Brown, adding that this was a great investment for Swaziland. "The quality and expense that's been invested in Jozini is an accolade for Swaziland."

He said among plans for the project were a resort, a 200-bedroom five star hotel, health spa, casino, 18-hole golf course which would go with a golf village, all at a budget of E450 million. Adding, he said plans for next year included introduction of more game, giraffes, elephants and 14 black rhinos.

Completion

"This is very exciting for Swaziland as these will be the first rhinos in the country. We're also working hand in hand with the ministry of agriculture and other relevant ministries for completion of a trans-frontier park which we hope to have up and running in time for the 2010 FIFA World Cup to be hosted in South Africa," he said.

"If we create the dream more foreign direct investment will be attracted, especially because Swaziland is currently struggling to attract such considering the global recession. What Jozini is doing is bringing more investment into the country as we have investors from Hong Kong, England, Germany and other countries."

Brown said at completion, Jozini would have 7 600 beds and a staff complement of about 2 000 people. "To date, about E110 million has been invested into the project, E13 million of which will be going into the lodges. Next year's investment stands at about E100 million."

"When complete, Jozini will more than double Swaziland's tourism and it will create more jobs, bring in tax income, more revenue and most importantly, it will help market the country. But, to make it as fantastic as can be, we need real support from every sector."