

2010 - a year of great expectations



The Dolphin Coast, especially the holiday town of Ballito, is expected to go through major changes and growth in 2010

Photo: The Bataleurs

2010, the year we have all been waiting for, has finally arrived.

The North Coast community in particular is waiting with bated breath for the changes as the new decade unfolds. A new airport, a tradeport, a soccer World Cup and the death knell of the recession, all promise a massive influx of people, business, and traffic to the North Coast.

Courier reporters Sandra McAllister and Khululiwe Makhaye spoke to some local movers and shakers to get their views on the changes they expect in 2010.

Property developer John Hatfield of Robow Developments is very upbeat about 2010.

"We are the pioneers, these are exciting times and in our latter years we will be telling our grandchildren stories of what it was like before all this happened," he said.

"There was no light industry in our area and since the west of the highway has been zoned for this, many light industries have moved there. Among them are a company making inflated panels for mobile site offices/ablution blocks etc, an adhesive plant, national manufacturers in the latex business, as well as a cheese organization. I have invested in a fair amount of stock in readiness for more," said Hatfield.

"Some companies from Durban are looking to move here and a Richard's Bay business already has. The impact the new airport and tradeport are going to have on the area is going to be massive and exciting," Hatfield said.

"There are large tracts of land zoned for middle to high-income group buyers, to house the influx of staff and commuters who will be moving to the area."

Royal Palm Property Holdings chief executive officer Wim Sak said 2010 is going to be a big improvement on 2009 and believes that the country is coming out of the recession.

"The banks have started giving bonds of 100% and 108% and with the North Coast being a special part of the country, we have great potential," he said.

"Due to the soccer World Cup, the new airport and tradeport, developers are

going to flourish. We are finding that there are more and more commuters from Johannesburg who want to live in a secure and natural area and the opening of the new elementary school in 2011 will also encourage this," he said.

One of the people who are commuting from Ballito to Johannesburg is Brian Roberts, head of Nedbank's property division. Brian Roberts, said there are advantages and disadvantages to this.

The Roberts family moved after twice being victims of serious crime and he now spends Monday to Thursday in Johannesburg while his young family stay at Simbithi. He says that his focus and level of concentration is increased while in Johannesburg, but that it is draining on their family life.

Roberts does not believe that the new airport will make any difference to the commute, as the drive to the airport now takes only 35 minutes, the flight to Johannesburg will take the same time, as will the drive from O.R Tambo airport to the city. He also finds it costly, as most corporates do not contribute to commuter flights.

Another high-powered commuter, who does not want to be named, says that although the choice works well, it is not sustainable and he predicts that as a result many well-qualified entrepreneurs will be starting up businesses in KZN.

Ilembe district municipality municipal manager Mike Newton believes 2010 is going to be a bumper year for the district.

"A lot of visitors will be coming to the North Coast, especially with the new airport opening in April. In KwaDukuza we had a successful holiday break with successful events being held in the area. I think local government has proved that it

can deliver so we will be seeing more and more bigger events settling in to the North Coast," said Newton.

"There is also going to be a whole lot of excitement around 2010 and our area will be full of activities. Our proximity to Durban allows us that opportunity, so the area will definitely be active during the Soccer World Cup."

"We will also see a lot of movement of goods in and out of the country especially highly perishable goods. Industries are important to the area and a lot of vacant land will be sold towards the end of this year. There is a lot of international interest coming our way and I think the area will develop immensely towards the second half of the year and into 2011," said Newton.

He said a bulk water master plan has been developed by the district municipality to deal with water supply problems in the area.

"For the first time in many years we had a successful Christmas with minor problems with water, thanks to Siza and Umgeni water and our staff. It's been a successful period and we just have to build on that," he said.

KwaDukuza mayor Thulani Khuluse hopes that the recession will come to an end and that society recovers quickly.

"We are looking forward to the Mr. Price Pro taking place for the second time in our area. This event has become our anchor event and has many other projects in it. This year is going to be a bumper year. We hosted it successfully the first time in 2009 and we are more experienced now so 2010 will definitely be smoother and hopefully more and more of our local businesses will benefit as well."