

# First mobile police unit delivered to Bloem SAPS

Edcon, the clothing, footwear and textiles retailing group in Southern Africa, together with Independent Newspapers presented the city of Bloemfontein in the Free State with a mobile policing unit last month, as part of a wider Partnership Against Crime initiative designed to assist the South African Police Service (SAPS) in serving the community.

The customised unit, equipped to police specifications and which cost approximately R80 000 each, was handed over to the Mangaung Police Station officials. The hand-over of this unit, brought to 18 the number of trailers that the Edcon group, as patron of the programme, has subsidised at an investment of over R1 million since 2006.

"The units will be utilised to increase the presence and capabilities of the police in Bloemfontein. While the purpose is to involve the community in the role of policing, this enhanced contact with the community will continue to provide reassurance and assist in the reduction of the fear of crime," says Samantha Hartshorne of Lead SA.

## Residents take back their power

Since its launch five years ago by *The Star Newspaper* and Community Policing Forums, the Partnership Against Crime has attracted significant investment from local businesses in an effort to provide direct assistance to the SAPS in their fight against crime.

"We are proud to be associated with such a vital and important initiative. As a company committed to empowering communities the trailers will serve the communities within the Edcon trading areas and improve the safety of residents. We feel privileged to be able to put our weight behind a project that is having such a positive impact in communities where more and more residents are determined to take back their power," says Edcon's group transformation manager, Laverne Leibrandt.

Built by Venter Trailers, the trailers provide highly visible contact points for civilians and SAPS due to their mobile nature. They have the ability to be moved to 'hot spots' within any policing area and also provide excellent means of communication between shops, offices, security companies and the police.

While the majority of mobile policing units have been previously deployed in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Polokwane and Cape Town, this hand-over in Bloemfontein is the first one for the Free State region.