

General Motors gives Chevies to the PE Flying Squad

General Motors South Africa has provided the South African Police Service's Flying Squad in Port Elizabeth with three Chevrolet Luminas, valued at over R1.1 million, earlier this week.

The high-performance vehicles, which have powerful V8 engines with an output of 270kw, form part of a General Motors South Africa (GMSA) pilot project that has already resulted in three 9-3 Aero 2.8 V6 Saab vehicles donated to the SAPS Port Elizabeth Flying Squad two years ago.

SAPS ensured that each Lumina is fully equipped with lights, radio and a tracker tracing system valued at around R36 000 per vehicle, while one of the vehicles is equipped with a state-of-the-art camera system, the Arbitrator 2.0, valued at over R100 000.

The president and MD of GMSA and president of General Motors Sub-Saharan Africa, Edgar Lourencon, who drives a Lumina himself, handed over the keys to Major General Johan Kapp of the SAPS at a small ceremony at GMSA's vehicle conversion and distribution centre. "GMSA is committed to making a difference in the community in which we operate and our commitment goes beyond that of assembling and selling motor cars," said Lourencon.

Sustainable projects and initiatives

"We believe in embarking on sustainable projects and initiatives that will impact positively on people's lives, such as this initiative, which has and will continue to make Port Elizabeth a safer place for its citizens."

Lourencon said the initial project, providing the Port Elizabeth Flying Squad with the SAABs, had shown just how effective such a partnership could be.

"We saw such positive results and how effectively those vehicles were being used that it was a big motivation for us to continue with the project, which has led to today's handover," he said.

Statistics show that during the period from January to July 2011, the PE Flying Squad attended to 6307 complaints. Of those, 1906 were priority one complaints, indicating a crime of a serious nature in progress in which high-speed vehicles were required. During the same period, the Flying Squad also made 556 arrests and recovered 196 stolen vehicles.

A real blessing to the Flying Squad

Kapp said that the new high-performance vehicles were a real blessing to the Flying Squad, which responded to priority complaints, such as cash-in-transit robberies, armed robberies and hijackings, in which quick reaction times were crucial.

"These additional vehicles put us on the same level, if not better, than the larger policing areas in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng," said Kapp.

"This will enable the Flying Squad to render a more professional service to the community and increase our reaction times to priority crimes," he continued.

Kapp said the handover came at just the right time, as police started gearing up for the festive season.

Two of the SAABs are still fully operational, having clocked over 272 000km per vehicle, while the third vehicle was written off in an accident during a high-speed motor chase.

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