

# Coca-Cola Beverages SA unveils a R12m groundwater harvesting mega project

Residents of drought stricken Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape, are set to receive a much-needed boost in their water supply. This comes with the launch of a Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) R12m mega project, which will supply the entire town of Graaff-Reinet with potable water.

The Coke Ville mega project is powered by solar energy which feeds directly into the municipality's infrastructure and is able to supply between 27 million and 30 million litres of water every month to the surrounding communities and town.

Coke Ville is CCBSA's off-grid, always-on solar-powered groundwater harvesting and treatment project; which has proven to be the perfect solution to address Graaff-Reinet's water supply challenges.



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CCBSA handed over the Coke Ville system at a ceremony on 19 October 2023. The National Department of Water and Sanitation and the Dr Beyers Naude Local Municipality support the project in Graaff-Reinet.

According to Nozicelo Ngcobo, director of Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability at CCBSA, the newly-installed Coke Ville systems have the capacity to deliver over 324 million litres of drinkable water per year, using the installed 89.7 kW solar PV system. The borehole pump is able to extract at a rate of 107,000 litres per hour.

“The community of Graaff-Reinet faces multiple challenges, including widespread poverty, limited access to safe and drinkable water, as well as the impact of load shedding which exacerbated the community’s ability to access water,” Ngcobo said.



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Graaff-Reinet, the fourth oldest town in South Africa, has been dealing with recurrent droughts that have led to low water levels in the Nqweba Dam, the town’s primary water source. As the town’s population has grown, so have the challenges associated with water supply.

“CCBSA had an opportunity to use its resources to be part of the solution in Graaff-Reinet, and after conducting feasibility studies and due diligence, we found that there was enough ground water, we determined that our solar-powered Coke Ville system would provide the ideal solution to assist the town.”

Groundwater has become an increasingly important source of water, with multiple drilling programmes initiated since 2017. However, the impact of load shedding has caused irregularities in water abstraction from this source, creating a new set of problems.

The company’s Coke Ville systems are able to pump, treat, store, and distribute clean water to communities in need and operate at no cost to the residents.



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There are four borehole site systems in Mimosadale; which have now been equipped with renewable solar energy systems. The system is completely independent from Eskom power supply and the Coke Villes have the capacity to fill up the town’s 18 Mega Litre storage reservoir at 1,5 Mega litres per month.

A total number of 3,882 households in Asherville, Kroonvale and Adendorp area, with a total population of 20,449 residents, are set to benefit from the project. Of the 3,882 households, 1,680 are registered as indigent.

Dr Beyers Naude Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr Willem Safers, said: “For over a decade we have struggled with water supply issues, which has only become worse in recent years. We appreciate the support provided by CCBSA to help alleviate the water challenges we have faced. Our vulnerable communities in particular will now have access to clean and safe drinking water.”



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Portia Makhanya, the Provincial Head of the Department of Water and Sanitation expressed appreciation for CCBSA's intervention to support the vulnerable Graaff Reinet community and urged residents to focus on behavioural changes to help preserve limited water resources.

"We all have a part to play in preserving water and to help build communities that are not only resilient, but sustainable in the long-term," Makhanya said.

According to Ngcobo, each Coke Ville comes complete with tank stand, storage tanks, lockable manhole for pump, alarm system for security, palisade fencing around tank stand and solar panels with lockable gate. The taps are located outside the system to allow communities to fetch water at their convenience.

"The deployment of the Coke Villes is part of the company's commitment to replenish every drop of water we use back to communities and the environment as part of the company's 2030 Water Security Strategy. Securing long-term water and sanitation solutions is intricately linked with the country's social and economic prosperity.

"As a company that uses water as one of its key ingredients, we are very conscious of the importance of preserving water for future generations, as we operate in a water-scarce country that's also prone to droughts," Ngcobo added.

CCBSA has installed Coke Ville systems in Limpopo, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Eastern Cape, including in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan area which in recent years has faced a devastating drought.

To date, CCBSA has distributed over 658 million litres of water to over 35,000 households throughout the country.

Globally, The Coca-Cola Company's Water Security Strategy 2030, is a three-pronged strategy to water, which is focused on regenerative operations, healthy watersheds, and ultimately supporting the resilient communities.