Enterprising county continues to attract growth

Murang’a County, known as Fort Hall during the colonial times, is one of the Nairobi Metropolitan Counties, owing to its proximity to the capital city. It is only 84km away, and many locals travel to Nairobi quite regularly, some daily.

The county is registering steady growth as it attracts more traders and investments in diverse industries, including banks, petrol stations, hotels, nightclubs, supermarkets, dry cleaners, and more.

Murang’a is endowed with good rainfall and very fertile soils, making it very conducive for agriculture. Coffee is the main cash crop, although there are other parts of the county that grow tea, fruits, vegetables, and practice dairy farming.

Apart from agriculture, the people of Murang’a are known for their entrepreneurial spirit. They are involved in business enterprises in the county and beyond. A number of them are leading entrepreneurs in banking, mass media, manufacturing, insurance and real estate, among others.

The founder of Equity Bank hails from Kangema. From humble beginnings here as a building society, Equity Bank has gone on to spread across Kenya and to neighbouring countries, creating jobs to thousands of Kenyans and other East Africans.

Other industries of repute in Murang’a include the Equitorial Nut Processors located in Maragua and Muranga towns. The company processes groundnuts and macadamia, and also mills notorious flour. Equatorial nuts are exported to the US, central Europe and the Far East for use as key ingredients in the baking, confectionery and ice-cream industries.

The company’s range of products, for both domestic and export markets, are based on three principal nuts – macadamia, cashew and peanut.

Murang’a education sector features some prominent schools too. The Pioneer Group of Schools is one of them.

Founded in 2000, the schools are dedicated to instilling knowledge, inspiring innovation and developing leaders for future generations. This is achieved through emphasis on sciences, technology, mathematics and technical skills that include aviation.

St Paul Thomas Academy, a boys boarding primary school domiciled here, has maintained a record of exemplary performance, positioning itself as a national academic giant.

The people of Murang’a are also known for their unity and collaborative approach to investment. This has made the co-operative movement very strong in this county.

Murang’a boasts some of the strongest co-operative societies. Indeed, Equity, one of the largest banks in the East Africa, started as a building society here.

Mentor Complex by Mentor Sacco. The facility has given Muranga town a new look, a building society here.

The residents are known to pool their resources together to invest and come up with front office services. The giant Mentor Sacco was started by teachers from the county before it opened doors to other civil servants and business people.

Mentor Sacco Society Ltd was established in 1977 as Murang’a Teachers Savings & Credit Society Limited. The Sacco is now an all-inclusive financial institution, and is one of the fastest growing in Kenya, with an asset base of Ksh7.26 billion.

Owing to focused management and robust business strategies, the Sacco now owns a modern 11-stor ey building in Muranga town. The facility has given Muranga town a facelift. Government and private offices are grabbing space here.

Water supply in Murang’a is managed by five water companies. About 30 percent of the residents in the county get tapped water from Muranga Water and Sanitation Company (Muwasco), Muranga South Water and Sanitation Company (Muswasco), Kahuti Water and Sanitation Company (Kawasco) Gatanga Water and Gatamathi Water and Sanitation Company.
The company is situated in Nyakinaga Location and supplies water to Mathioya Constituency, some parts of Kangema and Kiharu Constituencies.

In Kangema, the company supplies water to Rwathia and Kihoya areas while in Kiharu the company supplies water to Gaturi Ward.

The Water Services Provider (WSP) was incorporated 2006 as a public limited company by guarantee and manages Gatango and Mathioya Water Supplies where the name Gatamathi an acronym of the two water schemes came into being.

Since inception, company embarked on control and management of the pipe network that existed and augmentation of Gatango Scheme through the Kazi Kwa Vijana programme which saw replacement of the old dilapidated small size pipes with bigger diameter pipes and increase in service hours for Kiriaini which is the headquarters for Mathioya Sub-County from 3 hours per day to 21 hours per day.

The company has increased water connections from 1100 homesteads to about 11000 which translates to about 65000 people.

With the assistance of Tana Water Works Development Agency which has supplied 4,400 customer meters and sectional meters of various sizes over time and non-revenue water control equipment the company through internally generated funds has procured 3,500 customer meters for both new connections and replacing the unserviceable meters.

Tana Water Works Development Agency is implementing laying of a new main line from Kiriaini to Iruri Primary School 10km and service lines to cover about 70km while Athi Water Works Development Agency is implementing several water projects that will cover about 7000 households with water services.

The projects include Construction of new Gatango intake with treatment works at Kihari and laying a 8 km pipeline from intake to Kario tank. Laying of a 6km parallel main line from Fish Camp to Nyakianga tank is almost complete. For last mile connectivity, the agency is implementing laying about 150km service lines of various sizes to improve services in the lower zones of the supply area. and the proposed laying of 22km mainline from Kario to Gakurwe tank.

Kahuti Water and Sanitation Company Limited popularly known as Kawasco is one of the five water companies in Muranga County located in Kangema Constituency.

The water company serves some parts of Kangema and Kiharu constituencies, covering Kanyenya-ini, Muguru, Wangu, Murarandia and Mugoiri wards. The total area is about 250 square kilometres, with a population of about 170,000, based on the 2009 population census.

The water company was registered in 2006, taking over from the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation. The transfer, was geared towards bringing services closer to the people and ensuring stakeholder participation in decision making. In line with this, the company has seven directors, five from the various stakeholder groups and two from the County Government of Muranga. With the exception of those from the County Government, directors are elected by stakeholders on a rotational basis in the Annual General Meetings.

The water firm boasts increased water connections from below 3000 over 12,000 while Non-revenue water has gone down from above 90% to around 60% and still declining. Average hours of supply stand at 22, up from 12.

The company has shifted from manual to automated provision of services and this has enabled customers to pay for their bills through their mobile phones at the comfort of their homes.

There are a number of on-going and up-coming projects, funded by the National Government, covering areas of Mirichu, Kagaa, Gitare, Gitie, Gitige, Mukangu and Gikui among others.

Kawasco, believes in being part of the community it serves. Our corporate social responsibility includes tree planting, donations to children’s homes, free connections to needy cases and offering internships to bright but needy students from within the locality.