

## **Saab SA supports rural development**

Students of Freedom Park Secondary School received a boost to their facilities with the investment of a state-of-the-art iLab classroom by SAAB.

The Hawkstone iLab classroom is a self-contained and fully equipped turn-key computer educational facility which will provide learners with access to a computer training environment. The units are linked to the internet and are designed as integrated solutions, offering basic classroom equipment, ruggedised technology to prevent theft and vandalism, and control software.

Freedom Park School, which was built in terms of a partnership between the Vodacom Foundation and the North West Department of Education, is three years old and has made a significant difference to the quality of life of learners who previously travelled long distances for education at neighboring townships. Freedom Park learners are now being further empowered with a state-of-the-art computer classroom that will form part of the school's curriculum in 2011.

"From a semi rural community perspective, we are confident Freedom Park and the nearer Rustenburg municipalities can now compete with the big cities of South Africa. Learners and educators can now collaborate with the Education Universe and further to this, link to the "21<sup>st</sup> Century Educator Programme," said Prof Mandla Mchunu, chairperson of Saab SA's Defence Transformation Committee.

The iLab classroom uses one educator and accommodates 24 to 48 learners per classroom. It has the potential to provide the first tier of formal learning right through to advanced schooling. The facilities employ easily maintainable technology that can be operated in remote areas. The system's capability has been tested and successfully rolled out in various areas of the country. This will be the first one in North West province.

"We are extremely grateful for this donation. We believe the donation received today will uplift the school and take it to even greater heights. This support cannot be simply measured in monetary terms as the support shown here today is about building the knowledge of our children," said the School's Principal, David Tsepe.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Vodacom Foundation Chairman, Mr Mthobi Tyamzashe congratulated the recipient of the facility, Freedom Park School and also paid tribute to SAAB for including it amongst the beneficiaries of the iLab Centre. He added: "The facility will help significantly in bridging the digital divide."

