



Celebrating a memorable evening are Ian Goldsmith, PDG Bryan Thurtell, Dave Woodhouse, Klerksdorp President Johan Gerber, Coral Stewart, Northcliff President Paul Westcott, Denham Nel, Rio Casino's Peter Lobban and Dennis Stewart.



Rio Casino's Peter Lobban hands a donation for the wheelchair project to Northcliff President Paul Westcott.



Brian Smith congratulates Dennis Stewart on his excellent presentation.

Wheelchair milestone celebrated

HAVING distributed more than 500 wheelchairs to needy people in their community, the Rotary Club of Klerksdorp (D9320) had reason for celebration. To mark the milestone, the club's Rotarians invited the Rotary Club of Northcliff (D9400) to celebrate the occasion with them.

Peter Lobban, of the Rio Casino, also attended the event and presented a cheque of R2 000 to Northcliff President Paul Westcott for the Wheelchair Project. However, after hearing the facts and figures quoted by Dennis Stewart, he committed a further donation of R2 000. The casino has been a strong supporter of the project and the additional donation brings its total contribution to an impressive R55 000.

AG Mike Bower was praised in his absence for facilitating the donation of 190 brand new wheel chairs from the Rotary Wheelchair Foundation, which together with the 510 used wheel chairs sourced by Denham Nel through Northcliff Club, brings the total number of wheel chairs distributed by Klerksdorp to 700. At the event, Northcliff's President Paul also received a Service Above Self award.

The wheelchair project began in 1992 after a partnership was established between the Rotary Clubs of Northcliff and Rushmoor

(D1140, UK) and it has become a landmark project for more than one South African Rotary club. Rushmoor agreed to locate, store and load redundant wheelchairs for transporting to Johannesburg, while Northcliff was to arrange the transport from England and to store, repair and distribute the chairs to indigent disabled people.

Early in 1993 the first consignment of 56 wheelchairs arrived courtesy of Swiss Air. It was however soon realised that the large numbers of wheelchairs being located in the UK would be more feasibly transported by sea. Soon new sponsors were found.

The ambition of Northcliff and Rushmoor was originally to aim for 250 wheelchairs, but that soon snowballed to 500 and higher. With the spiralling numbers distribution became a logistical problem, but the need was endless. Rotary clubs around South Africa were called on to assist with the distribution and to date more than 120 South African Rotary Clubs have participated in this project, of which the Rotary Clubs of Klerksdorp and Scottburgh (D9270) have been the most active.

Eighteen years after the project was started, the Rotary Clubs of Northcliff and Rushmoor reached a total of 20 000 wheelchairs procured in England and distributed in South and Southern Africa.