



MEDIA STATEMENT

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FREE STATE TELLS A SUCCESS STORY ABOUT TOURISM

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DETEA) through its entity; Free State Tourism Authority (FSTA) will be participating at the Tourism Indaba 2014 in Durban from 10 – 12 May 2014. Twenty four (24) product owners representing the five regions of the Free State will be under the FSTA stand to promote the province as a preferred tourism destination.

In 2013 the FSTA launched the “Big 5” concept that came as an intervention to coherent marketing approach to promoting the province. The five routes run across the province, they could be summarised as follows:

- (i) Cheetah Routes (Mangaung Metropolitan) – the route offers historical, cultural and heritage attractions.
- (ii) Springbok Route (Xhariep District) – the route is rich in historical and heritage emanating from Anglo-Boer War history, adventure and leisure tourism.
- (iii) Flamingo Route (Lejweleputswa District) – the route is home to agricultural tourism, leisure tourism as well as sports tourism. The Phakisa Race Track is situated in this region and has previously hosted the World Motor GP.
- (iv) Lion Route (Fezile Dabi District) – the route is famous for its nature reserve & resorts, water sports activities and leisure tourism. The seventh World Heritage Site – Vredefort Dome is situated in this along this route.
- (v) Eagle Route (Thabo Mofutsanyana District) – the route is known as the jewel of the province due to its scenic beauty, nature reserve & resorts, adventure tourism and deep cultural roots.

The new business proposition (Big 5 Routes) brought synergy in the marketing of the province. The new proposition has strengthened the Public Private Partnership (PPP) and all tourism industry role players are pulling resources towards a common vision – of “marketing the province as a preferred inland destination” as stated by MEC for DETEA Mr Mosebenzi Zwane during his budget vote speech. The FSTA will monitor the release of the new statistical records on tourism arrivals by the National Department of Tourism later this year to view the impact brought by this news proposition. The entity is upbeat that the statistics will count in its favour as the provincial stakeholders have shown enthusiasms on how the province is marketed.

According to Mr Dhilosen Pillay, the CEO for FSTA, the Big 5 route concept has enabled tour operators to formulate a tourism package that attracts tourists to the diverse offerings that the province has to offer.

During the three days of the event, the FSTA will focus on different themes that highlight the strength of the Free State. The focus will be on cherry festival, sports & entertainment as well as culture and natural attractions. The FSTA’s focuses on these key pillars

Board Members: M. Netshivhodza (Chairperson), Ms S. Lebusa, M. Mahabane, D. Naidoo, Mrs P. Rantsoareng, D. Pillay (CEO)

emanates from the National Domestic Growth Strategy, which highlights events, sports and culture as key components that has potential of growing the domestic tourism.

The FSTA's primary objectives during the 2014 Tourism Indaba is to provide conducive environment for product owners to conduct business and clinch business deals that will realise the Free State being a preferred inland destination. Every three years a new intake of SMME's will be introduced to the different tourism pavilions like Indaba to interact with developed trade counterparts and seal deals that will see the provincial tourism benefiting from them.

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