

# The Weekly

## FREE STATE LAUNCHES TOURISM MONTH

September 7, 2012 |

The Meloding Stadium in Virginia was packed to the brim last week Friday as residents from all over the Free State came together in order to launch Tourism Month in the province.



A tourism ambassador ... Mokone Nthogoa, delivering the speech on behalf of MEC Mamiki Qabathe at the launch

“We are excited and have been looking forward to this opportunity to showcase the Free State province as a tourist destination,” said HOD Mokone Nthogoa, delivering the speech on behalf of MEC for the Free State of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mamiki Qabathe at the launch.

“September is declared Tourism Month in the country, where all South Africans are encouraged to travel their own country and get a better understanding of the affordable and exciting attractions available to them on their own doorstep,” she added.

The launch was kicked off with promising and exciting activities ranging from a Motor Extravaganza at the Phakisa Race Course in Odendaalsrus, a soothing sunset at the Koppies Nature Reserve and a walk through the heritage site in Ficksburg.

During the launch, 500 bikers roared through the townships of Meloding and Thabong in Welkom, where different places of interests were visited.

The motorcade which went through the two Goldfields townships forms part of the new approach to e-kasie tourism where residents are given the opportunity to explore townships as tourism destinations. Events on the day included drifting, spinning, stunts, bike school, games and music to set the atmosphere.

Nationally, the month will be used to promote domestic tourism, in a bid to get South Africans to be tourists in their own country.

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“Domestic tourists are the lifeblood of South Africa’s tourism industry, which is regarded as a major drive of the country’s economic growth. When domestic tourism grows, we create a nation of tourism ambassadors who are knowledgeable and speak positively about our nation and warmly welcome tourists,” said Nthogoa.

Nthogoa said with this year’s theme as “Tourism and Sustainable energy – Powering sustainable Development”, the department wants to cultivate a culture of travelling among the people of the Free State and turn each and every Free Stater into a tourism ambassador.

“The theme aims to highlight tourism’s role in a brighter energy future and to emphasise the importance of the role we, as tourism ambassadors play towards responsible tourism to improve energy efficiency and also to use renewable energy technology in our tourism establishments in line with COP 17 Resolutions,” Nthogoa emphasised.

Tourism is the fastest growing sector of the economy at the moment and September would allow South Africa to showcase what it can offer.

“The African market was the market of the future and by working together with other African countries there could be mutual benefits.”

[Source: [www.the-weekly.co.za](http://www.the-weekly.co.za)]