



destea

department of
economic, small business development,
tourism and environmental affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE

MEDIA STATEMENT

FREE STATE UPPING ITS GAME IN TOURISM

Tourism is touted as the fastest growing sector in South Africa, giving hope to many South Africans hoping to enter the sector or get employment. For this reason this sector continues to receive undivided attention from both the private and public sector.

September has been declared tourism month during which World Tourism Day (WTD) is celebrated on the 27th September globally. The purpose with this is to raise the profile of tourism as an industry and encourage South Africans to travel their own country. This year's tourism month was launched on the 22nd August 2019 in Kwa Zulu Natal by Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi Ngubane with the theme ***"Tourism and Jobs – Better Future for All."***

To promote the province as a tourism destination of choice and bring awareness to the challenges and opportunities in the sector, the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) together with its strategic partners will be commemorating tourism month with various activities that seek to instill a culture of travel amongst the people of the province and in return contribute positively to the economic growth of the Free State Province. The targeted markets for this campaign are stokvels, social clubs, burial societies, schools, churches and family reunions.

Despite abundance of natural attractions, historical sites and scenic beauty, Free Staters do not travel their province. The majority of the citizens of the Free State have not had the opportunity of visiting these places even where they are just a stone throw from their places of residence.

According to available statistics, South Africa had a total tourism spending of R 296 billion in 2018 and an average annual growth rate of 6.8% over the period. In Free State province the tourism spending as a percentage of GDP in 2018 was 5.55%. Tourism spending as a percentage of GDP for 2018 was 6.06% in South Africa as a whole. Free State Province had a total tourism spending of R 13.6 billion in 2018 with an average annual growth rate of 8.4% since 2008 (R 6.06 billion).



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To ensure that the Free State attracts more visitors an aggressive and targeted marketing efforts are being done. This marketing strategy will target the following consumers: **spontaneous budget explorers** which are young people of all races who impulsively go away for short breaks with friends and who prefer activity filled breaks over quiet weekends away. **High-life enthusiasts** which are successful go-getters who travel to boost their social status and seek out exceptional service and luxury experience.

Seasonal leisure travelers which are people aged about 25 to 45 years who have a travel culture, who go on holiday regularly. They understand the value of memory over commodity and travel to relax and spend time with loved ones. **Well – to – do Mzantsi families**, people who travel to escape the city stress and pressures of daily life. They seek new and different locations to relax in and they take advantage of special deals and offers. **First time travelers** are groups who do not have the culture of going on holiday and encourage people to travel their own province.

The province prides itself with natural tourism attractions with the big 5 routes, namely the **Cheetah Route**, here is situated the only game reserve in the middle of town with the only digital planetarium in Southern Hemisphere and the biggest bronze Nelson Mandela statue which stands at 8 meters, the **Eagle Route** runs from Ficksburg to Harrismith through some of the most picturesque landscape in the country with the iconic rock formations, activity highlights include cherry picking, rock paintings, arts & craft shopping and 4X4 trips. For those looking for everything that is typically Free State, the **Lion Route** situated in Fezile Dabi district has it, with activities such as cape wine tasting, gliding, hiking and the famous Deneysville – South Africa’s inland Riviera . In Lejweleputswa district, the **Flamingo Route** offers a variety of sporting and leisure activities with Free State’s own Phakisa Freeway Race Track, game viewing and key historical sites. The best sun rise is viewed in the **Springbok Route**, which connects the Free State with the Northern Cape, winds through the scenic farmlands and nature reserves of the Xhariep district with historical attractions that include battle sites, and San rock engravings and game farms.



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This tourism month, Free State will be a destination of choice with events and campaigns such as:

- The 7th Annual Provincial Lilizela Awards: 26 September 2019
- Kasie Tourism, Lejweleputswa District: 28 September 2019
- Media Familiarisation Tour, Cheetah and Springbok Routes: 19 – 22 September 2019
- Hiking Heritage Extravaganza: 20 – 22 September 2019
- #Keyalewena Short 'Left Travel Week: 23 – 29 September 2019
- Closing of Tourism Month: 30 September 2019

Through these events the department aims to create opportunities to transform the sector and recognize industry role players to ensure that tourism is a significant economic player.

END

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