

Bojanala

Collectively and Broadly Promoting Responsible and Sustainable Tourism for Benefit of All

EDITION

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tourism

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HERITAGE OFFERINGS FOR DOMESTIC TOURISTS: Freedom Park offers a variety of culture and heritage in its revamped efforts to attract more domestic travellers. Domestic tourism is on the increase in the country.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Season's greetings and welcome to our last edition for the 2013 calendar year. This is our last edition of the 2013 year and most of our stories are aligned to the mood and atmosphere of the holiday season, which is already upon us. We enter this holiday season encouraged by developments that point to the increasing safety and quality standards of our tourist sites. As you will read in one of our articles, the 2013 International Blue Flag Jury results announced that a total of 41 beaches have been awarded Blue Flag status in South Africa this year. The Blue Flag programme is designed to increase sound environmental practices among tourists, local populations and beach management. With these kind of developments in our tourism sector, we are assured that our mission of promoting tourism growth and development in South Africa is on track.

In this edition we also take a look at our country's growing local and domestic tourism markets, major news updates from the tourism sector, as well as a small tourism

Recently we had very interesting developments in the tourism sector.

business operator in Mpumalanga who is growing from strength to strength. We also take a tour on some policy developments, in order for you to understand more about government's efforts in regulating and stimulating our tourism sector. The NDT, through its campaigns and programmes, is encouraging people of South Africa to travel and explore their own country, and the Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy is set to ensure that we stimulate the growth of our domestic tourism industry. Read more on this on page 2.

Recently we had very interesting developments in the tourism sector, the most notable of which was the NDT's implementation of a cadet training programme on tourism, for Department of Home Affairs' (DHA) officials who will be posted at South African missions abroad. The training was a great initiative

and fulfilled an objective of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) the two departments signed in March 2012, in which NDT made an undertaking that it will provide training on tourism significance to the DHA frontline staff at South Africa's missions abroad. DHA officials are the first point of contact with tourists and can act as tourism conduits for the country. Effects of the training they received will go a long way in improving and promoting relations between DHA officials and potential tourists to South Africa, as well as empowering DHA officials to maintain and project a positive destination image of South Africa. In this edition of Bojanala, we elaborate more on this initiative and I am of the view that you will find the information very interesting and important.

Enjoy the holidays and don't forget to take a tour with family and friends this festive season.


EDITOR



NDT taking steps to encourage South Africans to travel within their own country

Cultural entertainment has always been an important part of good times in South Africa.

The National Department of Tourism (NDT) is setting its sights on encouraging South Africans to travel and explore their country, and has coordinated a marketing strategy aimed at attracting marginalised groups such as people with disabilities, youth and pensioners, to participate in travel and tourism. The NDT recently approved the Domestic Tourism

Growth Strategy (DTGS) to stimulate the growth of domestic tourism. The strategy aims to encourage the culture of local travelling and tourism amongst the South African society, especially the previously disadvantaged groups, and also to increase domestic tourism expenditure, and enhance measures and efforts aimed at addressing seasonality and geographical spread. The

department conducted research through African Response, focusing on the popular and community-based stokvels, and the research indicated that there is a need for more tourism information to be disseminated to the general public.

In a Social Tourism workshop that the NDT hosted on 29 August 2013 – which was



South Africa offers beautiful landscapes where tourists can explore and indulge in fun activities.

themed “Activating and development of social tourism for the benefit of the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa” - delegates and speakers agreed that there was a need for partnership and collaboration with relevant local tourism stakeholders, which would enable effective information dissemination with a view to increasing social tourism in South Africa. The main objective of the workshop was to brainstorm, and share ideas and information on social tourism and on how best to implement and promote it in South Africa.

sports activities; Ms Kathy Bergs of Fair Trade Tourism presented on linkages between fair trade and social tourism; while

cuisines that their hotels and other establishments prepare. The workshop discussed the legal framework of social

Social tourism should be promoted through existing government programmes.

Ms Wendy Alberts of the Restaurant Association of South Africa (RASA), and Mr Caleb Mabaso of the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA) presented their organisations' plans on social tourism.

tourism; accessibility; savings; the social tourism stakeholder analysis; infrastructure; social tourism activities; funding; marketing research and promotion; as well as monitoring and evaluation. South Africa is practising social tourism but needs a robust



During December holidays, townships are abuzz with fun activities as they experience an increase in visitor numbers.

The workshop was attended by both private and public stakeholders. Various elements that are critical to the growth of domestic tourism in general were discussed. Ms Beulah Mosupye from the NDT, made a presentation on the Overview of social tourism in South Africa and its contribution to the Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy; Ms Thuli Mahlangu from the Department of Social Development presented her department's tourism-supporting initiatives, such as the golden games, where elderly people from different provinces participate in

The parties also reached consensus that social tourism should be implemented and promoted through existing government programmes. It must also contribute to domestic tourism initiatives such as job creation, investment and community empowerment. Other initiatives that support social tourism are implemented by FEDHASA has also announced its own implementation of initiatives aimed at promoting social tourism, such as 'One million bed', 'RASA' initiative that enables its employees and people from local communities to enjoy the

marketing approach to promote it. Some of the key success factors in social tourism promotion would be to develop affordable packages for social tourism.

According to Deputy Director-General for Domestic Tourism Management, Ms Morongoe Ramphele, organisations such as 'Gogo on Tour' must be used as ambassadors of social tourism. Ms Morongoe also said there was a need to establish networks with service providers to support social tourism activities.

Freedom Park polishes its tourism appeal



The Sanctuary at Freedom Park.

Freedom Park is positioning itself as a destination of choice for domestic travellers and is planning big initiatives to lure more domestic tourists in the near future. For many years Freedom Park has been known to many people as a museum for South Africa's liberation history and cultural heritage, but in the past few years, it has been quietly transforming itself into a notable tourist attraction destination where international and local travellers can spend a day and couples and families can

the Park, is called //hapo, which is a Khoi word that means dream. The word was taken from a Khoi proverb that says: "A dream is not a dream until it is shared by the entire community". //hapo is a cave-like structure where visitors are gradually taken through a walk that tells of a Southern African story dating back 3.6 billion years in a narrative and interactive way. It has more than 2500m² of exhibition space and offers visitors interesting videos on the evolution of South Africa's unique culture, heritage and history.

attract even more South African visitors, "We want to focus more on the domestic market and target more adults, families and also young couples. There is a lot of untapped local market and this festive season we are going to embark on a campaign to encourage Gauteng people to visit Freedom Park".

When visiting Freedom Park, visitors can look forward to learning about South Africa's rich and colourful history, from creation to the issues of reconciliation and nation building.



Night and distant view of Freedom Park.

spend quality time out of the bustle of the city. Freedom Park's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Fana Jiyane, told Bojanala that they will soon roll out a national marketing campaign to sell the site as a tourist destination that offers more than lessons on the country's apartheid history. In recent years, the Park has been divided into eight areas of natural beauty and heritage significance to allow visitors to have wonderful experiences and enjoy their time.

One of these areas is the Uitspanplek, a newly constructed beautiful spot where visitors can unwind after a tour and families can bring picnic baskets and relax in the surroundings of nature. Another site of great interest, which was only recently built inside

This year, more than 22,000 travellers visited Freedom Park, and Mr Jiyane says plans are underway to take the tourist numbers even higher. "We aim to take the numbers to 59,000 by end of next year, and to 89,000 by the following year," he said, before adding that the ultimate goal is to reach a total of 103,000 visitors by end of 2016. Domestic tourists will be the most targeted market in the next three years and Mr Jiyane revealed some of the day to day attractions that the Park will offer to tourists soon, "We are planning to host jazz evenings, picnics, special family evenings for walk and talk, and social gatherings for different groups," he said. Of the 22,000 visitors who visit Freedom Park annually, 95% are local tourists, but Jiyane says that they want to

The Park invites visitors to participate in performances that tell stories of the country's historic developments. Situated close to the capital city – Pretoria – Freedom Park stands as a memorial to the country's freedom, but more importantly, it stands as a beacon to guide all South Africans on the route of hope and patriotism to a proudly united nation. Mr Jiyane said they are encouraging Gauteng people to visit the Park with friends and families this festive season. "We can without a shadow of doubt, guarantee them an exciting experience during their stay at Freedom Park because this place appeals to families, touring groups and social groups. Freedom Park is open seven days a week and offers guided tours three times each day. Entrance fees are R45 per adult and R25 for children and pensioners.

Glitz and glamour at Lilizela Awards in Tshwane

Lilizela Awards.



The Lilizela Tourism Awards national winners were announced during Tourism Month at a glitzy function at the Tshwane Events Centre in Pretoria. Lilizela Awards celebrate the best of the tourism industry's service records and act as a benchmark for excellence across the tourism sector. The awards were created to honour outstanding contributions of tourism establishments and individuals who are driving

innovation and delivering quality service and products. Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk said that the Lilizela Awards came about in response to his heartfelt need to acknowledge excellence in the tourism industry.

"Our visitors from abroad, as well as local travellers have had fantastic experiences, and this is reflected in the Service Excellence category where visitors were encouraged to vote" van Schalkwyk said, before adding that the Tourism Grading Council has worked to ensure that accommodation establishments are on par with global offerings. "I am incredibly proud to be part of an industry that has such high standards and impeccable service excellence records. Over the last few months, we have been privy to some exceptional entries, all of which show the level of detail establishment owners go to, to ensure that visitors experience comfort and reliability. This is what sets our country apart from the rest of the world," van Schalkwyk said.

More than one thousand entries were received for two categories of the Lilizela Awards – the ETEYA and Minister's Awards categories. The Minister's Award is a distinct

category that was issued and will continue to be issued at the sole discretion of the Minister of Tourism. It seeks to honour recipients who have made a noteworthy local and global contribution to tourism economically and socially. The Minister's Award is considered the cherry of the industry and one that everyone in the sector aspires to win. The Minister's Award was presented to Mr Jabu Mabuza as recognition for his exceptional contribution to the tourism sector. Mabuza played a leading role in Tsogo Sun, which he has helped to build into one of the top gaming and hotel groups in the world, previously as Chief Executive Officer and today as Deputy Chairperson of the group's Board.

In 2003 Mabuza was appointed to lead the SA Tourism Board, contributing his wealth of experience by strengthening and enhancing the partnership between government and the sector in order to deliver on the tourism promise. He has helped to grow the industry into a major contributor to economic growth and employment. He has led Tsogo Sun through difficult times of the 2008/2009 economic crisis, and during the victorious delivery of the best FIFA World Cup in 2010.



Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk at the Lilizela Awards.

NDT empowers foreign Mission officials on the significance of tourism



Home Affairs officials during the tourism care training in October.

The National Department of Tourism (NDT) and the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in March 2012 to identify and outline areas of cooperation between these two departments in promoting tourism growth and development in South Africa. Training on Tourism was identified as part of the implementation plan of the MoU. In fulfilment of this agreement, NDT held a training session on tourism significance for the Department of Home Affairs' (DHA) foreign staff, who will be deployed at South African Missions abroad. The training was held over two days in early October. DHA officials are the first point of contact with potential tourists

and as such, act as tourism conduits for South Africa. This was after the departments had agreed in principle that as part of the rolling out of the MoU, the Tourism training programme, which includes the 'Tourism Information Session' and the 'Tourism Fundi' will be incorporated into the broader training of the DHA foreign officials. Tourism Fundi training is an initiative of South African Tourism (SAT).

The general scope of training included the Basic concept of tourism; Economic significance of tourism; Significance of tourism growth in Africa; Challenges facing South African Missions abroad; Tourism Service Excellence; and the Tourism Fundi Programme. The training involved role playing sessions, wherein participants assimilated practical scenarios facing the functioning of South Africa's Missions

The general scope of training included the economic significance of tourism and challenges facing South African Missions abroad.



Workshop delegates busy with tasks during the workshop.

Part of the training - which was facilitated by SAT - concentrated on market research; social media and the South African Tourism Specialist course. The training programme also included Tourism Service Excellence, which was presented by the Chief Directorate: Southern Region in the Domestic Tourism Branch. The programme seeks to create awareness and empower DHA officials on tourism aspects and tourism development; improve and promote relations between DHA officials and the potential tourists to South Africa; instil the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) spirit of enhanced visitor experience to the DHA officials; empower DHA officials in assisting in marketing South Africa as a preferred destination of choice; enhance International Relations; empower DHA officials to maintain and project a positive destination image of South Africa; and contribute to sustainable tourism growth, thus contributing to economic development and job creation in South Africa.

abroad. This was done to provide DHA Mission officials with an opportunity to experience the challenges they will experience when posted at their respective Missions. In addition, this was to be used as a platform by DHA officials to provide solutions on how to render good service to prospective tourists and other travellers. There was consensus between all the parties involved on the need and significance of constant cooperation amongst tourism stakeholders.

Acting Deputy Director-General for Learning and Training at DHA, Mr. Stanley Mkhize said that the two departments need to work together to deal with challenges experienced in the tourism industry. Department of Tourism's Deputy Director-General for International Tourism Management, Ms. Aneme Malan emphasised the positive impact of tourism on the economy and the ability of the sector to create jobs.

Innovation critical to tourism growth and competitiveness



“Innovation is critical to South Africa’s tourism growth and competitiveness domestically and internationally. Growing initiatives such as the Tourism Indaba, lifestyle and niche tourism, culture and heritage product offerings will boost our international arrivals statistics whilst benefitting South African communities through job creation,” said Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk. Speaking at a breakfast meeting in the North West province, the Minister encouraged business owners and stakeholders from the tourism sector to partner with communities to drive domestic tourism and foster a culture of travel.

The growth and outlook for domestic travel and tourism is optimistic. Currently, domestic tourism contributes R1.1 billion towards South Africa’s GDP. Total tourist spend went up from R9.2 billion in 2011 to an estimated R10.2 billion in 2012 due to an increase in average spending per trip from R870 compared to R690 in 2011. “Service excellence and the affordability of travel and accommodation packages will go a long way to urging South Africans to travel and explore the country whilst fostering a culture of travel. I encourage all

stakeholders within the tourism sector to pull together in order to drive domestic tourism,” said van Schalkwyk.

The business breakfast was the first of a number of events the Minister participated in during his visit to the province. NDT partnered with the North West province to host a number of events in Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp preceding the World Tourism Day celebrations on the 27th of September under the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) theme: “Tourism and Water: Protecting our common future”. “Being afforded the opportunity to host the World Tourism Day celebrations in Klerksdorp has enabled us to focus our attention on promoting the province with a particular focus on our cultural and heritage products,” North West MEC Motlalepula Rosho said. Tourism in the North West is thriving and has registered positive growth over the years. Tourist destinations such as the Vredefort Dome, Taung Skull world heritage sites and Thomeng continue to attract tourists to the North West despite water shortages and drought. In the midst of these challenges, MEC Rosho painted an optimistic picture of the future prospects of tourism in the

province and assured the business community that the North West government will continue to play its part in promoting tourism. “We as the North West government will continue to work closely with the National Department of Tourism, our business community and stakeholders to support the initiatives put in place to promote domestic tourism and address hindrances to tourism growth,” said Rosho.



Various cultural innovations are also needed to boost tourism.

Challenges and opportunities for SA's tourism industry



Great service and excellence are important across the tourism value chain.

Service level inconsistency, skills retention and the need for integrated transport systems are some of the key challenges facing the travel and tourism industry in South Africa (SA). These were some of the issues that emerged during a discussion between Mmatsatsi Ramawela, CEO Tourism Business Council SA (TBCSA) and Dawn

Robertson, CEO Gauteng Tourism. Ramawela said that while there were pockets of service excellence, SA needed consistent service levels across the value chain. "People in the sector needed to provide service with a smile to ensure the best visitor experience possible," she said.

"The tourism sector battled to retain skilled people," said Ramawela. She suggested that the trade needed to make sure people saw a future for themselves in the industry in order to address this issue. "We need to become a sector that allows you to be proud and resonate what your country stands for," she said. Both Ramawela and Robertson emphasised the need to provide an integrated transport system. "We don't want potholes," Ramawela added. She also suggested that SA faced the challenge of being a long-haul destination for many key source markets. For this reason, she said, SA needed to address air connectivity and attract more airlines. Moreover, she said, visa issues negatively impacted travel from countries such as China, which had been identified as a key source market. "Gauteng Tourism saw its role as providing an enabling environment for tourism businesses," said Robertson. She added that there was a need to make it simpler for people to get investment.

According to Robertson, Gauteng Tourism has assisted in cutting the red tape that was needed to facilitate the Hop on, Hop off tour buses in Johannesburg. The association had also collaborated with the industry to put together the Gauteng Signature Collection, which was a collection of tourism products in the province that would be used to attract travellers and then disperse them to other tourism products.

"You create a product and we'll help you take it to the market," she told the trade. Speaking about some of the opportunities within the industry, Robertson said that if SA continued to grow visitor numbers, the industry would overcome low occupancy rates. She added that the tourism industry needed to capitalise on the ability of bloggers to act as influencers and embrace technology. Robertson also emphasised the crucial role played by SMMEs in the sector. "South Africa is blessed with many things, including vibrant sectors," said Ramawela. She also highlighted the need for South Africans to build the reputation of SA as a tourism industry, arguing that South Africans often talked the country down. "In the next 10 years we'll get our head around challenges," Ramawela concluded.

(Sources: Tourism Update)



These two towers in Soweto have become a popular site for diving adventurers.

Department's SRI initiative revives community owned lodge in Free State

NDT's Director-General, Ambassador Kingsley Makhubela (second from right) with senior officials at the re-launch of the Witsieshoek lodge.



Director-General of the Department of Tourism (NDT), Ambassador Makhubela, officially re-opened the newly renovated Sentinel Chalets at Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge in the Free State province in time for the start of the 2013 holiday season. The facility – shut down in 2010 as it had dilapidated into a state of disrepair and no longer receiving visitors – was given a new lease of life through the

Department of Tourism's Social Responsibility Implementation (SRI) initiative. The chalets of the lodge, as well as its public premises and facilities, are currently being renovated and refurbished under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The project was funded for an amount of R20.9 million.

Batlokwa community – owners of the lodge, entered into partnership with the Transfrontier

The facility – shut down in 2010 after it had dilapidated into a state of disrepair and no longer receiving visitors – was given a new lease of life through the Department of Tourism's Social Responsibility Implementation (SRI) initiative.



Proud beneficiaries of the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge.

Parks Destinations, to access development funds through NDT funded EPWP. Beneficiaries who were involved in the EPWP were on two-year employment contracts, and received both accredited and non-accredited training in the hospitality and construction fields. The lodge will also be able to employ personnel now that it is back in business. The SRI unit is currently planning to roll-out further training for the lodge's management and personnel to ensure business sustainability. Ambassador Makhubela, flanked by representatives of the Batlokwa community, officials of the Department of Tourism, and other stakeholders, officially unveiled the lodge's plaque, which bore the chalets' new name – Sentinel Chalets.



NTCE - Infusing youth into tourism industry

Young people need to be attracted to the tourism career sector.

In the past, tourism did not quickly spring to mind when young people made life defining decisions about their career paths. This has led to subsequent failure to attract suitable talent to the industry and the inability to retain the few that are inside the industry. This was later confirmed in a study conducted by the National Department of Tourism (NDT), the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA), and other key partners a few years ago. The findings prompted the industry into action and a long-term strategy was adopted to respond to issues that came up. The National Tourism Career Expo (NTCE) was conceptualised as one of the industry's response to the shortcomings indicated. FEDHASA has always provided visible support for the initiative on behalf of the entire tourism business community. The 2013 NTCE was delivered successfully and preparations are underway for the 2014 event.

Tourism can become and remain at the forefront of economic development and job creation in South Africa.

This will ensure that the industry can become and remain at the forefront of economic development and job creation in South Africa. This will in turn, ensure all

parties' support for the National Tourism Sector Strategy. A key indicator of industry performance in this regard, would be achievement of the set Growth Domestic Product and job creation targets for 2020. This great target calls for the creation of a robust talent pipeline that can be sustained into the future. The NTCE is one of the key tools that can be employed to deliver the message to young people. Also critical for the tourism sector to take keen interest in, is management of the quality of the information that is communicated to young people. The damage is normally irreversible when people have been recipients of inaccurate information about the industry for an extended period of time. Individuals who are put off by the nature of information they receive, will inevitably cut their interest in the industry, while some will be attracted to the industry based on incorrect information. Benefits that young participants will draw from the NTCE include:

gain new useful insights into the industry. With the newfound knowledge and change in attitudes, they will play a far more crucial role in educating and exciting young people about the industry.

- **Tourist Grooming** – The country has identified domestic tourism as a key element in growing the industry and insulating it from unpredictable global influences. It therefore becomes important that the industry is sustained by locals. This is an excellent opportunity to start grooming young people to become tourists in their own country. The extended effect of this cannot be undermined, as any of the successfully converted potential tourists will talk to various other people in their networks.

FEDHASA has started, with some measure of success, to encourage its members to replicate what happens at NTCE, in their localities in order to extend the reach. For the starting phase, this will be done with the acknowledgement of the limitation of an annual event taking place in one area.

- **Educator Empowerment** – Educators are a key factor in these interactions and they remain largely unempowered. Through their participation in the programme, they

Written by Caleb Mabaso – FEDHASA Head of Strategic Projects

UPCOMING TOURISM EVENTS

Date	Event	Province/Location
02 December 2013	Start of SA Holiday Season	National
07 December 2013	Wavescape Film Festival	Cape Town
07 December 2013	Friends of the Zoo Fun Run/Walk	Pretoria
10 December 2013	Urban Rail Africa Conference	Cape Town
13 December 2013	Soweto Festival of Lights	Soweto
17 December 2013	Holiday Course on Reptiles	Pretoria Zoo
09 March 2014	Afrenco Tourism Exchange Expo	Soweto
28 April 2014	Africa Travel Week	Cape Town
10 May 2014	Tourism Indaba	Durban



The pathway at Freedom Park that gives a good view of nature in the city.

Improved air connectivity needed to enhance African countries' tourism



A passenger jet lands at the airport at sunset.

African countries need extensive airlift configurations that will connect the continent to mainstream air routes. Due to the lack of this air connectivity, African neighbours have become long-haul destinations to each other, Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk said in his opening address to delegates from the aviation sector, at the Airlines Association of Southern Africa's (AASA) 43rd Annual General Assembly in Somerset West in October. "In a mere two years from now, we will be at the crossing point where inbound tourism to emerging-market destinations will exceed that of the advanced economies. This growth in emerging-market travel propensity will also drive new demand for aircraft," the Minister

said. The twin trends of exponential growth in airlift connectivity and lower real cost of air travel, create access to new destination markets. The Minister also said that with the introduction of e-visas and visas on mobile phones, it would be possible to significantly boost tourism volumes and the sector's job creation potential.

"Already there are over 600 million e-passports – micro chipped passports with your biographic and biometric data issued by governments worldwide. By next year, we expect 55% of all passports to be e-passports, and by 2020, this will likely be over 80%. Surely this is a moment to be seized," he said. As a global sector, tourism has grown exponentially over the past six

decades. Globally, 350 million new international tourist arrivals are expected by 2020, and the number is expected to reach 1.8 billion by 2030. A powerful tectonic shift is underway as economic and political power is moving from the North to the South and from the West to the East. Emerging markets are no longer just sourcing markets only, they are destination countries also. Over the next 20 years, international tourist arrivals in emerging-economy markets are expected to grow at double the pace of advanced-economy markets. The shift in geographic markets also overlaps with the megatrend of urbanisation. By 2030, 60% of the world's population is expected to have urbanised, which will transcend into at least a billion more city dwellers than at present.



41 South African beaches awarded Blue Flag status

Minister van Schalkwyk raising a blue flag at the Ramsgate beach during the launch of the Blue Flag Programme in KZN.

As the holiday season starts, South African and international tourists will be delighted to know that a total of 41 beaches have been awarded Blue Flag status this year by the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA). Furthermore, seven additional beaches have been given Pilot Blue Flag Site status. Internationally, 3,849 beaches and marinas have been awarded Blue Flag status for the 2013/14 season. In mid-October Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk launched the new Blue Flag Season 2013–2014 in Ramsgate in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. In order to ensure and promote quality water for inland and marine tourism,

the Blue Flag and Blue Drop Programmes were introduced. Blue Flag is a programme that promotes sustainable development in marine areas and also encourages beaches to comply with the Bathing Water quality standards and good practices in coastal management. This is to ensure environmental education and information; environmental management; and safety and services.

"The South Coast is a very special jewel in the crown of KwaZulu-Natal. This is indeed a fitting venue for the event given that the KZN South Coast is the stronghold of the Blue Flag Programme in the province," the minister said during the launch. Minister van Schalkwyk further said South Africa should optimise its tourism potential by offering both domestic and international visitors, clean, safe and well-managed beaches. "Attractive coastal landscapes, such as sandy beaches, dune areas, estuaries, and coastal lakes are

preferred sites for tourism development" the Minister remarked. The launch was hosted by the Hibiscus Coast Municipality. This year, South Africa celebrates its 13th year of running the Blue Flag successfully. The country celebrates the increase of Blue Flag beaches from only three in the first year, to 41 this year. Although the original focus of the international Blue Flag Programme was on encouraging beaches to comply with water quality standards, it has since expanded to take a holistic view of safety, amenities, cleanliness and environmental management issues. WESSA's Blue Flag Programme has grown significantly over the past two and a half years, with a 50% growth in the number of Blue Flag Sites over the past two years. The Programme is now, more than ever before, in line with the International Blue Flag trend with an increasing focus on environmental education and the conservation of biodiversity.



Deputy Minister Xasa calls on tourism sector to work together with government

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa.

Deputy Minister Tokozile Xasa urged the tourism sector to work together with government to capitalise on opportunities in the growing industry. Addressing delegates at the inaugural South Africa Travel and Tourism summit in Sandton last month, the Deputy Minister said the two stakeholders should

guide each other in developing strategies that will stimulate the tourism industry's growth. "There should be transparency between government and the private sector," she said, before adding that the two parties must focus mainly on long-term strategies and planning. "There are opportunities around infrastructure, electricity supply and transport, which complete the travel value chain," she said.

The summit was hosted by the Tourism Business Council South Africa (TBCSA) in partnership with Gauteng Tourism under the

theme "Value of the traveller". The main objective of the summit was to provide a national platform for debate and engagement within the South African travel and tourism industry, and to appreciate the contribution of travellers in the South African economy. "South African tourism has investment potential that can place the country among the top tourism destinations in the world," said Matsatsi Ramawela, CEO of the TBCSA, during her address to the summit. Dawn Robertson, CEO of Gauteng Tourism, said the tourism industry needed to unite and work together in order to achieve enormous growth.

Unemployed youth graduate from Western Cape Tourism Ambassador Programme

Central Karoo graduates with executive mayor of George, Cllr EZ Njadu.



A total of 300 unemployed youth recently graduated from the Western Cape Tourism Ambassador Programme, in which they received training on hospitality and tourism. The programme is one of the projects funded by the Department's Social Responsibility Implementation (SRI) initiative, which is being implemented through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The Tourism Ambassador Programme's aim is to train unemployed young people in the hospitality and tourism field, and then have them placed in some of the industry's

establishments where they will receive industry exposure, workplace experience and skills development.

This will then increase their chances of getting employment within the industry after conclusion of their training. The graduates received certificates in Accommodation Service, NQF L2; Food and Beverage Certificate, NQF L4 and Customer Care Skills Programme, NQF L4. Graduation ceremonies were clustered according to district municipalities, namely, Eden, Central Karoo and Cape Town.

The Tourism Ambassador Programme's aim is to train unemployed young people in the hospitality and tourism field, and then have them placed in some establishments.

Of the intake of 350 learners who enrolled in the training, 300 graduated and 95 got full-time employment following their training.



ETEYA finalist offers unique travel packages for the visually impaired

A touch and feel of an elephant. The tourists also got a chance to interact with elephants.

Ntwanano Tours and Travel is an emerging small business located 13 km outside the Kruger International Airport in Mbombela, Mpumalanga. Established in 2000, the tour company was nominated as a finalist in the 2012/13 Emerging Tourism Entrepreneur of the Year Award (ETEYA). What distinguishes Ntwanano Tours and Travel is the tour operator's innovative packages that seek to cater for people of all needs and requirements. Their travel packages include specialised tours for the visually-impaired, known as the Braille Trails, which have been tailored to give visually-impaired individuals and unsighted people an opportunity to engage with the wonders of nature in a sensory and sensual way.

Their packages include Flora Kingdom Tours, which includes visits to game parks and specialist organic growers of herbs and plants. The Genesis of Life Tour includes visits to areas where the earliest traces of life on earth have been found, where the oldest gold was mined, and where ancient fossils can be seen. Other products include transfers and daily shuttle services. The company has a full-time staff of four. It has four vehicles and deploys tour guides according to client requirements. Ntwanano Tours and Travel

has also been included as part of the Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP) programme and according to the company's owner Mr Sertorio Mshothola, this has given them another platform to shine and opportunities to several benefits, which include training from travel experts to run the business more effectively.

"They are helping me to spread the message around the world that Mpumalanga has much more to offer than just the Kruger National Park," Mshothola said. He added that the local TEP cluster has also helped him to form a strategic alliance with wildlife and birding experts, the Crowned Eagle Tours. "Kruger is an incredible place but there are amazing things to see and do just outside Kruger, yet overseas visitors just think the Lowveld is all about the park," he said. Ntwanano Tours and Travel was chosen from twenty seven finalists that were announced at the TEP workshop held during the Tourism Indaba in Durban early this year. Tourism businesses that are chosen for the ETEYA awards are those that have proven to significantly contribute to local economic empowerment, offer innovative products or services, and have a sound business plan to ensure continued growth and opportunity for expansion. As part of the ETEYA programme, the nine national finalists will

each be assigned a mentor to work with to implement their business plans. Each finalist received a R10 000 grant for development of a sound business plan. The winning business, Citi Hopper from the Western Cape was announced at the inaugural Lilizela Tourism Awards held in September. Although Ntwanano Tours and Travel did not win the ultimate prize, the small business has been motivated by their nomination, and continue to be a shining example of emerging small business that contribute to tourism growth in Mpumalanga.



Visually impaired people took time out to interact with the Braille Trail during the tour.



South Africa's tourism at a glance

South Africa's landscape, mountains and beaches make the country a beautiful holiday destination.

South Africa's status as a premier global leisure destination is firmly established. The country has the capability and the means, the welcoming culture, the diversity and the scenic beauty that the world's travellers are looking for when they choose a destination. International tourist arrivals in South Africa grew by 10,2% year-on-year to almost 9,2 million in 2012, more than double the global average of around 4%. The biggest growth in 2012 came from Asia and South America, driven by large increases in arrivals from South Africa's BRICS partners Brazil, India and China. From an African continental perspective, Nigeria and Tanzania were two of the continent's biggest growth markets during the past financial year, with tourist arrivals from these two countries growing by 37,5% and 45,8%, respectively.

Role players

South African Tourism (SAT)

South African Tourism (SAT) is mandated to market South Africa internationally as a

preferred tourism destination, to maximise the economic potential of tourism for the country and its people.

Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP)

The Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP) is a non-profit company that facilitates the growth, development and sustainability of small tourism businesses.

Tourism Indaba

The Tourism Indaba is an annual event that takes place in Durban. It is one of the largest tourism marketing events in Africa and one of the top three events of its kind in the world. The event showcases a wide variety of Southern Africa's best tourism products, and attracts thousands of local as well as international visitors and media from across the world.

Meetings Africa

Meetings Africa is an annual exhibition that serves as SAT's marketing platform to expose

local and international buyers to the range of services and products in Southern Africa.

Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)

In June 2012, the Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, announced the appointment of the new awards committee of the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA). About 1 160 properties have entered the tourism sector as lodges, guest houses or hotels after complying with TGCSA standards.

South Africa has eight world heritage sites, namely:

- Robben Island;
- iSimangaliso Wetland Park;
- uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park;
- Mapungubwe;
- Sterkfontein Cradle of Humankind;
- Cape Floral Kingdom;
- Vredefort Dome; and
- Richterveld cultural and botanical landscape.

Message from government: Drive carefully this festive season

Government has reminded South Africans of the importance of road safety as the holiday season approaches. Government Communication and Information System acting CEO Phumla Williams said drivers should use seatbelts, adjust their speed depending on road rules and conditions, keep safe following distances, and not talk or text on their phones while driving.

She also reminded drivers that drinking and driving is a criminal offence. The government of the Republic of South Africa is committed to halving the number of road deaths by 2020, and is relying on motorists changing their behaviour to help realise this goal. She thanked all South Africans, the transport industry and the media for supporting and carrying positive messages during October, which was transport month.

By the end of the current financial year, government would have invested more than R5.5 billion on planning, building and operating public transport networks in 13 cities around the country.

"Going forward government will continue to invest and develop the country's transport system to change lives and revitalise our economic landscape," said Williams.



SA looking forward to hosting Indaba 2014

Indaba 2014 has been opened to exhibitors from all over Africa. It will be repositioned as a “genuinely pan-African travel trade show that offers buyers the best and the widest diversity of African products under one roof”. Chief Executive Officer of South African Tourism (SAT), Mr Thulani Nzima, said that as the host country, South Africa is excited to unite with its fellow Africans to join forces and actively raise the profile of the continent in the travel and tourism sector. SAT has promised the tourism industry an intensely business-focused Indaba 2014. Nzima was speaking to delegates at the Travel and Tourism Summit in Johannesburg in October, when he explained that South African Tourism had commenced a three-year journey to make Indaba the vortex that fuels the Southern African (and now rest of Africa) travel and tourism industry, ensuring it provides the best possible environment to facilitate quality meetings. Indaba, he said, was on an irrevocable path to being a genuinely pan-African travel trade show that offers buyers the best and the widest diversity of African product under one roof. In response to demand, South African Tourism had invited all of Africa to Indaba 2014.

“Indaba is the only true travel and trade show that is owned within Africa. As the host country, South Africa is excited to unite with its fellow Africans, to join forces and actively raise the profile of our continent in the travel and tourism sector. International buyers don’t see borders, so we are expecting to improve both the number and quality of Indaba buyers at Indaba as a result.” This year, buyers came to Indaba from 77 countries around the world, and in 2014 this number is expected to grow. Indaba 2014 will give the world’s travel and tourism buyers an unequalled opportunity to do business with more than 1 600 African exhibitors, at a show that prides itself on being the biggest and broadest, must attend, mass-market travel trade show on the continent.

“The African continent,” he said, “is undergoing unprecedented growth in tourist arrivals and global market interest. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation’s “International Tourism in 2012 – Key Trends and Outlook” report, average growth to the African continent in 2012 was 6%, second only to growth in the Asia Pacific region (7%). Indaba 2013, Nzima said, was attended by 2 341 local and international buyers, 249 of who were top international buyers hosted by South African Tourism.

“Indaba hosted buyers are carefully selected against specified criteria. South African Tourism sources the best buyers from around the world, ensures they qualify, and invites them to Indaba to work with the industry, with the intention of benefiting everyone’s bottom-line,” she said.

Indaba 2014 will attract more than 6 400 leading professionals and companies to meet and do business in Durban over the three days. Already, more than 200 exhibitors have reserved their space at Indaba 2014. South African Tourism expects 3 000 influential global buyers to come to Indaba 2014. No less than 800 journalists from all over the world are expected to attend, affording exciting media coverage to many exhibitors. “We thank all Indaba exhibitors for their incredible support over the decades and we assure all delegates of our commitment to delivering an event every year that sets new standards in facilitating business, promoting eco-friendliness, ensuring a sense of community and personal interaction, all to make sure we deliver a hard-working, twenty-first-century and business-focused travel trade show,” concluded Nzima.

(Source: southafrica.net)

*We wish you a safe and
happy festive season, and
a prosperous new year!*

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