



tourism

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Deputy Minister Thabethe congratulates Tourism Buddies Graduates in the Free State

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The Deputy Minister of Tourism Elizabeth Thabethe was in the Free State to recognise and congratulate Tourism Buddies at a graduation ceremony held at the Indoor Sports Centre in Motse Thabong, Welkom today.

The Tourism Buddies Programme is a Hospitality Training Programme targeting the unemployed youth of South Africa as part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) of the Department of Tourism.

Over 80 trainees were awarded certificates after completing a 12 month learnership programme. Learners applied to be considered for either a National Certificate on Food and Beverages, which carries an NQF level 4, or a National Certificate on Accommodation Services of NQF level 2 - all fully accredited by the Culture, Art Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA).

“Our department is committed to addressing youth unemployment through the Working for Tourism programme which will create 3347 full time equivalent jobs in both infrastructure and skills development programmes in this financial year”, said Deputy Minister Thabethe.

Key objectives of the training programme include the training of unemployed youth in order to enable them to acquire necessary skills in the area of hospitality, assisting the youth to gain work experience to enhance employability in the hospitality and tourism sector as well as contributing towards decreasing the unemployment rate in the country.

“As you celebrate your achievement, you must prepare and brace yourselves for future challenges. Tourism has opened the door for you to new opportunities. Well done and congratulations,” concluded the Deputy Minister.

The three phase programme was preceded by a stakeholder engagement in which the Deputy Minister interacted with tourism stakeholders in the province. During this session, Deputy Minister Thabethe also recognised host employers by awarding them with certificates. These host employers were responsible for providing the learners with a platform for their practicals as part of their training.

Speaking on behalf of the host employer, Thulani Mdlalose representing the South African National Parks, emphasised the importance of giving young people an opportunity to develop skills that help to contribute to the GDP of the country.

In his address, Executive Mayor of Lejweleputswa Municipality, Councillor Sebenzile Ngangelizwe, acknowledged the efforts of the Department of Tourism to assist the Free State Province with empowering the youth in the Free State province with skills in the hospitality industry in order to curb the scourge of unemployment.

“To the beneficiaries of this programme, you have to ensure that you make us proud because the industry is yours. As a country we have developed values to make sure that the integrity of the country is polished. As you serve people visiting our country, it is important to display values such as respect”, said the Executive Mayor.

The last leg of the programme was an imbizo, where an engagement with the community of Welkom took place. The objectives of the Imbizo were to promote initiatives of the Department as well as mobilise and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders and communities so that the implementation

of the National Development Plan, including the Nine Point Plan to grow South Africa, becomes a national effort aimed at promoting inclusive growth.

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