



Expo launch creates awareness of tourism career opportunities for youth

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The Department of Tourism in partnership with Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environment Affairs in the Free State (DESTEA) and the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) held a media launch of the 2017 National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) in Virginia today.

The publicity campaign aims to raise awareness about the Career Expo set to be held in Bloemfontein from 28 to 30 September 2017 under the theme: *“Tourism alive with Opportunities”*.

Addressing tourism stakeholders and members of the media, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Elizabeth Thabethe said low levels of youth participation in the mainstream economy and youth unemployment are the reason for launching the Careers Expo today.

“We are on a drive to expose young people from high schools, Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges and universities to existing professions and exciting career opportunities within the tourism industry in order to drive South Africa’s National Tourism Sector Strategy’s goal of creating 225 000 tourism jobs opportunities by 2030,” said Thabethe.

The expo is an interactive opportunity between tourism curricula experts, tourism educators and learners and stakeholders to discuss diverse careers available in the sector. It is designed to empower thousands of learners across the country with information on tourism as a career choice through funding opportunities such as learnerships, internships, bursaries and life skills programmes.

DESTEA Acting Deputy Director General Dr Mbulelo Nokwequ highlighted that the NTCE is riding on the wave of the Tourism Month festivities. Adding that the Free State is ready to host the 2017 Expo.

“We have already mobilised and pre-registered over 9000 delegates for the 2017 National Tourism Career Expo. We want this year’s expo to be the biggest and most memorable and attract industry players and potential employers from big hotel groups” said Nokwequ.

Mr Peter Thomas from the Hilton Group stated that they are delighted to be part of one of the most iconic career events in South Africa tourism.

“We are really happy to be partnering in this Career Expo as we are committed to youth development. In 2014 in Switzerland we made a commitment to create opportunities for one million youth across the world. We do that by connecting them to the world of travel so that they can experience new cultures and contributing to the sustainability of the industry.

“We encourage our industry partners like hotel chains, B&Bs and lodges to be part of this event in order to open doors for young people and make a meaningful contribution to job creation,” said Thomas.

The Expo alternates between provinces on a three-year cycle. Launched in 2008 in the KwaZulu-Natal, it then moved to the Eastern Cape, and now hosted for the third and final year in the Free State. The Deputy Minister expressed her gratitude to the implementation partners CATHSSETA, the Department of Economic Small Business Development, Tourism and Environment Affairs in the Free State (DESTEA), project partners and stakeholders for the continued support of the programme over the years.

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