



MEDIA STATEMENT

TOURISM LAUNCHES A NEW LODGE AND CONFERENCE CENTRE IN KWAMAQOMA IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

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KWAMAQOMA –The Deputy Minister of Tourism Makhotsa Sotyane today unveiled the Mthontsi Lodge and Conference Centre that is set to boost tourism and highlight the historical heritage of the Amathole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape province.

Situated in the rural town of KwaMaqoma, the newly built tourism facility will be a prime destination for nature and history enthusiasts, and an oasis for visitors on route to immersive cultural experiences, inland national parks, and the coastal getaways that are offered by the neighbouring towns of Makhanda, Gqeberha, and East London.

Addressing guests at the launch, the Tourism Deputy Minister said that the development of the tourism facility is a testament to what can be achieved when government, communities, and tourism partners work together to create initiatives that stimulate economic opportunities and uplift communities.

“The construction of the Mthontsi Lodge embodies our vision to see the benefits of tourism enjoyed by all in the country. As government, we invested R31 million in constructing the lodge to build an economic future for the community in KwaMaqoma.”

“We are proud to have collaborated with the local government, the community and tourism partners to ensure the successful completion of the construction phase of this facility. The return on investment will be measured by the opportunities this lodge and conference centre creates for the youth, women entrepreneurs, and the local businesses within this community,” Deputy Minister Sotyane said.

Through its investment, the Department constructed thirteen (13) chalets with a total capacity of fifty-two (52) guests, as well as backpacker accommodation for thirty-two (32) guests. It also included two (2) lapas, staff accommodation, a guard house, an administration building, a restaurant, conference facilities, and internal roads.

The project created numerous employment opportunities during the construction phase, benefiting local SMMEs, women and youth. The lodge continues to contribute to local economic development by employing five (5) permanent staff members and ten (10) temporary staff members.

Infrastructure projects contribute to the broader goal of the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan (TGPP), which aims to position tourism as a key driver of inclusive economic growth and job creation.

The construction of the Mthontsi Lodge and Conference Centre is one of several infrastructure investment initiatives led by the Department of Tourism that are facilitated through the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA), to grow and diversify the country's tourism products, enhance visitor experience, stimulate local economic development, and strengthen destination competitiveness in tourism communities.

“Through the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan, we remain committed to ensuring that tourism contributes meaningfully to the inclusive growth of our tourism communities and the sector.”

“Tourism is about people and preserving our historical and cultural heritage. As we celebrate the addition of this tourism facility along one of South Africa’s significant liberation routes, we are reminded of how far we have come in attaining the gains of our democracy. This lodge belongs to the people of the Amatole District Municipality. Its future success depends on the partnerships we continue to maintain long after today's celebration has ended,” Deputy Minister Sotyú added.

Mthontsi’s history and liberation heritage date back to the 1800s, when the area was an epicentre of the War of Mlanjeni between Africans and Europeans. The site echoes the legacy of its forebears who stood in defence of the land, the sovereignty and dignity of the African people. The handover of the lodge to the Amathole District Municipality and the Mthontsi Waselukhuko primary Co-operative signalled a watershed moment that honours the triumphant legacy of the people of Mthontsi.

“The establishment of the Mthontsi Lodge represents a long-overdue act of atonement and restoration, as it honours the memory of those who fought and fell here, ensuring their legacy is preserved and shared with future generations.”

“Transforming this historic site of conflict into a place of remembrance, healing, and economic opportunity, the Lodge restores the dignity of the fallen heroes who resisted colonialism and lays a foundation for inclusive growth in the region,” Executive Mayor of Amathole District Municipality Cllr. Anele Ntsangani said.

The Mthontsi Lodge and Conference centre is built on a farm that was acquired by Amathole District Municipality as part of South Africa’s Land Reform Programme to settle Mount Pleasant and surrounding Adelaide farm workers and secure their livelihoods. The project benefits over 240 farm dwellers and their descendants, who now form the core of the Mthontsi Waselukhuko primary Co-operative.

ENDS

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