



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Innovation critical to tourism growth and competitiveness

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“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 arrival statistics whilst benefiting South African communities through job creation”, said Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk. Speaking at a breakfast event held in the North West province, Minister van Schalkwyk 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 R 1.1 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 will be participating in during his visit to the NW province. The National Department of Tourism partnered with the North West province to host a number of events in Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp preceding the World Tourism Day (WTD) 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 on the 27th of September has enabled us to focus our attention on promoting the province with a particular focus on our cultural and heritage products” said Ms. Motlalepule Rosho, North West MEC.

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 (small heaven) continue to attract tourists to the North West despite water shortages and drought. Despite 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 (NDT), our business community and stakeholders to support the initiatives put in place to promote domestic tourism and address the hindrances to tourism growth” said Rosho.

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