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North West Tourism MEC Launches Tourism Month at Mphebotho Museum in Moruleng

The North West MEC for Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism, Bitsa Lenkopane, officially launched Tourism Month 2025 at the Mphebotho Museum in Moruleng yesterday, accompanied by Kgosi Nyalala Pilane of the Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafela and HOD Mr Relebohile Mofokane.

The launch was celebrated under the theme “**Tourism and Sustainable Transformation**”, a call to reposition tourism as a driver of inclusive growth, cultural pride, and environmental stewardship.

In her keynote address, MEC Lenkopane highlighted the pivotal role of tourism in the provincial economy and in transforming communities.

“To us, as government in the 7th Administration, tourism is not just about attractions, it is about transformation. It is one of the most dynamic sectors of our economy, a lifeline for countless entrepreneurs and families, and increasingly an instrument of pride, preservation, and prosperity,” she said.

The MEC stressed that sustainable transformation in tourism is not an abstract idea but a practical approach that involves local communities, create jobs across the value chain, celebrates cultural identity, and safeguards the environment.

“Every village guesthouse visited, every township eatery supported, and every local guide hired contributes to our economy, turning exclusion into opportunity and neglect into empowerment,” she added.

MEC Lenkopane underscored that the theme challenges stakeholders to reimagine tourism as a vehicle for economic growth, social justice, and long-term sustainability. Transformation efforts, she said, must be deliberate and inclusive, with a strong focus on women, youth, persons with disabilities and black-owned enterprises.

Tourism Month, celebrated every September, is an opportunity for South Africans to travel, discover, and support local destinations. In the North West, the department has curated a month-long programme showcasing the province’s rich heritage, natural beauty, and entrepreneurial spirit. Activities include career awareness programmes, tourism stakeholder engagements, cultural experiences, adventure tutorials, and exhibitions for local SMMEs.

The MEC announced several initiatives that will shape the future of tourism in the Platinum Province. She revealed that the North West Parks and Tourism Board is being repositioned as a development agent to protect biodiversity assets and provide world-class destination marketing. A recent call for proposals was issued to private sector partners to co-manage provincial reserves and hospitality facilities, which will attract investment, infrastructure development, and diversification of tourism offerings.

To embrace digital innovation, the province is rolling out a QR code-based marketing campaign to showcase and market products & services by Micro Small Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) inclusive of tourism, complemented by the OR Tambo Connect Hub at OR Tambo International Airport, launched recently by Premier Mokgosi. The hub will serve as a flagship project to amplify North West’s visibility in both domestic and international markets.

Part of the key programme includes highlighted the establishment of Youth in Tourism and Women in Tourism structures to ensure greater inclusion in the sector. A series of cultural and eco-conscious activities will be hosted throughout the month, including the adventure tutorials in JB Marks and Matlosana, the Taung Heritage Walk, the Mahikeng Heritage Camp and Walk and the Eco-Trail Challenge. As this month is

also dedicated to Nature and Wildlife, Conservation and Environment the province will be participating at the one-million-tree planting initiative for National Arbor Day, to save the environment from carbon emissions and protect humans and animals against the effects of climate change. The province is also positioning itself as a film destination, creating new opportunities for economic growth and creative industry expansion.

To broaden access, all North West Reserves and Parks will offer free entry during Parks Mahala Week from 28 September to 05 October, excluding Madikwe Nature Reserve. This initiative is designed to give residents a free opportunity to experience the province's incredible wildlife, while also creating market access for young entrepreneurs and local SMMEs who will showcase and sell their products at park sites.

"Let this month not only be a celebration of our beautiful landscapes and cultural heritage; let it be a rallying point for inclusive growth, equity, and long-term sustainability. Together, let us build a truly transformative tourism sector," concluded MEC Lenkopane.

The North West Province invites communities, partners, and the media to join in amplifying the voice of tourism and to support efforts to make the sector more inclusive, transformative, and sustainable.

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