

MEDIA EXPOSED TO THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE DISTRICT



Journalists from different media houses across the country were last weekend exposed to the outstanding natural beauty of Thabo Mofutsanyana District and to a host of tourist attractions in the district as they travelled through Eagle Route, from Ladybrand to Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

This was during a Media Familiarization Tour, which was organised by Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality's Local Economic Development and Tourism Department and the Free State Tourism Authority.

The media entourage arrived in the district on Thursday evening and were welcomed by Chairperson of the Board of Free State Tourism Authority, Mr Glen Netshivhodza, and a Member of the Mayoral Committee for Local Economic Development and Tourism, Councillor Sylvia Visagie.

Welcoming the entourage, Visagie said: "Members of the media, let me assure you that the beauty of our area is indeed irresistible. It is the nature at its best. It is just amazing. We, the people of Thabo Mofutsanyana, take much pride in our own region, which forms part of timeless aesthetic creation. The scenic beauty of our region is just tantalizing and a source of inspiration."

The Media Familiarization Tour then kicked-off on Friday morning with a visit to Lekgalong la Mantsopa, outside Ladybrand. The guests were given a tour of the place, where Mantsopa, a powerful prophetess who was believed to hold the gift of seeing into the future and communicated with the ancestors, lived during the early 1900s. She died when she was 114 and was believed to be the only black person to be buried among the whites during that time.

The tour then took to the Sandstone estates outside Ficksburg, where all the guests were treated to a ride on board a steam train. This was followed by a trip to Clarens, where the guests had a choice of variety of activities, which included extreme sports such as Zip lock and quad-biking.

Later on in the evening, the journalists were treated to a dinner by the Executive Mayor of Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality, Councillor Malefu Vilakazi, at Brandwag Hotel in Golden Gate.

In her brief address to the media, Vilakazi stated that media is a strategic partner and an alliance in letting people know about the beauty of Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She also stressed the importance of residents of Thabo Mofutsanyana knowing about their area in order to appreciate its natural beauty.

“It is for this reason that we want to expose you to this area so that you can help us in telling this good story of our district. Media has also the power to change the perceptions and throughout this tour, I can assure you that you will be learning about the beauty of our own land. Thabo Mofutsanyana district alone is a good story to tell, and the media becomes a good vehicle to tell this story.

“Marketing and promotion of our district as a tourist destination remains vital to ensure an influx of tourists and also to stimulate tourism among the locals,” she said.

The media entourage furthermore cruised to the Dinosaur Park in the Golden Gate Highlands and Basotho Cultural Village to learn about the life and history of Basotho. They also experienced the nightlife of Bethlehem in Dihlabeng Local Municipality. Other activities included horse-riding and abseiling.

This media tour was taking place as part of Tourism Month activities. September has been marked as a Tourism Month by the South African Government. It is celebrated annually to focus on the importance of tourism on the South African economy.