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department of
Economic, Small Business Development,
Tourism and Environmental Affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE

MEDIA STATEMENT

REDISCOVER AND EXPLORE THE FREE STATE

PART 2

Necessary as they were, the lockdown regulations and accompanying measures immediately choked the tourism sector and all its sub sectors because they are fuelled by people's movement. This sector, pre-pandemic, was the tonic for economic growth in Mzansi and was projected to contribute R 145.3 billion to the GDP in 2019 with an increase of 709 000 jobs.

Every effort has to be made to remove the tourism sector from the ICU and very quickly. Industry players in the Free State have no luxury to point fingers, but to work as a collective to remedy the economic calamity brought on the industry by the pandemic. Working together with the government they have to pull out all stops to lure tourists, travellers and families, wherever they are, to take advantage of interprovincial travel as a result of Level 2 regulations.

For a dream weekend getaway, water enthusiasts should not look any further than Deneysville on the shores of the monstrous Vaal dam. A stone's throw away from Gauteng Province, Deneysville has earned the title as the inland water mecca of South Africa and is fast becoming a much sought after vacation and leisure destination for those seeking a quick getaway from the bustling city life. With five star accommodation and plenty of activities like boating, sailing, fishing and other water sports, Deneysville is the place to be.

On the southern tip of the Free State is the Gariep Dam Nature Reserve, about 9.7 kilometers from the N1 between Colesberg and Springfontein. The Gariep Dam is the largest dam in South Africa, bordering Free State, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape. The dam is a haven for water sports like angling, canoeing, boating and skiing. The tranquillity and beauty in the area provides an opportunity to hit one's reset and recharge buttons after the long months of the lockdown. The highlight at the dam is the visit to the dam wall where adventurers can challenge themselves to a 13.6 km walk through the dam's passages down to the belly of this architectural piece.

At the center of the province, the City of Roses is an ideal getaway location for modern site seekers. Here, you will find the Naval Hill Nature Reserve, the only game reserve in the middle of a city, with the only digital planetarium in the southern hemisphere and the biggest bronze Nelson Mandela statue which stands at 8 meters. On the north-western fringes of Bloemfontein lie 70 hectares of the Free State National Botanical Garden in a valley peppered with dolerite koppies, tall grassland, woodland and an enrapturing 360° view of nature.



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Other attractions in Mangaung include the National Museum, notable for its large collection of fossils, cultural historical exhibits and archaeological displays, and the Mangaung Cultural Route. The route includes the Maphikela House and the Waaihoek Methodist Church, the birth place of the African National Congress.

Moving into a new era of tourism, the Free State undoubtedly provides a fresh experience and promises rare memories and experiences that will linger with the traveller for a very long time. The Free State is ready to welcome travellers to discover and explore its beautiful plains, gorges, mountains and rivers.

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