

MAYORS CHALLENGE 2008 TO PROMOTE TOURISM MONTH PROVES TO BE A HIT ONCE AGAIN

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(Pictures taken by Lucky Makeleni)

Posted: 29 September 2008

CENTANE: Mayors, councilors and staff from different municipalities and officials from various stakeholder organizations within Amathole District Municipality braved a chilly weekend, and walked 34 km along the Wild Coast between 18 – 22 September 2008. This was done to commemorate Tourism Day on 26 September 2008 and to promote tourism within the district. Each and every year ADM embarks on a hike of the district to explore a different area and to ensure that tourism month is always honored in this way.



Acting ADM Mayor, Councilor Samkelo Janda officially opened the challenge and emphasized that this was a perfect opportunity for building relationships with other key stakeholders and getting to know each other.

The challenge started at WaveCrest near Centane outside Butterworth and ended at Morgan's Bay. Communities around the area benefited by assisting the tourists to carry their luggage and they were given some tips.

A delegation of 25 people was led by tour guides who hailed from the surrounding communities. This was a clear indication that even though ADM is promoting tourism, communities are not left out in the process, and everyone stands to benefit in one way or another.

Amos Nkonki, a tourist guide, works for the Wild Coast Meander and walked with the delegation for almost 14km. On their way from Wave Crest to Trenner's Hotel, Nkonki briefed the delegation about the history of the Wild Coast area. Before reaching their destination the delegation came across a shipwreck that had been there since 1971. According to Nkonki the ship used to carry coconut oil. He said it was wrecked there because of a tropical cyclone.

The area of Centane is a rich area especially for herbal medicines such as the African Potato which is commonly used to boost the immune system.

On the third day, the delegation learned more about the beauty of nature along “Trevor’s Trail” in the Qolorha area which also included a boat cruise along the river.

The communities of these areas are familiar with the concept of Vukuzenzele. They plough vegetables and sell their produce to the local hotels. Young people are keeping themselves busy as they are trained as potters. During weekends they assist the tourists and this is another way of curbing crime in the area.

On the last day of the challenge the delegation proceeded to Morgan’s Bay which is about 12 kilometers away. The walk was tough but the weather was fine and everyone enjoyed basking in the sun along the way. It was such a nice experience, after the chilly cold spell during the earlier part of the weekend, especially for those who had never participated in the hikes before.

Cllr Janda thanked everyone and wished them a safe trip on their way back home. He encouraged initiatives of this nature as this is another way of marketing the beautiful places of Amathole District Municipality. END