

Media Statement

To: All Media Houses

24/02/2025

MEC Ketso Makume provides progress on Spaza shops & small business registration.

In heeding the call for spaza shops and small business owners including food-handling outlets, to continue registering their businesses and meet the deadline of Friday, **28 February 2025**, the Free State Government has established **51** registration/business licensing centers across all four districts and Mangaung Metro.

As the deadline is looming, it is significant for the small business owners to take into cognizance that if the registration window period is missed, the business would not be allowed to operate and will be closed down.

Once a business is registered within the set period, a further process to obtain a permit or a license will be undertaken as per Municipal By-Laws and other compliance requirements.

Since November 2024 to 20 February 2025, number of applications received unfolded as follows:

- Thabo Mofutsanyana District—**2 016**
- Lejweleputswa District—**1 366**
- Fezile Dabi District—**2 069**
- Mangaung Metro—**1 653**
- Xhariep District—**417**

The total number of applications received thus far amount to **7 521**. Thus far, about **641** applications are been approved and the process is ongoing.

The Free State MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ketso Makume is calling on business owners, business associations, chambers, traditional leaders, and all other stakeholders to join hands with government to ensure that unregistered businesses that qualify get assistance with the registration before **28 February 2025**.

“The registration process require business owners to submit amongst others a properly filled application form with personal and business details, a certified copy of SA identity document and proof of residence. It is also important to take into account that forging registration documents is a criminal offence and can result in serious penalties,” MEC said.

MEC Makume explains that he has instructed the departmental Consumer Protection unit to continue working with law enforcement agencies, entities and other departments to conduct compliance blitz inspections across the province to strengthen adherence to legal frameworks governing trade and food safety.

“The intergovernmental and coordinated approach with relevant authorities reflects our commitment as Government that we are dedicated in addressing risks associated with unregistered businesses while addressing the underlying vulnerabilities within the food safety ecosystem and illicit trade networks,” MEC Makume added.

The department working with other sector stakeholders has conducted **1 275**-compliance inspections from November 2024 to date across the Province. During these compliance inspections, **198** tuck shops and food handling outlets found to be compliant, **170** were non-compliant. About **58** tuck shops and food handling outlets were closed due to non-compliance.

Furthermore, the department together with its stakeholders has embarked on an intensive programme to provide this sector with both financial and non-financial support. The non-financial support includes training on food handling, compliance with Consumer Protection Act and Foodstuff, Cosmetics, and Disinfectants Act as well as business management skills.

MEC Makume commits on employing more inspections to enforce the Free State Integrated Business Support and Licensing and Regulations Act no2 of 2024. This Act intended to respond permanently to issues experienced towards businesses operating without being properly registered.

Furthermore, MEC urges members of the public or any unauthorized bodies to STOP conducting their own unlawful inspections and closing of unregistered businesses but to report such businesses to their respective municipalities OR the Departmental Consumer Protection Unit at customercare@destea.gov.za; WhatsApp—**0829475394** and the nearest Police Station.

Issued by the Free State Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

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