

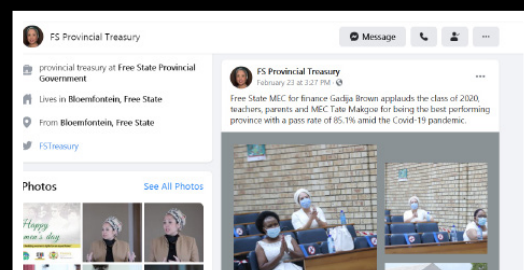
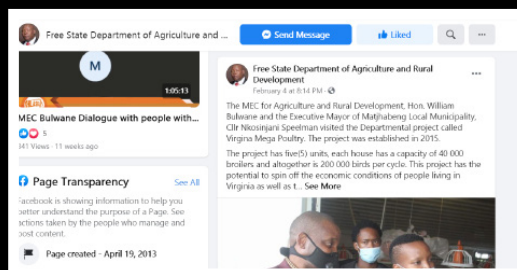
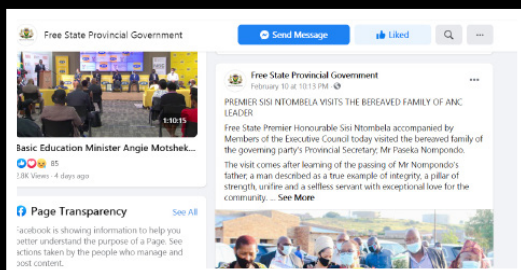
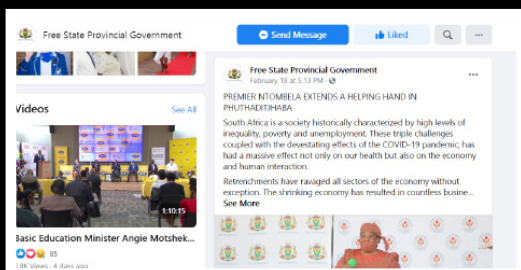
THE UPDATE



FREE STATE PROVINCE

“THE PULSE OF COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE IN THE FREE STATE GOVERNMENT”

SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS FEED



HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MINISTER FEELS AT HOME IN THE FREE STATE

Minister of Human Settlements, Mamoloko Kubayi embarked on a two day visit to Mangaung from Monday 27 September until Tuesday, 28 September.

Minister Kubayi, who was accompanied by Deputy Minister Pamela Tshwete and the Director – General in the Department of Human Settlements Mbulelo Tshangana, was welcomed by Premier Sefora Ntombela and MEC for Public Works and Infrastructure and Human Settlements, Tshidi Koloi.

The Minister, as part of her visit, was given an update on incomplete projects, but was also taken to Hillside View, Mangaung, to have a look at the houses which have been built. Minister Kubayi congratulated the provincial government, and urged the government to provide quality houses for the people.



“

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”

PREMIER NTOMBELA

“We must remember that human settlements is about giving back dignity to South Africans. When we give people houses, they must be of quality. Do not give people houses that you would not want to live in,” Minister Kubayi said.

Premier Ntombela said the Free State Provincial Government aims to move with the necessary speed to provide shelter for the people of the province. She also acknowledged that there are other people who

simply just want land to build on, and appealed to municipalities to avail it to those in need.

“Human settlements remains a critical issue and our people understandably want houses to live in comfort. The indignity of homelessness is often too much to bear. A caring government like ours, which appreciates the importance of housing, particularly for those who cannot afford to do so themselves, must continue to provide shelter for our people,” Premier Ntombela said.

She continued: “Today, our people realised the promise we made to them of a better life. Despite these achievements, we are painfully aware that much more still needs to be done. Many more people desperately need houses and sites. This reality therefore places on us a massive responsibility to move with speed to deliver for them.”

Khutlang Mosola, one of the beneficiaries, said she was thankful for the house which has been built for her.

A PLACE CALLED HOME



On the 3rd September, Free State Premier Sefora Ntombela led a delegation to Freedom Square, Mangaung, to officially hand over a house to the family of the late Boitumelo Mabeleng, popularly known as Myzer.

Mabeleng was an avid Bloemfontein Celtic football club supporter and a revered sports journalist. She passed away in October 2020 following a short illness. Premier Ntombela said, while Mabeleng

herself struggled to make ends meet, she was always struck by her dedication to helping others out. “On a rare occasion that I met her, Myzer would always make it a point of making me aware of challenges that other young people like her were going through. Never one to seek personal gratification, Myzer always placed the needs of other people first,” Premier Ntombela said.

The Premier further said that, through her tireless

support for Celtic, she enhanced the image of the province.

“Myzer dedicated her life, indirectly, to marketing our province. Through her work as a sports reporter and her dedication to both Bloemfontein Celtic and her beloved Mathaithai football club, the world knew about Bloemfontein and Free State province in its entirety,” said the Premier.

The Premier was accompanied by newly elected

Speaker of Mangaung, Mapaseka Nkoane-Mothi-bi, MEC for Public Works, Infrastructure and Human Settlements Tshidi Koloi and MEC for Health, Montseng Tsiu. Premier Ntombela thanked Mabeleng’s mother Sarah, her brother Masego and her two daughters. She also the supporters of Bloemfontein Celtic and Mathaithai FC, another club Mabeleng supported, for gracing the event.



BOOST FOR CREATIVE SECTOR

The Free State Executive Council, led by Premier Sefora Ntombela, visited Welkom in Matjhabeng local municipality and were taken to a sight where a film studio will be constructed.

The CEO of Open Sky Film Studios, Jaub De Meillon said the site where the studio will be built is about a thousand square meters. “There is a lot of talent in the province and hopefully, with the support of government, we can get the studio working very soon. All the young people across the province will have a shot at making good careers for themselves and I am looking forward to the project,” e Meillon said.

Premier Ntombela said the studios will give the youth an opportunity to showcase their skills in the cut throat television world.

“It is anticipated that television dramas /series and even movies will be shot at the studio once it is completed. We have a lot of untapped talent in the Free State and I am hopeful that once the construction of

the studio is complete, the youth of our province will unleash their talents,” Premier Ntombela said.

She also said that she was confident that the youth will come up with brilliant concepts and will make full use of the studio.

“The Free State province has energetic and innovative youth. The film studio will provide our youth with an opportunity to make a name for themselves. This is but one of the many ways we are tackling the scourge of unemployment in the province. There will be opportunities for our creative as make-up artists, camera operators, video editors, writers and many others. I am therefore very happy with what the future holds for us,” she said. Premier Ntombela made an appeal to production companies to make use of the studios as this will help elevate the profile of the province and in the process, create much needed work.

“I also want to encourage the youth to make full use of the facility because it is theirs,” she concluded.

NXANGISA PRAYS WITH HOUSE OF PRAISE



COGTA MEC Thembeni Nxangisa visited the House of Praise Ministry church under the stewardship of Apostle Dr. Prophet Hlobo in Botshabelo on 08 September 2021 to celebrate the role of the church, in building and strengthening the moral fibre of the society.

The Church has over a period of time played a positive role towards the attainment of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa. The founding fathers of the ruling party were galvanized by the religious consciousness to take a step and challenge what they recognized as an unjust social order that was based on racial segregation.

The South African Council of Churches (SACC), the Muslim Judicial Council and other faith based organizations came together to rally that apartheid was a crime against humanity. Students were organized under the umbrella of the Young Christian Students Movement to organize students against apartheid.

“As the developmental government, we recognize that the Church has a responsibility to teach and direct the community to take care of each other, and in the process to inculcate the culture of tolerance and enhance a caring society. There are great leaders of the church that played a leadership role in the struggle against apartheid. The role played by Dr Byers Naudè, Sister Bernard Ncube and the Progressive Churches have left an indelible mark in the history of our liberation” said MEC Nxangisa..

He also mentioned that in Botshabelo, a progressive forum of church leaders, under the banner of Ministry Fraternal, played a leading role in organizing the community against the apartheid regime.

“Even today the churches are continuing to play an important role as a moral compass to direct the society, in the midst of social challenges. In a situation where young people look for guidance, mentorship and counselling, the church is there to provide assistance,” he said.

Pastor Hlobo, who invited the MEC to the House of Praise Church, paid tribute to the MEC and expressed his appreciation that the MEC could find space in his busy schedule to respond to the invitation. This, Pastor Hlobo said, is an indication of a government that is close to its people and is responsive to the call to action.

MEC Nxangisa made a commitment that the Department will always be available to work close with the Church, in order to build a caring and safe society.



KILLING OF FAMILY A SHAME

On the 30th of August, Moloi street in Thabong, Welkom was rattled by gun fire.

In its wake were four lifeless bodies including that of a 10 year old and a pregnant woman. The assailants broke into the Mashie household and left Merriam Mashie (59), her son Morgan, Siziwe who was dating Moshe, Mme Merriam' son and was also pregnant and 10 year-old Relebohile, Mme Merriam's granddaughter dead. Premier Ntombela condemned the killings, saying the brought to the fore the violent nature of crime in the country. She said she had been left stunned at how all four were wiped out in a crime so brutal, it has left the neighbours shocked.

"Ours is such a violent society that hardened criminals are brazen enough to murder children and pregnant women. This crime has left all of us shaken and what is even worse, there were children who witnessed it. It is only by the grace of the most high that they escaped. The children escaped with the skin of their teeth. Although they made it out alive, the mental scars will take a very long time to heal," Premier



Ntombela said at the Mashie household.

She said that she has directed officials from the Department of Social Development to deploy social workers and other professionals to help the family, particularly the children who bore witness to the crime.

"The horror of witnessing the brutal killing of family members will weigh heavily on them. I have tasked officials to get them psycho-

logical help to help them deal with the trauma. I have also appealed to the police to work around the clock to bring the perpetrators to book. It is important that the police move with speed to arrest the thugs behind this heinous crime," she said. Premier Ntombela also warned that criminals will not be allowed to continue with their reign of terror and that once caught, heavy punishment will be imposed on them.

"We cannot allow criminals to terrorize our communities. I therefore appeal to anyone with information which can lead to the arrest and successful prosecution of those criminals to contact the police," she said.

PREMIER NTOMBELA WELCOMES LIFE SENTENCE FOR CHILD RAPIST



The Botshabelo Regional court sentenced a 40 year-old child rapist to life imprisonment on the 6th of September 2021.

Sexual predator Thabo William Mokoale raped the 4 year-old on 26 September 2020 and was finally sentenced earlier this month. On that fateful day, rapist Mokoale sent his victim, who stayed next door to him, to the shops to buy him a few items.

Upon return, the 40 year-old brute locked her in the house and mercilessly raped her. It was only the following day, after concerned family members and community members had been desperately searching for her, that Mokoale let the child go.

The traumatized child informed her parents

about the trauma that sick Mokoale subjected her to. He was arrested the following day on 27 September. The trial was concluded when Magistrate Matshediso Khuduga sentenced Mokoale to life imprisonment.

Welcoming the sentence, Premier Ntombela decried the abuse that children continue to be subjected to. She added Mokoale's actions has left his victim with long term mental scars which will require her to undergo intensive psychological therapy to finally lead a normal life.

"We welcome the sentence handed down by our competent court. This sentence has sent out a very clear message that sexual predators, particularly those who prey on children, will face the full might of the law.

As a result of this sickening act, the poor, who used to be outgoing, is now withdrawn and is now volatile and temperamental. All of this because a grown man, who ought to protect this child, could not control his sexual urges, and sought sexual pleasure from a four year old child. His selfish and sick deeds have now caused the child long term damage," Premier Ntombela said.

She also thanked the police and prosecution for thoroughly investigating and successfully prosecuting the case. The Premier further thanked community members for supporting the family of the child and wished the family and the child well in her road to recovery.

MURDER OF STUDENTS LEAVE PREMIER NTOMBELA SEETHING

The killing of three students in QwaQwa on 22 September left the province in the state of disbelief, with Premier Sefora Ntombela labelling the perpetrators heartless thugs.

According to the police, the students were ambushed by armed robbers who demanded money and their gadgets and money and went on to shoot them. Three of the students died and the fourth was still in hospital at the time of writing.

Premier Ntombela said the killers robbed the country of bright talent and the contribution that the students would have made after completion of their studies.

"This senseless criminal incident claimed the lives of three innocent victims. The thugs who committed this atrocious criminality, have robbed our nation of the important contribution that these students would have made in the advancement of our society," said an

angry Premier Ntombela.

She called on law enforcement agencies to quickly find the killers and ensure successful prosecution.

"We must leave no stone unturned in pursuit of these criminals and for the harshest punishment to be imposed on them after their prosecution. We call on our people to work closely with the police in providing any relevant information which can lead to the speedy arrest of these perpetrators. We must work hard to rid our communities of people who commit such heinous acts," she said.

Premier Ntombela further conveyed her condolences to the bereaved families.

"On behalf of the Free State Provincial Government, I would like to send my heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased and all their loved ones. Our thoughts are also with the family of the student who is still in hospital and I wish him a speedy recovery," Premier Ntombela said.

THERE'S MORE TO BE DISCOVERED IN THE FREE STATE



The long anticipated arrival of the media from across the country to the Free State was met with excitement when they finally assembled in Bloemfontein on 25 August to kick-off the two (2) day Tourism Month media tour, a build up to the official Tourism Month media launch.

Upon arrival in the City of Roses, members of the media were escorted to the Famous Brew and Still, a Bloemfontein restaurant that creates and provides its own locally brewed and hand-crafted beverages for a welcome breakfast hosted by MEC Makalo Mohale before departing to the five tourism routes,

namely; the Cheetah Route, Eagle Route, Lion Route, Flamingo Route and Springbok Route. MEC Mohale welcomed the media and wished them a safe and exciting tour whilst discovering tourism gems that the province has to offer. After arriving in their respective destinations, members of the media excitedly took on the adventure in their tourism routes guided by registered tour guides and route ambassadors. The Springbok Route entourage checked in at De Stijl Hotel and experienced the wonder that is Gariep dam, through a game drive, dam tour and wine tasting. The Lion Route participants visited the world renowned Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site which is known to be generous with majestic mountains, amazing views and calming air. The Cheetah Route participants explored De Oude Kraal, a working sheep farm outside Bloemfontein. They also visited the Franklin Nature Reserve in Naval Hill which is the only Nature Reserve in the world that is situated in the middle of a city. Excursions for the Flamingo Route included an underground mining tour at Sibanye Stillwater. Following an incredible experience of the tourism routes, members of the media headed to the hosting district, Thabo Mofutsanyane on the second day and congregated in QwaQwa for a full day of activities. Famous for its majestic mountains, rich Basotho culture and humility, in QwaQwa the media contingent was treated to an authentic Sesotho experience at Dinkoeng Tented Camp and Adventure and Bothobapelo Country Lodge. Here they took part in horse riding, experienced how Basotho traditional food is prepared, indulged in traditional cuisine,

traditional dancing and experienced the Basotho way of life.

To pull down the curtain on the tour, on day three (3) the media embarked on their final journey to Clarens for the official Tourism Month media launch.

Tourism Month was launched under the theme "Tourism for Inclusive Growth". In his key note address, MEC Mohale expressed his gratitude to the members of the media for their participation in the media tour. He also noted the importance of domestic travel and that focus will be placed on domestic travel through a distinctive focus on travel to villages, rural areas and small towns to attract travellers seeking adventure, leisure and family outings. The Department of Tourism's Director General, Mr Victor Tharage took the opportunity to announce that the Free State Province will be hosting this year's World Tourism Day celebrations.

The day's announcements also included the unveiling of the 2021 Sho't Left Travel Week. Travel week is a domestic campaign aimed at promoting cheaper and affordable travel, while providing product owners and tourism trade an opportunity to re-attract South Africans back into the culture of traveling locally.

DESTEA has planned a string of activations for the 2021 Tourism Month campaign to commemorate September as Tourism Month. The aim of the activities is to market Free State tourism attractions and persuade Free Staters to travel their own province and be tourism ambassadors.

TEEN PREGNANCY A SHAME

The sharp increase in teenage pregnancy numbers prompted the Free State Provincial Government, led by Premier Sefora Ntombela, intervened with the launch of the teenage pregnancy awareness programme.

This programme, held at Mampoi Secondary school in QwaQwa on 9th September, was a response to worrying revelations about girls, some as young as 10 years-old, falling pregnant. Premier Ntombela appealed to the learners, particularly the girls, to jealously guard their bodies and to reject the advances of predatory older men who often woo young girls with money and alcohol.

"The recent statistics paint a grim picture regarding the number of young girls who are pregnant. In QwaQwa particularly, the readings are a cause for concern. A look at the statistics from Elisabeth Ross hospital in QwaQwa paints a very worrying picture. The numbers indicate that in the 2020/21 financial year, 469 babies were delivered by girls aged between 14-19 years old. This is at only one hospital! Of concern, from April

to mid-June this year, the very same hospital has already reported 109 deliveries by girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years of age," Premier Ntombela said. The Premier said she was concerned that young girls were losing their childhood to pregnancy as this could have a negative impact on their future.

"We have heard of girls as young as 10 falling pregnant. A ten year old falling pregnant is difficult to comprehend, but these are the days of our lives. This is an outrage. Girl children are losing their entire childhood because at the age of 15, they are already mothers. My fear is that we may only be scratching the surface and the numbers are high," she said. Premier Ntombela said parents must shoulder responsibility for this state of affairs.

"The shocking numbers of young girls who are now pregnant or mothers is a reflection of a decaying society, and importantly, a reflection on us as parents. How did we arrive at this



very low point? How do we, as parents, explain this sad state of affairs which happened right before our very own eyes? The future of our children has been compromised because we have been found wanting. We failed the most basic test as parents, which was to protect our children where it mattered the most," she said.

The Premier condemned what she called "sexual predators" who prey on young girls. "Our societies are plagued by sexual predators who seek out, identify and pounce on children. What is even sad is that, after falling pregnant, those men disappear, leaving the girls to care and raise the babies on their own. A rather worrying trend of elderly men, enticing children with money seems to have taken root of our society. These perverts, flash money at children, buy them alcohol and later demand sex from them," Premier said.

MEC for Social Development Mamiki Qabathe and MEC for Health Montseng Tsiu joined the Premier and called on both young boys and girls to abstain from sex until the right time. In the event that they do, warned the MECs, they must use condoms. children

MENCARE 50:50 PROGRAMME IS LAUNCHED IN THE FREE STATE

The family is viewed as one of the most essential components of a community and forms the setting for demographic reproduction, primary socialisation and is the primary source for psycho-social support for each member of the family.

Stable and supportive families where fathers and mothers are equally involved with parenting their children and have adequate parenting skills are associated with several positive outcomes for individual members and the wider society. These include higher levels of self-esteem; lower levels of antisocial behaviour such as crime, violence, and substance abuse; higher levels of work productivity; lower levels of stress; and more self-efficacy to deal with socio-economic hardships.

In 2019 the Free State Department of Social Development partnered with SONKE GENDER JUSTICE to implement the Mencare 50:50 programme in the

Free State. when SONKE announced that they received funding from Department for International Development (DFID) & United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and were planning the role-out of the programme.

In response to the call to act on Gender Based Violence and Femicide in the province and the increased incidents during the past year, the Free State Department of Social Development held an awareness session in Mangaung with the hope that the awareness, training and roll out will benefit the Free State Province and that the programme will go from strength to strength in supporting partners in playing an equal role in raising their children as well as strengthening women economic empowerment and preventing Gender Based Violence. The MEC for Social Development Mamiki Qabathe pledged her support in promoting the parenting programme in order to curb accompanying social

ills.

During her keynote address, MEC Qabathe expressed her appreciation of the Mencare 50:50 Programme.

"A program such as this is very important because for the longest time, the focus has been on women. We have been talking to the victims but we are not addressing the perpetrators who are the men in our communities. We need to ask our men what went wrong, when and how they changed from being protectors to being abusers. We need to engage these men and find out how they can be helped so that this vicious cycle is halted", said MEC Qabathe.

Mr Patrick Godana from Sonke Gender Justice spoke about the importance of grooming boy children from a very young age. "If you miss the opportunity to mentor them while they are still young, there is very little you can do to correct their behaviour when they are older. We talk about teen-



age pregnancy as if it's a 'girls' problem, but who is impregnating these girls, who is infecting them with HIV? It's the same boys that we are overlooking when we have these serious conversations", said Godana.