

NEWS REPORT - 20 January 2003

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MINISTER OPENS R4 MILLION VISITOR CENTRE AT CAPE POINT

ONE of Cape Town's most popular tourist destinations is to get another world-class visitor facility thanks to a multi-million rand grant from the City of Cape Town and overseas donors. The Buffelsfontein Visitor Centre at Cape Point, officially known as the Cape of Good Hope section of the Cape Peninsula National Park, was opened recently (*18 January 2003*) by Mr. Johan Gelderblom, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Tourism and Gambling. The Centre is located in the historic Buffelsfontein homestead, which dates back to the early 1740's. In 1939 the Cape Divisional Council purchased the Buffelsfontein farm, to become the nodal area of what would become today's Cape of Good Hope section of the Cape Peninsula National Park. Since this time the farmhouse has served as accommodation for game wardens, as a tearoom and lastly until 1995 as a restaurant. However, with the opening of the Two Oceans restaurant at Cape Point in 1996, the building has stood derelict. "Thanks to a R2,5 million grant from the City of Cape Town, R750 000 from the French Global Environmental Facility and R280 000 from the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility, as well as additional funding from SA National Parks, the homestead has taken on a new lease of life as an environmental interpretation centre," says Howard Langley, outgoing park manager for the Cape Peninsula National Park.

According to Mr. Gelderblom, tourism has become one of the fastest growing revenue generators for the region. "During this past December and January alone, international tourists injected about R4-billion into the Western Cape economy, while domestic tourists spent in the region of R650-million.

"Attracting an average of 800 000 visits per annum, Cape Point forms one of the proverbial jewels in the crown. As such we need to cherish this priceless asset, constantly adding value to ensure that its allure never wanes. The opening of the Buffelsfontein Visitor Centre will add another dimension to the multi-facetted Cape Point experience," says Gelderblom.

The Centre will house a full complement of artefact displays, state-of-the-art audio visual equipment and information material covering all aspects of the area's natural and cultural wealth.

Soon, the Centre will become the hub for a wide range of activities. It will serve as a classroom for students who will be able to stay over at the environmental overnight facility being planned at Bordjiesrif. It is also here that the Cape Peninsula National Park will sell GO GREEN cards, where a variety of hikes will begin, where volunteers will congregate, where activities will be publicised and even perhaps where mountain bikes or kayaks can be hired.

The Centre will be manned by CPNP staff and volunteers seven days a week from 08h00 to 17h00.

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