

# Billion Group makes its debut in hotel development with Mayfair Hotel in Mthatha

With the opening of four-star, R130-million Mayfair Hotel in Mthatha, Billion Group, known for its development of major malls, celebrated its inroads into hotel development. The hotel is situated adjacent to the groups BT Ngebs City regional mall.



Sisa Ngebulana, founder, Billion Group

Billion Group founder Sisa Ngebulana, who grew up in Corana just outside Mthatha, was on hand for the gala opening and ribbon-cutting. Business leaders and dignitaries attending the opening – including the Eastern Cape Premier Phumulo Masualle and SA Tourism CEO Sisa Ntshona – saw the 96-room hotel at full capacity for the event.

Addressing a packed auditorium, Ngebulana said his vision for the hotel had been simple. “Before Mayfair Hotel, the hotels here were the same ones doing business when I left Mthatha some 30 years ago,” he said. “My aim with Mayfair Hotel was to create affordable luxury – a four-star grading with the look and feel of a five-star establishment.”

The three-storey hotel, which opens to the public on Friday, 2 June 2017, boasts a luxurious three-room penthouse suite, a two-room presidential suite, as well as executive suites, normal suites, and several conferencing halls.



## Breaking ground

“When we opened BT Ngebs City two years ago, we brought stores to the region which were only found in larger cities. Now by opening Mayfair Hotel, we bring accommodation which previously was only found in Johannesburg or Cape Town. “Later this year we will bring world-class entertainment to the region when we break ground on a casino and entertainment complex.”

The hotel opening launches Billion Group’s phased precinct development around the major South African malls it has developed in recent years. This includes developing the precincts around Baywest Mall in Port Elizabeth, Forest Hill City in Centurion, and Hemingways Mall in East London.

Construction on the next phase of the BT Ngebs City development – a casino complex with cinemas and high-end restaurants – is scheduled to start in the latter part of this year.

## A coup for tourism in the region

Ntshona described the hotel as a coup for tourism in the region. “Tourism is the new gold, and its impact goes far beyond the establishments themselves (with downstream economic benefits). It is not just about leisure, but increasingly about business and conferences. Business tourism is becoming increasingly relevant,” said the country’s tourism chief.

“Today we see Billion Group making worthwhile inroads into the tourism sector.”



About 750 direct and indirect jobs were created during the hotel's two-year construction phase, with a further 70 permanent positions during its operational phase. This excludes downstream employment, such as laundry and other outsourced

services.

“Other tourism establishments in Mthatha are consistently booked up, which shows the demand in the market for accommodation of this calibre,” said Billion Group Commercial Director Vuyokazi Njongwe. “The area is crying out for development and we are heeding that call.”

## **Aimed at business**

Aside from providing much-needed accommodation for business travellers, Njongwe said the hotel offered up to 120-seater conferencing facilities.

“The hotel has an incredible lounge and restaurant for business networking, as well as a boardroom and private dining room for more confidential discussions. We believe it will become a great place to do business.”



The hotel is situated alongside the 60,000m<sup>2</sup> BT Ngebs City mall, which was the catalyst for the group’s live-work-play precinct on the edge of Mthatha’s central business district. The mall was responsible for bringing high-end shopping and international retail brands to the region in mid-2015.

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