

Johannesburg Tourism Company bids farewell to CEO

The Johannesburg Tourism Company will bid farewell to current CEO Deon Viljoen this month when he concludes his current contract and moves back to Southern Sun Hotels. In March 2003, Viljoen was seconded from Southern Sun Hotels and appointed by the City of Johannesburg as CEO of the new Johannesburg Tourism Company. His appointment was based on a two-year contract with the aim to create and establish the Johannesburg Tourism Company (JTC).

The JTC was established as a special purpose vehicle with a specific focus to attract more business related tourism to the City as this sector is not only the most lucrative and sustainable, but given Johannesburg's position as the economic and business hub of the country, also has the most suitable mix from a strategic point of view.

"As a host of industry members will surely concur, Deon has done an exceptional job of strongly positioning the JTC as a public-private sector partnership - an invaluable tool in promoting tourism to Johannesburg. In the space of less than two years, the Company has exceeded expectations and considerably raised its local and international profile," says Connie Molusi, Chairman of the JTC.

Since inception the JTC, headed up by Viljoen and his strong management team, has obtained support and buy-in from industry players; established the Johannesburg Convention Bureau which has secured in excess of 20 international event conferences and exhibitions and supported the establishment of 10 new events and tourism initiatives; and has secured strategic partnerships with several associations, exhibitions and companies.

The JTC has also been instrumental in developing the concept of Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) with eight tourism nodes in Johannesburg with significant tourism growth potential identified.

Viljoen and his team have also been responsible for the production of a variety of marketing collateral including tourism brochures and guides as well as an interactive website and streaming video, which has put them in touch with the latest frontiers of internet broadband technology.

The JTC has also succeeded in training five tourism interns, which have subsequently been appointed as permanent staff members of the Company. "The staff at the JTC, which have flourished under the leadership of Deon and his management team, will offer a significant support structure for the Company's new CEO," says Molusi.

Until such time as a new appointment has been made, which is expected to take place in the near future, Eddy Khosa, Deputy CEO of the JTC will be stepping in as acting CEO.

"I was privileged to have been given this wonderful and exciting opportunity of establishing the Johannesburg Tourism Company. The JTC team and board who enthuse passion for their City have been a phenomenal support to me over the past two years. The vision of the City of Johannesburg has to be commended. I have no doubt that the Johannesburg Tourism Company will grow from strength to strength and continue to add value to the tourism industry in our vibrant city," concludes Viljoen.

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