MEC for Roads and Transport, Hon. Gloria Barry, officially unveils the Eastern Cape 10-Year Rail Plan and, in partnership with the Apple Express Section 21 Company, launches the Apple Express Train Tourism Service between Port Elizabeth and the Langkloof.

PROGRAMME

08h00 : Meet at Humerail Diesel Depot
08h30 : Train departs
09h15 : Stop at Chelsea
10h15 : Stop at Van Stadens Station
11h30 : Arrive Loerie Station

Entertainment (starts at 10h00)

Programme Director : Mr NAS Poya (Deputy Director General ECDORT)

11h45 : Opening Prayer by Bishop Ngqono
11h50 : Welcome by Kouga Mayor, Cllr Robbie Dennis
11h55 : Introduction of guests by Mr G Mente (DORT District Manager)
12h00 : Beneficiaries of project comment:
- History of the PE-Avontuur Railway Line by Speaker of the Cacadu District Municipality, Mr Deon de Vos
- The PE Apple Express Section 21 Company by Mr Wesley Kruger (Chairman)
12h20 : Cultural event by Misgund Dance Group
12h25 : Keynote Address by MEC Gloria Barry
12h55 : Cultural event – Christine Swartbooi
13h05 : Handing over of gifts – Ms Maryna Bamard (Cape Route 62 Tourism Association)
13h10 : Closure and Vote of Thanks – Mr NAS Poya (Deputy Director General ECDORT)
13h15 : Lunch
14h30 : Train departs for Port Elizabeth
17h00 : Arrive at Humewood Diesel Depot

Taking the Apple Express to 2010 and beyond!

In today’s technology-driven world the Port Elizabeth-Avontuur Narrow Gauge Line can still be used to benefit both urban and rural communities along its route. The development of a viable rail tourism industry in the Langkloof and Gamtoos Valley will be beneficial to local communities for the following reasons:
Rail tours will improve access to existing and potential tourist attractions and increase tourist volumes, which will impact positively on revenue and employment created from tourist-related activities.

Seasonal workers on commercial fruit farms could be engaged in tourism businesses outside of the harvest period as part of an intended programme to improve their standard of living.

Historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs) can be engaged in tourism enterprises and skills transfer, which will create a sense of ownership amongst local people.

Rail-based tourism will provide more business opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMMEs), such as taxi operators, accommodation establishments, tour operators, cultural tourism, craft markets, and food suppliers.

The introduction of the tourism service, on this iconic rail heritage, forms part of the Eastern Cape 10-Year Rail Plan, which seeks to maximize the potential of certain strategic railway lines throughout the Province, including lines that have a potential to boost tourism – the cornerstone of the Province Growth and Development Plan.