Hands Design Collective Cooperative

As part of the initiative to facilitate economic development within the hand craft industry in the Greater Knysna the Economic Development Department has facilitated the establishment of the Hands Design Collective Co-operative.

Ilse van Schalkwyk, Manager: Economic Development, said the department partnered with leading local crafters who are actively involved in this sector as craft entrepreneurs. “We want to provide support for the needs of creative businesses in the local economy and grow the region’s craft and design sector. The Hands Co-op has been assisted by our local SEDA branch as well as the Economic Development department with the vision that they will provide a single resource centre for crafters to gain access to support services.”

The services will include:

- **Product support** - to provide an environment in which designers and craft producers can further develop their existing products or prototype new products;
- **Business support** - to assist designers and craft producers to develop skills in creativity, business and production management, and marketing;
- **Market support** - to assist designers and craft producers to define and reach their targeted markets.

She said that there are many talented individuals in the Knysna area who see their businesses flourish, they require sales. “Unfortunately as any business venture you need to be a good marketer and understand branding and product trends to ensure the success of your business. The vision for Hands is to take the business support required and centre this in the form of a co-op where crafters can access this support service, get access to training, get their products market ready and gain access to different marketing opportunities. This will convert to more orders for their products. We work with craft producers, designers and a wide range of other creative entrepreneurs. Although Hands is at the incubation stage, the potential is infinite and we encourage crafters to make use of Hands and the services offered.”

The Hands Co-op can be contacted at handsdesigncollective@gmail.com or the shop can be visited in Woodmill Lane. Interested parties can also visit the Hands Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/handsdesigncollective) for more information on news, events and projects.

To register on the craft database, contact Ilse van Schalkwyk (ilveschalkwyk@knysna.gov.za). Registration will enable you to get involved in the future training and support programmes for all crafters from export clubs to product development.

Important Notice: New telephone numbers for departments

The Western Cape Premier’s Entrepreneurship Recognition Awards

The Western Cape Premier’s Entrepreneurship Recognition Awards 2014 is the second year of this prestigious programme to recognize the importance, achievements and potential of some of the Province’s most exciting entrepreneurs. By acknowledging, supporting and showcasing successful entrepreneurs, this Awards programme helps to build a culture of entrepreneurship, encourage new start-ups as well as business excellence and achievement.

Upcoming Events

- **36th Convention of the Fynbos Forum**: 4 - 7 August
- **National Women’s Day**: 9 August