



MEDIA RELEASE

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EMBARGO: Immediate

ISDF Youth Competition semi-finalists announced

The semi-finalists in the Integrated Strategic Development Framework (ISDF) Youth Competition were announced at an event held in Knysna on Friday 6 March.

Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans offered her congratulations on their achievements thus far. "Each of these semi-finalists have come up with unique, original ideas and have put in hours of dedication and hard work to develop their entries to this level. Aside from working very hard, they also faced various challenges while preparing their entries for submission. And these challenges are precisely some of the issues the ISDF will address upon completion."

Municipal Manager Grant Easton agreed. "These participants would have required easy, fast and reliable access to the Internet to conduct their research. If they could not access the Internet from home, they would have needed access to an integrated, reliable, public transport system operating on sturdy infrastructure to transport them to a library where they could conduct research using conventional methods, or by using the library's computers. These are just small examples of issues that the contestants may have faced, but when you view them in the context of this competition, these little things would have had a big impact on the quality of their final submissions."

"But these are issues that the ISDF will address," Easton continued. "It will speak to the needs and aspirations of our residents and our visitors, and it is being compiled based on those needs and aspirations as identified by the residents of Knysna. As such, this ISDF is in fact owned by the citizens of the greater Knysna municipal area."

The ISDF Youth Competition is aimed at drawing participation from Knysna's youth in the development of the town's ISDF plan. 31 registrations had been received by the closing date of 13 February this year.

Pat Mulder from the Knysna Creative Heads Consortium and convenor of the competition explained that the competition aims to encourage and support innovative ideas, proposals and, eventually, contributions to the ISDF by Knysna's youth. "Our young people are filled with great ideas on how to improve the lives of their communities, fuelled by unique and original thinking."

"The semi-finalists are a good representation of the youth of Knysna as both young ladies and young men are equally well represented," said Mulder. "This group of young people share an admirable characteristic in that they care for others and wish to improve the quality of life for all residents of Knysna. And they have delivered project proposals not to enrich themselves, but to create opportunities for other people."

The participants also received a letter from Edwin Price, Howard G. Buffet Chair on Conflict and Development at Texas A&M University. Price's letter called the semi-finalists "...a very special group among the youth of Knysna", and went on to commend the value of their work. "Your work and that of your other young colleagues, is the foremost and strongest pillar on which the economic progress of South Africa rests. Your leadership, intelligence, creativity and entrepreneurship are more important than highways, bridges, school buildings and hospitals. The youth of today and tomorrow can build those highways and hospitals, but

highways and hospitals cannot build boldness, creativity, persistence, scientific ingenuity and dedication to fellow man and woman.”

Wolmarans wished the semi-finalist well in the next stage of the competition. “The ISDF is all about achieving something great for Knysna, based on the needs and aspirations of its residents. The semi-finalists’ projects all address ways in which at least some of those needs and aspirations may be met. And in doing so, we will go a long way towards creating a town where people and nature prosper.”

Groups consisting of three to five young people, all between the ages of 16 and 35 and living within the greater Knysna municipal area, were invited to prepare and present a concept proposal as entry to the competition. The competition and adjudication processes will follow very strict rules and procedures, with the 10 groups with the best proposals each awarded R5 000.00 in the form of a planning grant to enable them to prepare a business model design for their proposal. These models must adhere to strict guidelines and be submitted by mid-April 2015. An awards ceremony is planned for 22 April next year, where the top three business models will each be awarded R25 000.00 in prize money. Viable business models will also be included in the list of eligible projects as part of the ISDF.

The ISDF Youth Shape Your Future competition is sponsored by the Texas A&M University (TAMU), organised by the Knysna Creative Heads Consortium, and held in conjunction with the formulation of Knysna’s ISDF. For more information on the ISDF, this competition or its rules, please visit www.isdf.co.za or contact Knysna Creative Heads Consortium at 044 382 6732, or email carla@knysnacreativeheads.co.za. For more information on the ISDF, please contact Knysna Municipality Manager: Economic Development Ilse van Schalkwyk at ivanschalkwyk@knysna.gov.za, or email isdf@knysna.gov.za.

Caption:

Event coordinator Pat Mulder addressing the finalists prior to the official ceremony. (picture by Roger Boughton)

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Knysna Municipality Communications Department
P O Box 21. Knysna. 6570. Western Cape. South Africa
Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300 (switchboard) or 302 6471 (direct)
Fax +27 (0)86 215 4818 e-mail communications@knysna.gov.za