



MEDIA RELEASE

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EMBARGO: Immediate

Investment in Knysna top priority

The Knysna Municipality launched an initiative called *Invest Knysna* on Wednesday the 6th of December at the Conrad Pezula Hotel.

Invest Knysna is facilitated by the Economic Development Department at the Municipality. Executive Mayor Eleanore Bouw-Spies said the aim of the project is to revitalise a stressed local business sector. "On a national level there are a variety of factors that have a negative influence on economic growth, e.g. the political instability, junk status, higher petrol prices and slow retail growth. In Knysna we see businesses close monthly. The drought and fire have affected many businesses, and Knysna is also an expensive town to live and work in. Currently tourism is the main driving factor of the local economy and it is affected by seasonality."

She said the aim of *Invest Knysna* is to develop an investment strategy that will prioritise investment needs & opportunities, including possible public private partnerships. "In January 2018 we will start to interact with local businesses to get their input and discuss 'investment readiness'. This will form part of an investment climate assessment to get a clearer picture of the current situation and incorporating the results, a standard operating procedure will be drawn up to improve how we interact with potential investors going forward. "

"*Invest Knysna* will also make sure the Municipality is well prepared for the Garden Route Investment Conference taking place in March in George. We will have a Knysna Pavilion at this conference, hosted by Eden District Municipality and SCEP (Southern Cape Economic Partnership), to showcase selected local businesses and their investment needs. This conference will also attract many national and international investors who are interested in forming partnerships with our District."

She concluded by saying that to ensure Knysna is a thriving, flourishing town throughout the year where people of all walks of life can prosper, it is essential to create a new investment brand and 'vehicle' to take us into the future. "The most reliable way to predict Knysna's future is to create it."

For more information about *Invest Knysna* and how you can get involved, please contact Ilse van Schalkwyk on (044) 302 6358 or email business@knysna.gov.za.

For more information on the Garden Route Investment Conference, please contact Melanie Wilson at Eden District Municipality on (044) 803 1445 or email Melanie@edendm.gov.za

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Knysna Municipality Communications Department

P O Box 21; Knysna; 6570. Western Cape. South Africa

Tel [+27 \(0\)44 302 6300](tel:+270443026300) (switchboard) or 302 6471 (direct)

Fax [+27 \(0\)86 215 4818](tel:+270862154818) e-mail communications@knysna.gov.za