



18 July 2023

2023 BASOTHO NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

In 2024 the Basotho nation will celebrate 200 years since its formation. As preparations are underway for this bicentennial occasion the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation has over the years continued to celebrate and preserve the Basotho history and culture through:

- **Sesotho Literature Museum** which promotes Sesotho literature.
- **Dr Maphalla Annual Memorial Lecture** in honour of one of the stalwarts in Sesotho literature, Dr K.P.D Maphalla.
- Implementation of the “**Use of Free State Official Languages Act, 2014**” which recognises Sesotho as the most spoken language in the Free State.
- Establishment of the **Language Services Unit** whose mandate is interpreting and translation.

The Basotho Cultural Village, located in picturesque and mountainous surroundings, is the centrepiece in all the Department’s efforts to preserve the heritage and cultural history of the Basotho nation. Through this institution, which is a living museum, the annual Basotho New Year celebration has been observed over the years. On the eve of the celebration of the bicentenary of the formation of the Basotho nation the annual Basotho New Year celebration will be celebrated as follows:

Date: 05 August 2023

Time: 10:00

Venue: Basotho Cultural Village, Qwa Qwa.

Basotho New Year is celebrated annually after the last days of winter (Mariha) to give way to new life after the dry season. Basotho New Year starts in August (Phato), which is known for its blowing winds and it being the month when fields are cultivated and the first crop from the cultivation is offered as a sacrifice to Tlatlamatjholo (God).

As in previous years the celebration will showcase the following activities: horse riding, grand parade, demonstration of cultivation, music and dance. Traditional music and dance that will be showcased on the day include, amongst others, Mohobelo, Accordion music, Serobolelo, Sesotho hip hop as

well as Zulu and Tswana traditional dances. A variety of Basotho traditional food will also be on display. The proceedings will be opened with a Basotho prayer.

Expected to attend the celebration are dignitaries and communities from across the Free State, other parts of the country as well as from the neighboring country of Lesotho. The cultural and historical umbilical cord that connects Basotho people in the Free State and Lesotho is also strengthened through this celebration.

End.

Issued by the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (DSACR)

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