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Transport

Department:
Transport
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA RELEASE

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MAFIKENG AIRPORT TO HOST INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY

Focus for 2006 is on Aviation Safety and Security

Celebrations for the International Civil Aviation Day will take place at Mafikeng Airport on Thursday, 7 December 2006 at Mafikeng Airport, North West Province. International Civil Aviation Day (ICAD) is an event initiated by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), which is celebrated all over the world to promote civil aviation among the general public. In terms of a resolution passed by ICAO, the 7th of December each year has been declared International Civil Aviation Day. The purpose of this annual celebration is to establish and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation in the social and economic development of States. For the past few years South Africa has been an active participant in this worthy event, and will continue to do so in the years to come.

It is part of a government strategy to rotate the venue so that all provinces are afforded an opportunity to host the event, and the North West Provincial Government volunteered to host the 2006 event.

Not only will this year's event put North West Province on the map but it will also assist in promoting and marketing Mafikeng Airport, which is currently under-utilized, despite having state of the art facilities and the 6th longest runway in the world.

However, Mr Rickie Rennie, the Manager of Mafikeng Airport, says the provincial government's plan for the airport is to optimise its usage, and it is events like these that will assist in putting the airport on the map. The Mafikeng Airport hosted a highly successful air show in October this year, which was voted the 3rd best air show in Southern Africa by Air Show South Africa (ASSA). "This is an indication that our airport is one of the best, but we need to get more people to use it", says Mr Rennie.

The event is being organised by the South African Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), in conjunction with the Department of Transport, the North West Provincial Government, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS), the South African Airways (SAA), South African Air Force (SAAF) as well as the Aero Club of South Africa.

Both the Minister of Transport Mr Jeff Hadebe and the North West Premier Ms Edna Molewa will attend the event.

The theme for ICAD 2006 is: **“Safety and Security – first and always the top priority.”**
This is the theme that the Council of ICAO has approved as the theme for this year’s worldwide celebrations of ICAD on 7 December 2006 and throughout the year 2007.

The theme comes at the right time when the continent’s state of aviation safety and security is being questioned. It therefore provides an excellent opportunity for all the relevant stakeholders involved in civil aviation in SA to inform the flying public about what they are doing to raise and improve the levels of safety and security.

The CAA, ACSA and ATNS all have plans in place to enhance the levels of aviation safety and security in South Africa. **(See attached documents for detailed information on these plans)**. Although there are a number of agencies and organizations looking at improving aviation safety in this country, the overall responsibility for aviation safety and security oversight in South Africa lies with the South African Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Mr Zakes Myeza, the Chief Executive Officer of the CAA, says “aviation safety and security remains an important priority for all of us. With 2010 also approaching very fast, we need to assure South Africans, and the rest of the world, that South Africa will be able to deliver a safe aviation environment during that crucial FIFA Soccer World Cup event. We have to assure the world that we are ready to handle the anticipated increase in aviation activity effectively and efficiently, without compromising safety and security”.

Mr Myeza says the CAA is working very closely with the aviation industry to enhance safety in the country, as well as to encourage voluntary compliance.

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