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Municipality shines at National Arbor City awards

KOUGA Municipality recently obtained third spot in the highly coveted National Arbor City Awards, for 2023.

This prestigious accolade recognises municipalities that have demonstrated exceptional commitment and dedication to the Ten Million Trees Programme, and have successfully embraced greening initiatives within their communities.

The municipality has been awarded a prize of R150 000.

“This achievement could not have been possible without the invaluable support and partnership of the Dorp van Drome, Patensie Pronk and other voluntary individuals and organisations,” said Kouga deputy executive mayor, Timothy Jantjes. “It is worth noting that the Dorp van Drome organisation previously played a significant role in the municipality’s success by assisting Jeffreys Bay in winning the “Dorp van die Jaar” title on the Kwêla platform in 2018.”

The NACA ceremony, organised by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, was held on September 1, in Polokwane, Limpopo, and marked the launch of National Arbor Month.

Marco Engelbrecht and Nomvelo Siwela of Kouga Municipality, alongside representatives from Dorp van Drome, were honoured to receive certificates acknowledging their contributions to this vital cause.

“It has been an absolute pleasure working with the municipality, who wholeheartedly support our projects to beautify and enhance the town of Jeffreys Bay,” said Deon Goosen, an elder of Dorp van Drome. “The municipality has dedicated four of their employees to assist with our special projects, with the mutual goal of maintaining gardens, trees, and public parks.”

According to Jantjes, this achievement is on a par with the commitment to the municipality’s Keep Kouga

Clean and Green campaign, which was launched in 2019.

“This campaign aims at developing a comprehensive greening plan that not only showcases current and future greening locations within the municipality, but also raises awareness about the numerous benefits of greening programmes,” he said.

“The greening initiatives also serve as a platform to highlight the indigenous tree species native to the region, fostering a deeper connection with our environment. The greening plan, which will be implemented over the next five years, has already seen the successful planting of more than 3 000 trees within the municipality.”

According to Jantjes, collaborative partnerships with local non-profit organisations, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and Community Works Programme (CWP) are fundamental to the success of many projects within the municipality’s Community Services Department. These partnerships not only contribute to Local Economic Development in the region, but also enhance the skill sets of programme beneficiaries.

“We are immensely proud of this accomplishment. The municipality remains committed to the sustainable development and beautification of our region through greening initiatives,” said Jantjes. “This award is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team and our contributing partners.”

The municipality extends its heartfelt gratitude to Patensie Pronk, JBay Surfers, Kromme Enviro Trust, Dorp van Drome, Woodlands Dairy, Gamtoos Irrigation Board and many others for their unwavering support and commitment to enhancing the environment. The prize money will be re-invested in further greening initiatives and community beautification projects.

-ISSUED BY KOUGA MUNICIPALITY