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Athlone to share in World Cup Trophy fever

26 April 2010 -- The visit of the World Cup Trophy to Athlone on 8 May will generate enthusiasm and passion for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ which is now less than a month away.

The solid-gold trophy will be on display at the Alexander Sinton Complex where members of the public will be able to see it up close, have their pictures taken and participate in wide range of activities organised by Coca-Cola, the organisers of the FIFA World Cup™ Trophy Tour.

“The 2010 FIFA World Cup™ is a once-in-a-lifetime event for all South Africans, says Onwell Msomi, General Manager 2010 FIFA World Cup™ of Coca-Cola South Africa. “Only a limited number of people will be able to watch the games live in the stadiums. The Trophy, however, will be seen by a much larger part of the population.

The Cape has produced some top soccer talent in the past including Bafana Bafana and West Ham striker, Benni McCarthy. There is no doubt that the arrival of the FIFA World Cup™ Trophy will inspire more youngsters to take the game seriously and to become part of South Africa’s soccer future..

Among the top South African players who hail from the region are former Bafana legends, Andre Arendse, Quinton Fortune and Shaun Bartlett as well as Nasief Morris who will, in all likelihood, be the mainstay of the South African defence in the coming FIFA World Cup™.

The Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Clr Dan Plato, says: “The Trophy Tour will harness the spirit and energy we as a country need to ensure the success of this once-in-a-lifetime event.

“The City of Cape Town is ready and waiting for the 2010 FIFA World Cup,” says Mayor Plato.

The event at the Alexander Sinton Complex will start at 10h00 on 8 May and continue till 18h00 in the evening.

The World Cup Trophy arrives in Athlone on the final leg of its global tour during which it travelled across the world in 225 days, and was seen and admired by millions of people in 86 countries.

Now, the solid-gold Trophy is in the Cape to be seen and admired by local communities before it is handed over to the captain of the winning team of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup™ on 11 July.

“We have kept the best for last,” says Onwell Msomi. “Together with the Trophy Coca-Cola will be providing a wide range of fun-filled activities that will appeal to young and old.

“This is an opportunity to celebrate the first World Cup tournament on African soil and prepare the mood of the people of the Cape just days before the kick-off on 11 June.”

This is the first time ever that the Trophy has made an extended trip across the length and breadth of the host country. It is visiting 33 cities, towns and villages in a tour a month. Through this tour Coca-Cola is ensuring that the largest possible number of South Africans can share in World Cup fever.

The Road to Athlone started at FIFA headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland on 21 September 2009 when the President of FIFA, Sepp Blatter and Coca-Cola Chairman and CEO, Muhtar Kent, took the first steps with the Trophy on its 134 017 kilometre journey.

Its first stop was in Cairo, Egypt, before criss-crossing Africa, touching down in more than 50 capitals on the continent. It was in Cape Town, briefly, for the World Cup Draw in December 2009 before continuing on its global journey.

On a tight schedule and with even tighter security the valuable trophy is travelling South Africa in a specially branded helicopter, followed on the road by a large support team who will run and stage the events.

In terms of FIFA rules, only Heads of State and the victorious captains and coaches may touch this valuable trophy which has been the symbol of sporting excellence since it made its first appearance at the 1974 World Cup finals.

But in Athlone local supporters will have an opportunity to get close to the trophy. For some lucky winners of the Coca-Cola Pashasha competition there will be a bonus chance to have their pictures taken with this iconic symbol of 2010.

“The Coca-Cola Trophy Tour will not come to Athlone in our lifetime again. This is an opportunity to join all South Africans and claim your own special memory of the 2010 FIFA World Cup,” says Msomi.

For more information on the South African leg of the FIFA World Cup™ Trophy Tour please visit www.cocacola.co.za/2010

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