



MEDIA RELEASE

BIGGEST OUTENIQUA WHEELCHAIR CHALLENGE YET WITH BOOSTED ACSA SPONSORSHIP

GEORGE, 12 FEBRUARY 2018 – Airports Company South Africa is sponsoring the 2018 Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge for disabled athletes with its biggest donation yet.

The annual race, exclusively for disabled athletes, attracts top international wheelchair racers as well as hundreds of local participants to compete on the streets of George. The 2018 Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge will for the first time take place on a Sunday, 18 February 2018.

Airports Company South Africa has increased its sponsorship to R900 000 for the 2018 event, up from R700 000 in 2017. The company has supported the Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge since 2011 and it is the most important community engagement for George Airport and its staff.

George Municipality has sponsored R250 000 towards the race, whilst Western Cape MEC for Cultural Affairs and Sport also donated R50 000. Toyota Halfway House in George is providing the venue free of charge as well as 2000 bottles of water as part of their sponsorship.

Senzeni Ndebele, Airports Company South Africa's Corporate Affairs Senior Manager for Regional Airports said: "This sponsorship represents our continuing commitment to disabled athletes and the cause of mobility.

"Our sponsorship of the Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge has helped to raise the profile of this race to the extent that it attracts participants not only from around South Africa but also from many other countries. We believe that providing opportunities and access to people with disabilities helps to create inclusive environments in the regions of our airport communities."

The event, which started in 2002 with only 27 athletes, has grown exponentially and more than 1 000 athletes now take part in the four race categories:

- 42.2 km full marathon;
- 21.1 km half-marathon for athletes using racing wheelchairs or hand cycles;
- 10 km distance, with 40 categories which allowed basketball chairs, ordinary day chairs, hand cycles and racing chairs and;

- 5km fun event.

The Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge is driven by passionate volunteers in the town of George which actively embraces disabled athletes. The awareness programme before the race includes learners from local schools with the aim of teaching children about the challenges of disabled people. The Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge also provides an opportunity for the tourism and hospitality sector to ensure establishments are accessible to disabled people.

“Our sponsorship means that disabled athletes have a professional and respected platform to participate in to achieve their sporting goals in spite of the physical challenges they face. Events such as the Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge also create an environment in which all members of our airport communities, irrespective of where they come from, can overcome and thrive,” said Ndebele.

Wheelchair athletes who would like to take part in the 2018 event can visit www.georgeocc.co.za or contact Alewijn Dippenaar on 082 457 4575 or email him at dyndev@mweb.co.za. Closing date for entries is 9 February 2018. The event starts at 08h00 on 18 February 2018 at the Halfway Toyota Open Space in Knysna Road, George.

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