

## Checkers brings extra joy to Stanford community

**20 November 2023** – A captivating scene has been unveiled in the Western Cape village of Stanford, where Checkers has gifted the town a spectacular festive light installation, to promote tourism and bring joy to the community which is still recovering after being hit hard by the recent floods.

The light installation, which is almost entirely solar powered, stretches the length of the main street and features striking illuminations adorning trees and store fronts, small wire farm animals and windmills, giant star lights and a Christmas Tree created with painted hats. Scattered throughout are life-sized wire and papier-mâché sculptures of African animals, such as Springbok, Giraffe and Kudu, created by internationally sought-after artist Michael Methven.

“Stanford has come alive with these beautiful festive lights. After some really tough years for this area, which has faced floods, road closures and fires, these lights have brought new energy,” said Overstrand Executive Mayor Dr Annelie Rabie. “I am calling on the community to take advantage of this opportunity. Grab the chance that the new interest brings, do not waste it. Let it be a spark that ignites new business in Stanford.”

Checkers has also collaborated with Overberg artists to create beautiful picture windows showcasing their work within the light installation. An enormous light feature of a gift wrapped in a bow creates a streetside photobooth to delight visitors to the village.

Working with Stanford landowners, the heritage association, businesses along the main street and the local municipality, Checkers has used light and art to enhance and accentuate the beautiful character and architecture of the town, employing many local people to assist with the set up and maintenance of the installation. Almost 7km of LED lights and 70 000 bulbs have been used along the main street to create this visual spectacle.

Besides creating an experience to lift spirits and bring renewed hope, Checkers aims for the festive attraction to enhance tourism efforts by drawing additional visitors to the guest houses, restaurants and cafes around the village, as well as to shop in the art, curio, bric-a-brac, antique, and other retail outlets. The town also offers a Friday evening and Saturday morning farm market with local producers selling their goods which offers another way to support local and bring joy to the region.

“It is time for our dorp to shine,” said Stanford resident and community elder Henry Gibson. “We have never had something like this in our town. Something that brings people together. And the timing, after the flood is right. We needed some joy, light and fun.”

The lights will sparkle until the first week of January 2024, offering ample opportunity to bring family and friends to delight in the festive cheer.

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