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SEARCH

**NEWS ARCHIVE**

**Another Gadget for Self-Drive Tourists**

2007-08-03

By Wezi Tjaronda

WINDHOEK

Namibia has joined the few countries in the world that offer their self-drive tourists important information in the comfort of their rented cars.

First developed in neighbouring South Africa, Namibia became the second to have a radio station designed to give tourists information related to the geographical location the vehicle is in, but the first to cover the whole country.

Information from elsewhere indicates that Namibia is one of the most popular self-drive 4x4 destinations in the world.

Tourism Radio Namibia (TRN) is a new location-based information service that allows self-drive tourists to gain maximum pleasure out of their travel through Namibia. It comes in the form of a small device, which is easily installed into a vehicle's power source and uses Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to broadcast interesting information relevant to the area, which the self-drive tourist is travelling through.

"The service is offered throughout, from the Orange River to Katima Mulilo, and from Walvis Bay to Buitepos, southern Zambia and northern Botswana," said Tourism Radio Namibia Marketing and Sales Officer, Frans Burden, yesterday.

The device was first developed and launched in Cape town, South Africa and came to Namibia and Spain where research and information to be put into the device are ongoing.

In Namibia, Burden said, the process of loading all information would be complete this month.

The idea behind the radio, which is only broadcast inside the vehicle, is to inform self-drive tourists about Namibia and the sites they can look forward to seeing and road safety tips. The station also broadcasts fun and lighthearted shows that keep tourists informed and entertained.

The GPS intelli-point system also draws the tourist's attention to various points such as traditional restaurants, an accommodation spot and historical landmarks as the vehicle passes by.

Burden said the same intelli-point system alerts drivers about road hazards, high accident areas and other invaluable road safety information, as well as tourism-related information such as destinations, hotels, restaurants, service stations and internet cafés.

Although the device is still being developed, with the company still pre-recording information of all the popular tourist routes, Burden said car rental companies have shown great interest in the product.

However, the problem is that the company cannot meet the increasing demand, said Burden. He said the company plans to have about 1 000 devices in place by early January 2008.

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