



A Working on Fire team lays blankets and eco logs to prevent soil erosion

Department of Environmental Affairs active in Knysna rebuild

The ability to deploy a Rapid Environmental Restoration Response (RERR) proved to be a vital intervention by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) Directorate of Natural Resource Management Programmes (NRMP), in addressing the rehabilitation of Knysna and the surrounding natural environment.

Central to the RERR programme rolled out by the DEA (NRMP) to restore the Knysna / Plettenberg Bay burn scar, is the prevention of further land degradation through erosion control measures.

The most visible examples of the equipment brought to Knysna by DEA (NRMP) to curb erosion are the fibre rolls and fibre blankets, made from a by-product of wood from invasive alien trees.

Since the soil erosion project began on 24 July 45 WOF firefighters, including participants from the Knysna High Altitude Team (HAT), have laid out more than 2200 eco logs (equivalent to 13.2 km in length) and close to 100 bio-degradable blankets.



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



Soil erosion prevention in Knysna

Winter Fire Season in full swing

The 2017 winter fire season reached a peak in September with firefighters across the country being kept busy by multiple fires that threatened lives, properties, livestock and the environment.



In Limpopo's Waterberg District, sixty firefighters provided support at Dithabaneng in Thabazimbi to fight the fires. A Working on Fire helicopter and spotter plane provided aerial

firefighting support to the ground teams. An estimated 25 000 hectares of grass vegetation which included indigenous plants were destroyed in just 72 hours in this fire.

Firefighters thanked for hard work and dedication



Firefighters have returned home to their bases

The 150 firefighters who were deployed to Mpumalanga have returned to their respective bases after providing additional firefighting support throughout the month of September.

Martin Bolton, the General Manager for Working on Fire in Mpumalanga, says that the deployment also served as a learning experience for firefighters, especially those based in the Western Cape.

"Our firefighters from the Western Cape are used to suppressing fires in mountainous areas. Their stay in Mpumalanga exposed them to a different firefighting setting mainly because our fires here are grassland and plantation fires," Bolton says.

Bolton adds, "As a programme, we are immensely proud of our firefighters' dedication and hard work during this fire season, although we understand it has not been easy."



Editorial

Welcome to our September Newsletter and thank you for taking the time to read our latest edition. As South Africans celebrated Heritage Day, Working on Fire participants also joined the celebrations with activities at their respective bases where they dressed up in traditional wear and shared traditional cuisine.

The month of September saw Working on Fire teams assisting Fire Protection Associations and fire authorities in suppressing numerous wildland fires across the country. These fire suppression efforts, together with the fire education activities held at schools and communities, helped limit the economic damage these fires could have caused to the environment.

Read about the Schools Debate Competition which was rolled out nationally to encourage learners to engage with environmental issues for the benefit of the future.

You will also read inspiring stories of how our participants are using the stipend the programme provides to improve and empower themselves through further education, starting small businesses or through the social relief it brings to their families.

A warm welcome to our new firefighters who have just finished their training at the Training Academy. We wish you all the best on your new journey.

Happy Reading.

MD Message: ‘Back to Basics’

Trevor Abrahams



In May this year, following my return as Managing Director, the Working on Fire (WOF) Executive Committee reaffirmed our collective commitment to the ‘Back to Basics’ campaign within the programme. During the past months we have made significant strides towards bringing stability within the organisation.

Most importantly though, our firefighters and management have warmed to our ‘Back to Basics’ campaign and together we have started the journey to restore discipline and respect in the programme.

This discipline, respect and commitment to fulfil our responsibilities, for which we are all employed in the programme, equally applies to everyone, whether you are part of the management or you are a firefighter.

We cannot accommodate unwarranted cases of indiscipline, nor will we accept anyone in Working on Fire being treated with disrespect or tolerate clear cases of an abuse of power. We have already dealt with such cases with firmness and fairness in accordance with the WOF disciplinary policies.

Unfortunately during the past few months, it became clear that not everyone was in tune with our ‘Back to Basics’ campaign. This applied to both management and firefighters.

As a result, there have been some significant management changes and you will have seen that we’ve had to part ways with some of our senior managers.

However, we cannot manage an organisation by relying solely on its disciplinary process. Nor can we turn a blind eye to ill-discipline and misconduct.

Rather, we should remember and dedicate ourselves to the values of our organisation: Accountability, Teamwork, Excellence, Adaptability and Making a Difference. We can only grow our organisation if we stay true to these values in our work and private lives.

Profile of Shane Christian

WOF Executive Committee Member, National General Manager



Ready to lead from the front, Shane Christian, National General Manager, during the June Knysna fires

Shane Christian was born in East London in the Eastern Cape on 31 December 1969 and was just six months old when he moved with his mother, a single parent, and four siblings to Kraaifontein in Cape Town.

His family returned to East London when he was six years old and he completed primary school there. At the end of 1982, the family moved back to Cape Town to settle in Mitchells Plain where he attended Portlands High School.

In February 1988 he commenced his apprenticeship as a diesel mechanic at the then South African Railways in City Deep, Johannesburg, where he qualified in 1991. The downscaling of the Railways saw most staff retrenched in 1992. Christian started up his own business as a mechanic in the same year and joined the local fire service in East London during 1993.

Starting as a junior firefighter he quickly moved up the ranks to senior firefighter within two years, an achievement which normally

takes five years. He was also part of the Rescue Diving unit during his stay with the fire service, while he pursued his tertiary education in Fire Services Technology up to diploma level. He also undertook a Mechanical Engineering Diploma at technikon.

In 2004 he was appointed Chief Fire Officer of the Amathole District Municipality. Several fire services in the former Transkei that were established under his watch there are still running today. He held this position until moving to Working on Fire as the Eastern Cape General Manager in 2010. He became the Western Cape General Manager in 2011.

In June this year Christian was appointed as National General Manager. As National General Manager he is responsible for the financial, operational and administrative requirements of the programme and the management of the eight Provincial General Managers.

Christian is married and has a 24-year-old son and a 17-year-old daughter. He has

been an active sportsman, playing soccer, baseball, volleyball, hockey and swimming.

Since joining Working on Fire in 2010 he feels that working with youngsters from marginalised communities makes being associated with the programme worthwhile.

Our premium news products, WOFire News and WOF TV, have the single objective of being informative!

They are there to keep our participants informed about what’s happening in WOF across the country.

WOF TV News and WoFire News are dedicated to the hard work of our participants and aim to focus on their stories, not only in relation to their work in WOF but also how they have grown and developed in the Programme.

Furthermore we feature many stories of participants who took responsibility for their own lives and also extended their compassion to others.

Readers are welcome to send us their stories in their home language and we will assist with translation and editing.

Please e mail your story to **news@wofire.co.za** or submit them via your local Provincial Communication Officers, Regional Managers, Base Managers or Crew Leaders.

I want to reassure everyone that there is no purge or witch-hunt under way and that all that is required is for everyone to remain committed and dedicated to doing their work and living the values of WOF.

To make Working on Fire a great programme again, we will need that commitment from all.

I have met and spoken to many in the WOF family and I am assured that we have an overwhelming groundswell of goodwill and commitment among our personnel to do the right thing and reach even higher levels of achievement for the programme. I thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Introduction of Editorial Team

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Working on Fire is on YouTube (Working on Fire TV News)



Working on Fire is an Expanded Public Works Programme which resides within the Department of Environmental Affairs.





The Loskop Team wore traditional clothes and performed a drama while celebrating Heritage Day with learners.

Working on Fire is known for its diversity. So when Heritage Day came, it was bound to be a showcase of various cultures as our participants and management joined the celebrations.

WOF teams joined local government departments, communities and schools to celebrate Heritage Day. Some teams wore their traditional costumes and cooked various traditional dishes which were enjoyed after their origins were explained.

WOF Head Office in Nelspruit took a different approach to the celebration, and had a quiz on South African heritage and a best-dressed competition focusing on what makes one proudly South African. The event allowed employees an opportunity to interact and ask questions about the heritage represented by participants.

‘Our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our nation’ – Nelson Mandela.

We trust you enjoyed your Heritage Day!



The Witelsbos and Kromriver Teams in the Eastern Cape celebrated Heritage Day in style by singing traditional songs and talking about their various cultures.

WOF rich in Diversity and Cultures



KWAZULU-NATAL teams participated in Heritage Day activities



Gauteng Heritage Day – The Maropeng Team celebrated the day with community members from Orient in the West Rand, and exhibited traditional wear, food and dance.



The Ugie Team also dressed up in cultural wear to celebrate the day.



Those who participated in the quiz received prizes and had the opportunity to interact and ask questions about the heritage represented by participants.



Everyone got the chance to dress up in their cultural dress and share their heritage with their colleagues.



Head Office staff celebrated Heritage Day with a quiz on South African heritage and a best-dressed competition focusing on what makes one proudly South African.



Clarens Team members dressed up in different traditional clothing and cooked traditional foods.



A feast of traditional dishes was prepared by the Makhado Team members as they celebrated their cultures.



The Naledi Team celebrated Heritage Day by wearing different traditional costumes and cooking traditional foods in celebration of their heritage.



Various traditional dishes such as dumplings, mogodo, kosogo and mabele were on offer for the team to enjoy.



Learners from different schools who participated in the debate with the members of the Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal fire awareness cluster

School debate produces fire alert learners

Working on Fire in KwaZulu-Natal hosted its Provincial School Debate Competition at Nazareth Community Hall in Umzimkhulu for learners from various schools.

The primary objective of the competition is to create an opportunity for learners to debate environmental issues that have a negative impact on their social and natural environment.

KZN Fire Awareness Training Officer Bongumusa Nyathi says, “The purpose of the debate is also to develop learners’ research skills and assist them to turn facts and statistics into a strong argument.”

The learners from Petros Jozana Primary, Nokwezi Primary, Nombewu Primary, St Barnabas

and Mkhathshana Primary schools debated topics such as ‘Wildfires fuel climate change’, ‘Invasive alien plant species increases the risk and intensity of wildfires’ and ‘Frequent fires could be the cause of land degradation’.

Mkhathshana Junior Secondary School educator Nandisa Somhlaba says, “This was a great programme to develop learners’ communications skills. This opportunity allows learners to express themselves to the outside world while learning valuable information.”



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal

Community fire awareness through the airwaves

Working on Fire regards fire awareness as one of the key factors of implementing integrated fire management systems effectively and therefore uses several platforms to bring fire education to the people.

Working on Fire Limpopo’s community fire awareness cluster approached the Botlokwa Community Radio station in Capricorn Municipality through the assistance of the Base Communications Representative of Molemole Base, Jack Mboyane.

Botlokwa is one of the communities that are prone to wildfires and every year grazing land is destroyed by fires depriving livestock of feed.

“We saw it beneficial to approach the radio station because some livestock owners don’t have the chance to attend our fire safe workshop,” says Sello Matlhare, Limpopo’s Community Fire Awareness Officer.

Apart from fire safe tips, listeners were educated about the importance of planting trees as part of the Arbor Month campaign as well the importance of preserving our forests and environment as part of our heritage.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo



Sello Matlhare and Kgwadi Kgamanuse radio to share fire safety tips with communities

WOF hosts schools debate competition to educate learners



Winners of the School Debate Competition hosted in Mpumalanga

Working on Fire’s Awareness Department in Mpumalanga hosted its first Annual School Debate Competition at Thembeke Secondary School on 8 September 2017. The competition provides a platform for Grade 8 and 9 learners to debate how environmental issues negatively impact on the natural environment and livelihoods.

Fire Awareness Training Officer Elliot Nyathi says the debate competition, “Seeksto strengthen and improve literacy levels in our

country and encourage learners to take positive action towards their environment.

“We targeted five schools in the province’s Lowveld region that are situated in fire-prone communities, in order to empower them by providing knowledge and skills that prepare them to be fire alert.”



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga

Western Cape learners participate in School Debate Competition

Working on Fire in the Western Cape hosted its first School Debate Competition at the Child Welfare Centre, with 25 learners from various schools in Stellenbosch.

The learners, from Kylemore, Makupula, Luckhoff, Cloetessville and Kayamandi High Schools, debated topics such as fire prevention, how fire causes land degradation, frequent fires and how climate change leads to fires.

Adjudicators from the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs, Stellenbosch Municipality, Western Cape Education Department and the City of Cape Town assessed the learners on presentation, communication and content.

Aside from debating environmental issues that have a negative impact on their social

and natural environments, participants were exposed to the key fire messages and the core focus areas of the WOF Fire Awareness Department.

Michael August from Kylemore High School says, “I’d like to thank Working on Fire for this debate as we feel we can empower ourselves and future generations to come. This has been a great experience and I have learnt a lot from this competition. I look forward to the next one and believe we will be better prepared and we’ll have fun.”



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



All the participants in the school debate

Fire awareness key messaging competition



Kroonstad Type 2 Crew Leader David Nyelele with the trophy for first place

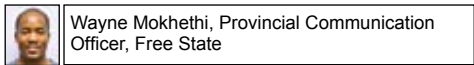
Twenty-two firefighting teams across the Free State were recently tasked with creating a play or poem highlighting fire awareness to see whether they understood the fire messages that they were teaching schools and community members.

The top three teams all chose poetry as their method of conveying the fire awareness message. Although this made it rather difficult to choose the winners, in the end the Kroonstad Team took first place, with the Bethlehem Team in second place and the Clarens Team taking third place.

Kroonstad Type 2 Crew leader David Nyelele says, “On behalf of Kroonstad Base, I would like to thank the WOF fire awareness department for honouring us with first position. I hope this trophy

will serve as motivation to the rest of our team and to the other teams in the province to continue conducting fire awareness at schools and the communities at large.”

“We are very proud of the teams that participated as they all showed immense creativity in their poems and plays. It showed us that the teams understand the topics they teach. However, the competition also revealed specific areas that we need to pay more attention to. The winners really appreciated receiving the trophies,” says Free State Fire Awareness Training Officer Tommy Mokoena.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

WOF joins stakeholders to create integrated fire awareness



Representatives of various organisations who attended the PIER workshop at Tzaneen Country Lodge

Fire awareness education at schools and in communities is one of the most important aspects of the integrated fire management systems that WOF implements across the country.

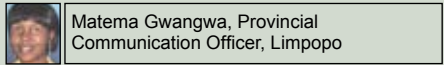
WOF Limpopo staff attended a Public Information Education and Relations (PIER) workshop which was hosted by Mopani District Municipality with Provincial Disaster Management at the Tzaneen Country Lodge. The workshop was attended by stakeholders who are affected by the impacts of both structural and wild fires.

“The purpose of this workshop is to create a joint forum or working group that is aimed at raising awareness, creating a common ground of working and also connecting with

other stakeholders that are affected by the impact of fires,” said Mumcy Mugivhi, Disaster Management Coordinator, during the PIER workshop.

WOF presenters described their roles in society and shared their experiences with regard to fire awareness campaigns they conduct within their areas.

Unlike other stakeholders at the workshop, WOF’s method is aligned to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which is what PIER is promoting and encouraging as their research proved that learners grasp more information when they learn by doing.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

School debate puts spotlight on environmental issues



North West General Manager, Nolvuyo Mashologu, awards Grade 9 learners from Tlokwe Secondary School the 'best team on content' award for their chosen topic

The North West Fire Awareness Department hosted its first schools debate competition which saw local schools debating environmental issues that have negative impacts on the natural environment and livelihoods.

The schools debate competition, which was held in Ikageng in Potchefstroom on 15 September, saw Grade 8 and 9 learners from BA Seobi and Tlokwe Secondary Schools participate in the debate.

These learners debated topics such as fire prevention, how fire causes land degradation, frequent fires and how climate change leads to fires.

Fire Awareness Training Officer Sophy Dinko says the debate seeks to encourage learners to take positive action towards their environment while also improving their literacy

levels. “The schools that took part in the debate were from fire-prone areas and these debates aim to empower them with knowledge and skills that will make them fire alert,” says Dinko.

North West General Manager Nolvuyo Mashologu says she was impressed by how knowledgeable learners were about environmental issues. She says this was a clear indication that teams were providing fire education at schools and that learners were well armed to preserve our natural environment.

“These learners are our future leaders and we hope they continue to preserve the environment beyond these debates,” says Mashologu.

Written by: Editorial team

Firefighters’ exemplary work recognised with awards

Earlier this year, Mamre Base Manager Randall Arendse felt that the Mamre firefighters had been doing such sterling work over the past months that he wanted to give back to them in the form of incentives.

He introduced the ‘Firefighter of the Month’ initiative in April 2017. To earn the award, the Mamre firefighters are assessed on attendance, fitness, productivity, behaviour and attitude.

Arendse says, “It’s important to keep our participants motivated as they work hard in protecting the environment and saving lives, which should be recognised. This keeps the morale high within the team and motivates them to work hard every day.”

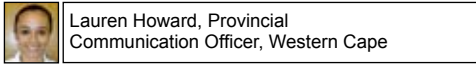
At first Arendse used his own money to purchase gifts for the ‘Firefighter of the Month’, but later sourced prizes from local businesses, such as a 5GB memory card sponsored by Shah-Zah’s Roadhouse and a Pizzeria fast food voucher.

This month, the firefighter of the month went to two outstanding firefighters, Donovan Konstanel and Raltin Passens.



Base Manager Randall Arendse (middle) issued certificates and gifts to Mamre firefighters of the month for September, firefighters Donovan Konstanel (left) and Raltin Passens (right)

These firefighters were among the many unsung heroes who assisted in the devastating Knysna fires in June.



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape

Western Cape Standardisation Workshop

National General Manager, Shane Christian, recently visited Working on Fire Western Cape to engage with provincial staff and provide additional information about the Working on Fire programme, standardisation in management, as well as a back-to-basics refresher.

The workshop programme included topics such as management and leadership, management styles, work styles and the capacity to work more effectively.

Christian says, “The aim of the roadshow was to engage with the provincial staff and to implement the back-to-basics programme. I am confident that the Western Cape will continue to strive beyond their capabilities and take the province forward.”

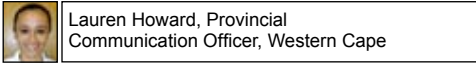
In addition to the workshop, a session on risk management facilitated by Tony Mancos was



National General Manager, Shane Christian, speaks to the Western Cape management

conducted, that included an information session on the WOF ethics line.

Working on Fire Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, joined the session and gave words of encouragement to the staff after listening to concerns raised by management.



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape

Thulani’s journey to success

Thulani Mkhosi, a former firefighter from the Hogsback Team in the Eastern Cape, thanks WOF for providing him with the skills that have enabled him to be where he is today.

Prior to joining the programme Mkhosi was unemployed and survived on money he got from piecemeal jobs.

“Life was hard and getting a decent job with no qualification was difficult,” Mkhosi says, who nevertheless remained positive about life. “When WOF gave me the opportunity I told myself that I would work hard.”


Twenty-five-year-old Mkhosi was recruited in 2013 as a firefighter. A year later he was selected for the Type 2 Crew Leader course at the Breakthrough Academy in Mpumalanga.

“In 2015 I was nominated to attend the Type 1 Crew Leader course in Mpumalanga and I passed well.

“During that time we conducted fire awareness in schools and around communities. That’s where I realised how passionate I am about working with communities. It was after this exposure that I was appointed as the Fire Awareness Facilitator (FAF).”

Mkhosi spent a year as the FAF and learnt a lot before being appointed as the new Community Fire Awareness Officer recently.

“The journey has been tough, rocky and exciting sometimes. With passion and hard work I managed to be where I am today,” says Mkhosi.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape



Thulani Mkhosi, newly appointed Community Fire Awareness Officer




Jane Mluli holds her National Certificate in Business Administration with pride

Vrede Crew Leader Receives Tertiary Qualification

Jane Mluli, a Type 2 Crew Leader from the Vrede Team in the Eastern Free State, recently graduated from the Oxbridge Academy with a National Certificate in Business Administration, after completing the year-long distance learning course at the institution.

Mluli has been a Type 2 Crew Leader for over five years. She plans to start her own business with the knowledge that she has recently acquired so that she can provide her five-year-old child with better opportunities in life.

Vrede Base Communications Representative Motloung Mduduzi says, “This motivates us to educate ourselves with the stipend that we receive from Working on Fire. Jane has led by example by showing the rest of our team that it is possible to work and study part-time. By doing that she has created a brighter future for herself and her family.”



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

Stipend used to pave the way for higher education



James Sibanda has been admitted to study film and television production at Tshwane University of Technology

Participant’s financial discipline rewarded with a car

There is serious need to master the art of financial management for firefighters to develop and succeed in life, says William Tshabalala, a driver at the Heidelberg Team.

Tshabalala recently bought a BMW 325i car with cash he saved from the stipend he earns in the programme. When asked how he had managed to buy such a car, he says the secret was financial discipline.

“Stay away from credits and debts and focus on saving real cash. We work to earn money to make a living. Therefore use it wisely,” he says.

“I believe it is not solely about how much you earn, but it is about how you manage and spend money that matters most,” says Tshabalala, who observes that greed and impatience are




William Tshabalala used his stipend to finance the purchase of a car

huge distraction in managing finances in many instances.

Tshabalala says he learned and grasped the basics of financial management during his first training at the academy in Nelspruit when he was recruited to become a firefighter.

“We need more financial management workshops to improve our skills and knowledge going forward,” he says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng


James Sibanda, a firefighter at the Maropeng Team, is heading to Tshwane University of Technology to study towards a film and television production diploma after a short stint in the WOF programme.

Sibanda joined the programme in May having matriculated last year. The 20-year-old says that one of the best skills he acquired in the programme is financial management.

“I was equipped with financial management which is a lifetime tool,” he says. “I saved money from the monthly stipend I received from the programme to buy a laptop and camera to advance my career and studies. I am eagerly waiting to study in the coming year.”

Sibanda says it also felt good that he used his stipend to pay his admission fee at the university. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme will be paying his fees.

Recalling his first stipend, Sibanda says he was very excited to withdraw hard-earned money. He says he will always have good memories of the programme.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

Clocolan firefighter participates in indigenous games

Molefi Salemane has been a firefighter at the Clocolan Base in the Free State for the past three years. He regularly participates in indigenous games, which are organised under the auspices of the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation.

Indigenous games are traditional games that have been played by the indigenous people of South Africa. The games are a highlight of Heritage Month. Of the many indigenous games, which include Diketo, Kgathi, Intonga and many more, Salemane exclusively plays Dibeke, which is played by two teams, 12 players per team, and lasts for 40 minutes per game.

“I have been playing Dibeke for the past seven years. Since I joined Working on Fire the regular fitness training that we do helps me to

perform better because Dibeke involves a lot of running. I would like to encourage people to get involved with indigenous games during Heritage Month because it serves as a outlet for stress and keeps you busy. There are also opportunities to become more than a player but to get employed as a coach, referee or technical official,” says Salemane.

Salemane and his team are participating in the district league. If they are successful, they may progress to the provincial tournament and thereafter the annual national tournament.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Molefi Salemane

Free State firefighter takes on Table Mountain

Pitso Meko, a firefighter from Bloemfontein Base, and Mofokeng Samuel Peipman from Heilbron Base, are both seasoned athletes. They recently travelled to Cape Town to run in the Table Mountain Challenge, a popular race on the trail running calendar.

The Challenge is a 44km trail run around and over Table Mountain that participants can compete in by themselves or with a partner as a duo team.

This year the runners were surprised by a reversed route. Meko and Peipman com-

pleted the race in a time of 6 hours and 45 minutes.

“I am very proud of these two firefighters who represented not only Working on Fire but also the Free State. Because they ran such good times they both qualify for the next Championship race that will be held in Knysna,” says Tumelo Sekolos, the WOF Free State Regional Manager.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Pitso Meko

Participant’s small business off to a sound start

Tumelo Makola, 20, a firefighter at the Krugersdorp Team, used his stipend from the programme to kick-start his sound and graphic designing business.

Makola, who hails from the Kagiso township, used the stipend to purchase the equipment he needed. He says it was not easy raising money to establish an enterprise.

“I offer sound system services at social functions and design posters for people and organisations for promotional purposes. I have my own mini-studio at home which I use to design graphics,” he says.

The graphic designer, who self-trained using tutorials on the internet, says graphic design is his passion.

“I love playing with computer programmes. I intend to grow my business exponentially in the future,” says Makola, who also raises cash by modeling on a part-time basis.

“Fitness exercises in the programme help me shape up well. I am taking entrepreneurship quite seriously. Plus my age is on my side,” he says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng



Tumelo Makola is fired up by entrepreneurship and intends to grow his business

Culture has a foundation of many pillars



Esrom Lebogo says South African heritage can best be promoted and encouraged by being multilingual

Esrom Lebogo, a firefighter at the Rust de Winter Team, says being multilingual can help in promoting and preserving cultures of majority and minority groups in the country.

After putting in years of effort, he speaks all 11 official languages fluently as well as Shona, Zimbabwe’s dominant language.

Lebogo learned some of the languages from his fellow firefighters. He said languages bring firefighters from different cultural groups together and help them become united teams.

“Language is used to identify and define people. It is imperative that we encompass all the languages to make our heritage diversified,” Lebogo says.

Lebogo believes languages, rather than the clothes we wear or other practices, are at the core of our heritage. He says multilingualism will help to strengthen and promote our diverse cultures. Heritage preservation should be through affirming languages.

“The fundamental pillar of our cultures is language. Therefore it is critical to learn more languages so that we accommodate and respect each other as different groups,” he says.

Crew Leader Jimmy Phaahlane confirms that Lebogo is very good with languages.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

Participants assist a learner in need



Crew Leader, driver and some team members with the learner who received new school shoes

Working on Fire firefighters do not only show commitment in saving lives and the environment, they also show care towards members of communities.

Earlier this month, two WOF participants from the Molteno Team in the Eastern Cape, Crew Leader Sibongiseni David Ndumdum and driver Lunga Sam spotted a learner without school shoes during the fire awareness presentation the team conducted at the school.

Ndumdum said the first time he saw the little girl was when they went to Eluthuthu Primary School to make an appointment for the awareness programme.

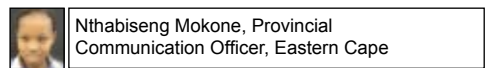
"The child was wearing old shoes and I thought that maybe it was because of the

weather. But even on the day of the awareness presentation she still had those old shoes on," Ndumdum says.

He enquired about the child and a teacher told him that the child had no parents and was not receiving the child grant.

"I was really touched and that's when I decided to go and buy shoes for her. One of my colleagues added some money and we bought them," says Ndumdum.

Tears of joy rolled down the little girl's face when she received her gift.



High Altitude rope technicians complete rope access training

Thirteen High Altitude Team (HAT) participants from KwaZulu-Natal recently completed a 10-day rope access training course at Shongweni Dam. The training was facilitated by the High Angle Rescue and Access Company.

Rope technicians must undergo a rope access refresher training course every two years to ensure they are competent in terms of any changes to the technician and certification scheme that occurred since their previous assessments.

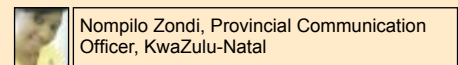
Ethekwini Rope Technician Siphelele Mpanza says, "Although this was the second time I did this training, I learnt new techniques taught by Dion from High Angle that I can use in the field."

The training included the tying of different types of safety knots, rope transfer, search and rescue, anchoring, fall arrest, mapping and how to handle equipment. Refresher training ensures that participants are safe when working in the field and maintain the high standards needed for the job at hand.



High Altitude Team rope technicians who attended the training course

"I am very proud of passing my rope access training and wish all rope technicians a safe and productive year," says Mpanza.



Team celebrates 6 years of service to community



Mothibistad Team members celebrate six years of working together

Earlier this month the Mothibistad Base celebrated its 6th anniversary together with Regional Manager, David Matras. The team was established six years ago to assist neighbouring communities to identify and mitigate their fire risks.

As they cut the celebratory cake, team members vowed to continue to service local communities by battling veld and forest fires and by putting in place fire prevention

measures. By implementing measures such as firebreaks, fire awareness education and door-to-door fire awareness activities, the Mothibistad Team has potentially saved many lives and protected the environment.

All Working on Fire teams are based in fire-prone communities to assist these communities to mitigate their fire risks.

Written by: Editorial team

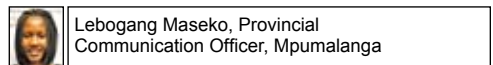
Newly trained firefighters join WOF

With the winter fire season still in full swing, Working on Fire (WOF) is striving to minimise the risks and negative impact of wildfires across the country.

In support of this objective, WOF has recruited and trained 61 young men and women as new firefighters within the programme. They are now based in KwaZulu-Natal, North West, Western Cape and Mpumalanga.

In a ceremony filled with song, dance and celebration at the Nelspruit Training Academy on 29 August 2017, WOF welcomed the newly trained firefighters to the programme.

WOF General Manager in Mpumalanga, Martin Bolton says, "The fire season is always tough. With our new firefighting force we should be able to have a more intensified response to fire call-outs."



Working on Fire welcomed 61 new firefighters