



WOFIRE NEWS

Saving Lives • Protecting the Environment • Restoring Dignity

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Working on Fire



Working on Fire - WOF TV News Channel



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Western Cape ready for summer fire season



Just over 200 delegates attended the official opening of the Western Cape wildfire season at the Lourensford Wine Estate, Somerset West, on 28 November 2018, which was held under the auspices of the Western Cape Umbrella Fire Protection Association.

Anton Bredell, the Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in the Western Cape, said that the province was ready for the fire season. He said, "We have access to eight helicopters, four water bombers and eight spotter command and control aircraft that can be deployed to incidents across the province.

"These aerial resources will be complemented by 1,550 municipal firefighters across the province, bolstered by approximately 1,020

seasonal firefighters (municipal and other organisations). There are also 27 Working on Fire teams with about 700 firefighters in the Western Cape and an additional 500 firefighters in other provinces who can be called upon if required."

The official opening of the fire season also coincided with the hosting of the first major Wildfire Ready Convention in the Western Cape at the same venue, from 28 to 29 November 2018.

This two-day convention focused on targeting wildfires in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) and presentations were made by several speakers from the USA and Europe, local fire authorities and fire protection associations.

Attendees discussed how - through Integrated Fire Management and its four operational components of reduc-



tion, readiness, response and recovery, and linked to the Wildland-Urban Interface as the distinct focus - fire authorities could concentrate not only

on how to fight these fires, but also share best practices for the prevention and mitigation of wildfire events.



2018 marks the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela and this provided a unique opportunity for people around the world to reflect on his life and times and to promote his legacy.

In 2003, Nelson Mandela said, "Our children are our future and one of our basic responsibilities is to take care of them in the best and most compassionate manner possible."

Inspired by this message and in celebration of the centenary of Nelson Mandela, and to honour the

Living the Mandela Legacy - Taking care of our children

firefighters who make enormous sacrifices every year in saving lives and property, Working on Fire will be handing out 1,850 Kids Care Pack-



ages containing essential personal care basics and educational toys, to the children of firefighters as a gift of hope.

A huge thank-you to all our WOF management, stakeholders, partners, Fire Protection Associations, corporate sponsors and members of the public for all the generous contributions in cash and in kind, that have made this a huge success.

Through your generosity, you are also part of living the Mandela Legacy.

Nelson Mandela 1918 - Forever



The North West Province General Manager Noloovuyo Mashologu handing over gifts to the children

MD Message:

Trevor Abrahams



15 years of service to South Africa

It is that time of the year again when many of us are preparing to spend time with our loved ones during the upcoming festive season.



In many aspects, this has been a rewarding year for all of us at Working on Fire and it is heart-warming to see how everyone involved in the programme, from firefighters to management at all levels, has worked tirelessly during this year to provide uninterrupted integrated fire management services to all our stakeholders. Our role in the Southern Cape and Tsitsikamma fires in October and November has elevated the image and appreciation of WOF to an all-time high.

We have all seen how provinces have held various activities to celebrate Working on Fire's 15-year existence with various partners and stakeholders. A big thank-you to all the provinces that have participated in these celebrations.

Creating more work opportunities



WOF MD Trevor Abrahams speaking to Cyril Ramaphosa at the Job Summit

In October, we attended the Presidential Job Summit hosted by President Cyril Ramaphosa which adopted a declaration calling for the expansion of the government's public works programme.

During this year, many former firefighters moved on to the formal job sector, to jobs at the South African Police Service, nature conservation agencies and at local fire brigade services. This is a trend that we want to increase exponentially in the years to come.

In support of the call to create more work opportunities for our youth, we will further develop the skill sets of our firefighters in 2019 to help them move into the formal employment sector, and in so doing, create more opportunities for other unemployed youth to become part of the programme.

Winter Fire Season

We had a slight reduction in the fires which Working on Fire responded to in the 2018 winter fire season (1,819) compared to the 2017 winter fire season (1,963).



This can largely be attributed to much better preparation by landowners and communities, and in this regard, I want to thank all our firefighters and management in our winter fire season provinces for doing all the hard work in terms of firebreaks, fuel load reduction and prescribed burning.

In addition, there has also been a greater awareness amongst landowners and community members and we should credit our fire awareness programme for their ongoing efforts to educate our key stakeholders on how to be FireSafe.

Summer Fire Season

The Western Cape is in the midst of its summer fire season and I want to extend best wishes to our firefighters and management and all we ask is that you continue to remain vigilant and safe on



the fire line. We also acknowledge the teams from other provinces that come to assist the Western Cape during their fire season.

We know that it is not easy to be on duty during this festive season but your commitment to save lives and protect our environment is widely applauded.

Azishe Games

We were once again able to host a very successful 2018 Annual Azishe National Games with KwaZulu-Natal crowned as overall winners of the fifth edition



of the Games. The competitors were passionate and we want to thank all provinces who participated.

Working on Fire received a R100,000 donation from Absa for the WOF Kids Care Packages and to support firefighters who lost their belongings in the Karatara fire on the Garden Route in November 2018.

Garden Route and Tsitsikamma fires



Photo collage: Deldre Cloete

Working on Fire's participation in the multiple fires in the Southern Cape (Western Cape) and the Tsitsikamma region of the Eastern Cape during October and December have been greatly appreciated and acknowledged across the board.

We were honoured to have been able to participate at her memorial and funeral arrangements and we salute a fallen hero and dedicated leader whose record of selfless service to the South African people must inspire all of us to respond to the Thuma Mina call and make our own contribution to building a better society for our future generations.

We honour our fallen heroes

We cannot end off the year without acknowledging the pain we also endured when we lost three of our very own colleagues in 2018 during firefighting operations in the Western Cape.



Cedric Seokoma, Gert Wildschut and Nico Heyns will be forever remembered as brave firefighting heroes and our thoughts and prayers are with their loved ones during this festive season.

WOF Kids Care Project

Inspired by the legacy of Nelson Mandela, Working on Fire will be providing Kids Care-Packages to children of our firefighters this December as a gift of hope which will provide essential personal care basics, educational toys and clothing to children.

This is one way we can honour our firefighters, who make enormous sacrifices every year in saving lives and property.



Stay Safe

In conclusion, allow me to extend best wishes to every member of the Working on Fire family – firefighters, management, partners, our government stakeholders – and also our media partners who have communicated the successes of the programme throughout the year.

Have a wonderful and enjoyable festive season break and if you are travelling, I wish you a safe journey.

World AIDS Day marked in the Western Cape

To mark the 30th anniversary of the first World AIDS Day in 1988 we remember the lives so sadly lost to the virus and reflect on the journey of those facing challenges every day.

This World AIDS Day, activist Nompumelelo Ngangane, a former WOF firefighter who is now a Human Resources Assistant, spoke at a WOF Western Cape event about her experiences.

Ngangane, a mother of three beautiful children, said, "Not many may know but I've been living with HIV for the past 16 years, and it has not stopped me from living my dreams. In the beginning, it was very challenging, as many people would reject me when they heard about it. It was difficult in the beginning but



Activist Nompumelelo Ngangane share her experience of living with HIV/AIDS

I grew strong and started sharing my story so that other people couldn't hurt me anymore and spread rumours about me."

Although ending HIV transmission is within sight, the HIV stigma unfortunately still exists. A survey revealed that half (50%) of people living with HIV have experienced discrimination because of their HIV status.

Following the event, which was initiated by SDP Colleen Jones, the Western Cape provincial staff released balloons in memory of those who lost their lives to the HIV/AIDS virus.



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Let us all help to fight HIV/AIDS

Social Development Practitioner Sabelo Buthelezi says the firefighters and management need to be encouraged to do HIV/AIDS tests.

He says testing is seen as a serious step in the right direction towards confronting what is a global killer disease that remains an enemy to the health of young people and which threatens the future of this country.

Because millions die from the disease, Buthelezi says, "We cannot afford to turn a blind eye on this deadly virus and syndrome," and adds that firefighters are not immune to AIDS and should be tested.

Johannes Motsepe, a Crew Leader for the Ditholo Team, says it is critical that everybody join hands to fight the scourge of HIV. It is through testing that people can then get help and treatment.

Buthelezi says creating awareness and educating employees about the disease is the key to fighting the disease



as firefighters' health and wellness are the central focus of the programme.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Team honours HIV/AIDS survivors



The Sasol Team and Sasol Emergency Department observed a moment of silence in honour of HIV/AIDS survivors

Mpumalanga's Sasol Team and the Sasol Emergency Department observed a moment of silence for those who have passed away due to HIV/AIDS and said a prayer in support of those individuals and families living with this challenging reality

today. The team called on people to get regular health check-ups so that the virus could be detected at an early stage.

The Mpumalanga Social Development Practitioner will be hosting '16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against

Women and Children' campaign workshops with various teams across the province. These workshops will include a discussion and health advice with regard to HIV/AIDS.

Written by Zania Viljoen

WOF Free State celebrates World AIDS Day



The Thaba 'Nchu Team interacting with stakeholders during the event

Working on Fire in the Free State celebrated World AIDS Day in various towns and cities across the province to encourage people to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died.

Participants from the Working on Fire Thaba 'Nchu Team attended an AIDS Day event in Selosesho hosted by the Wesley Methodist Church. Numerous activities took place on the day and the attendees were advised on preventative methods and those with the virus were motivated not to give up and told that they could live long happy lives by leading a healthy lifestyle.

Many stakeholders attended the event and provided motivational talks, such as the Department of Health, SASSA, Mangaung Fire and Rescue, EMS, businesses, various church denominations and the community at large. Most participants got the opportunity to be tested for HIV, TB, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Social Development Practitioner Selaelo Mathokwane says, "Our teams across the province annually join the international community in showing support for the drive to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS within the country. By forming part of these events, they aim to inform society that the fight against HIV/AIDS is in the hands of each individual."



Wayne Mokhethi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer



Eastern Cape Working on Fire participants and stakeholders march to raise awareness

Free State teams say no to abuse

Teams from across the Free State joined hands with their communities and various stakeholders in a display of solidarity to put across their message of saying no to gender violence and child abuse in their towns, cities, communities and in society at large.

The Bethlehem Alpha and Bravo Teams marched through the streets of Bohlolong with local stakeholders and held a prayer service to launch the '16 Days of Activism for No Violence against the Abuse of Women and Children'. The Brandfort Team attended the campaign launch at the Ipeleng Hall and the Clarens Team attended two events: an educational talk held at Atlehang Crèche addressing children's rights and a Men's Imbizo that



Participants from the Brandfort Team at the '16 Days of Activism' launch in Brandfort

addressed males' role in stopping the abuse of women and children.

"Highlighting the issue of women and children abuse annually with the launch of the 16 days of activism against the abuse of women and children is a big step in ensuring that abuse and violence do not become a societal norm," says Selaelo Mathokwane, the Free State Social Development Practitioner.



Wayne Mokhehi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

16 Days of Activism



The Eden Concordia and Goudveld Teams at the '16 Days of Activism' event

Teams in the Southern Cape, together with Social Development Practitioner, Lusheen Britz, campaigned to spread the message of no violence against women and child abuse, as well as the 'Not in My Name' campaign.

Britz says, "The '16 Days of Activism for no Violence Against Women and Children', in conjunction with World AIDS Day, took place across the Southern Cape with various stakeholders attending these events, such as the Department of Health,

SAPS, Councillors, various primary schools, community members, Working on Fire firefighters and managers. The aim of the event was to raise awareness about the '16 Days of Activism' and World AIDS Day, to commemorate those who have passed away from AIDS-related illness and to unite in the fight against HIV."



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

WOF raises awareness of women and child abuse

Working on Fire in the Eastern Cape, in collaboration with the Department of Health, Disaster Management, the Women Support Centre, FAMSA and the local traffic department, marched through Ngangelizwe Location in Mthatha as part of the '16 Days of Activism for no Violence Against Women and Children'.

Participants carried placards with messages condemning any form of violence against women and children

and encouraging abuse victims to speak up so that they could get the help they needed.

According to the Social Development Practitioner of the province, Siphokazi Jack, the march was meant to educate the community to say no to the abuse of women and children and speak up when they witness it.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Raising awareness of gender abuse, one team at a time



Sello Cele, Chief Community Safety and Liaison Officer at the local municipality, spoke about the reported cases of women and children abuse

North West Social Development Practitioner (SDP), Makoloi Tele, hosted a '16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children' workshop for the Castello, Boskop and Highveld teams, to raise awareness about women and child abuse. Guest speakers explained the different forms of abuse and how to get help from the various institutions that offer services. They also urged

abused men to speak out and seek help, adding that more and more men were experiencing abuse but were too ashamed to speak up or seek help. A team performed a drama illustrating the different forms of abuse.

The SDP will continue to host '16 Days of Activism' events at various other bases across the province.

Written by Editorial

KZN teams commemorate 16 Days of Activism

The '16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children' campaign is observed annually from 25 November to 10 December 2018.

Over the period, government departments and organisations convene a series of activities to focus on the problem of violence against women and children, the causes and appropriate solutions.

Various teams have participated in marches and dialogues in their respective communities. The Vryheid and Normandien teams took to their CBDs to engage the public and encourage loving and protecting women and children.

The Nkandla Team visited the Siyenze Sizanani Care Centre to educate learners about their rights and encourage them to report to their parents or teachers if they are abused.

Firefighters from the Manzingwenya and Manguzi teams attended



The Vryheid Team engaging the public at an intersection

the FireWise and Department of Health Awareness Day where they learnt about topics such as teenage pregnancy, depression, family planning and HIV/AIDS. They also had access to screening stations.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer



Krugersdorp Team during a march of no violence against women and children abuse at City Hall

No to violence and abuse

The Krugersdorp Team participated in a march against women and children abuse to City Hall attended by stakeholders from across the public service in the West Rand.

Social Development Practitioner for WOF in Gauteng, Sabelo Buthelezi, says that violence against women and children was at alarming proportions.

"It is running like a raging wildfire. It has to be curbed as a matter of urgency," he says.

Buthelezi says anyone abusing women or children was the enemy of our society.

"I say 'Not in my name' to men who abuse women and children. Real men

don't beat or abuse any person irrespective of gender or creed," says the SDP.

He says the awareness-raising of gender-based violence must be a daily activity to bring consciousness to abusers. All the firefighters have a responsibility not to turn away from any form of abuse and violence against women and children.

"All the teams had programmes to raise awareness among the communities they live in. I have done workshops with teams to highlight the problem of abuse in our society," says Buthelezi.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Limpopo participants raise voices against abuse



The Rooiberg Team, along with various stakeholders, marches with placards bearing messages condemning the abuse of women and children

Working on Fire participants from Mogalakwena and Rooiberg took to the streets of their communities to raise awareness against women and children abuse.

"Every day in our society there's a child or woman who falls victim to abuse. Of late, most abuse is caused by the people who are close to them," says Limpopo's Social Development Practitioner, Michael Ramatsea.

Men also fall victim to abuse and in most cases fail to report abuse in trying

to protect their pride and some end up losing their lives.

"A lot of people encounter emotional abuse at their workplace. But because there's no physical pain, they end up suffering from depression and this can end their careers," says Wilhelminah Kwenaita, a social worker from Thabazimbi.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Loskop Team stands up for the rights of people with disabilities



The WOF Loskop Team advocates the rights of those living with disabilities

On 3 December, the WOF Loskop Team joined the international community in observing International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This day is used to create an understanding of disability issues and advocate the rights of people with disabilities.

In South Africa, this day also marks the beginning of Disability Awareness Month.

Members from the Loskop Team showed their support by participating in a fun walk through Elandsdoorn during which they focused on creating awareness of discrimination against people with disabilities.

According to the Base Communications Representative, Bongani Mthimunya, the event was very successful. "All people should be treated equally, no matter their abilities. No one should feel like they have to hide. We all have something to offer," says Mthimunya.

Afterwards, the team also shared tips with community members on being fire safe. These tips will enable people to avoid fire risks in and around their homes.

Written by Zania Viljoen

Getting firefighters to and from fires is a WOF driver's passion

Working on Fire is proud of its team of WOF drivers who are passionate about transporting teams safely to and from a fire line or other integrated fire management activities. These men and women effectively manage vehicles with up to 25 passengers and equipment across long distances at all hours of the day and often over rugged and dangerous terrain.

To ensure that they are always proficient and ready to do their work,

they have to do annual refresher driver training. During the training, their knowledge of road safety and operational procedures, as well as their driving skills in specific types of vehicles, are assessed.

To pass the training and receive a yellow card, drivers need to:

- Achieve 80% in road assessment with competency tested on vehicle size and capabilities (FT);

- Achieve 75% in fire line safety (theory and practical);
- Pass a fitness test (a 2.4 km run in a maximum of 14 minutes).

The most recent training, in preparation for the Western Cape summer fire season, took place in October. Two week-long training camps were held with 22 drivers in Newlands for the Western Cape region and 23 drivers in George for the Southern Cape region.

"We are tremendously proud of the calibre of drivers in the Working on Fire programme. Keep up the good work. I would like to encourage our drivers to keep making a difference by applying the



WOF drivers during the recent driver refresher training in the Western Cape

knowledge and skills they have acquired," says Amor Adlem, WOF Transport Manager.

Written by Editorial

Team gives festive season safety tips



Zukile Dhlomo, Base Communications Representative of the Castello Team, addressing community members at Rysmierbult Clinic

As the festive season is fast approaching, the WOF North West teams are doing everything they can to ensure communities are safe from disaster. The Castello Team and JB Marks Disaster Management held a festive season awareness activity at Rysmierbult Clinic.

The team taught community members about biodiversity, the different species and how they affect fires and our environment while also giving tips on how to stay safe this festive season.

Zukile Dhlomo, the Base Communications Representative of the Castello Team, says, "The community was also taught personal safety and about protecting themselves from fires during the festive season."

Dhlomo urges community members to enjoy the festive season safely and to remain alert to fire risks by completely

Eastern Cape firefighters applauded for battling Tsitsikamma and Olifantsvlakte fires

Stakeholders in the Koukamma Municipality have expressed their appreciation of the Working on Fire firefighters and the hard work and dedication they showed during the Tsitsikamma and Olifantsvlakte fires.

Senior Section Ranger of SAN-Parks, Euginia Mkhathshwa, said these young men and women did a wonderful job.

General Manager of the province, Samora Gusha, applauded the firefighters for doing such a difficult job without any injuries. He said that they had lived the values of WOF, including Teamwork and Making a Difference.

The Tsitsikamma fire started on 23 October in the Lottering area in the west and was declared contained on 27 October. A second series of fires started due to lightning between Stormsriver and Clarkson on 29 October. Fire suppression activities over this period were hampered by extreme weather conditions, exacerbated by further lightning fires on 4 November at Coldstream and Kareedouw.

This fire spread over 80 kilometres from Coldstream in the west to Palmietvlei in the east. Working on Fire firefighters worked very hard for almost two weeks and finally succeeded in containing the fire on 7 November.



Firefighters managed to suppress the fires that raged for days on the Garden Route

The total area affected by this fire between the catchment and the coast was approximately 40 000 ha of which the burn scar is approximately 6 000 ha.

The Olifantsvlakte fire started on 4 November while the Tsitsikamma battle was still raging, when lightning struck on the mountain peak to the north of Coldstream and fire then spread down in a southerly direction. As there was no immediate risk, monitoring was done daily while all resources were based in

Witelsbos to assist with the fires in Tsitsikamma.

When the Tsitsikamma fire was totally contained, monitoring of the Olifantsvlakte fire continued until 10 November when suppression activities started, as the fire was becoming a threat due to wind changes alternating between easterly and westerly directions.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

WOF prepares children for the holidays

Working on Fire Limpopo's Aganang Team visited Juno Day Care in the Ga-Matlala area outside Polokwane to conduct fire awareness for the learners at the centre.

The Aganang Team thought it beneficial to conduct fire awareness with the learners before the centre closed for the holidays.

"Most of the children sustain burn injuries during the festive holidays that are caused by firecrackers that they are exposed to as part of the festive celebration. By educating them we limit the impact of their sustaining injuries or adding to the stats," says Elliot Mokobodi, Aganang Base Communications Representative.



Aganang participants educating children about fire causes and prevention

The children were educated about the causes of fires and also the prevention methods to implement to ensure that they stay safe.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

No break for WOF firefighters

Working on Fire Limpopo firefighters are having it tough battling multiple wildfires in the Waterberg District and the heat wave at the same time.

"December is supposed to be a rainy season for us, but this year it's like Mother Nature has decided otherwise. Even though we were planning on closing for the festive holidays, it seems as if some of us will have to stay behind and be ready to assist when needed to do so," says David Maake, WOF Regional Manager in the Waterberg District.

With the grass still dry and the fire danger index rating high it's not easy to predict when these fires will end. WOF firefighters are ready to be dispatched to the wildfires.

Should there be no rain, the WOF firefighters will have to work throughout the festive holidays protecting the environment and saving lives.



Limpopo firefighters battling multiple fires in the Waterberg District outside the fire season



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Team teaches community about fire safety

The Loskop Team recently conducted a door-to-door FireSafe awareness activity in Masakhaneng. They taught community members about the causes of fire and how to prevent unwanted fires from starting and spreading. They also explained what to do in the event of a fire and how to stay safe.

The team targeted the community as it represents a higher fire risk because the community doesn't have electricity.

"Most people in this community do not have electricity. They make use of firewood to cook with and stay warm," explains Bongani Mthimunya, the BCR for the Loskop Team.



Loskop Team brought fire education to the Masakhaneng community

"We taught them about the different fire hazards, to keep children away from fires and how to help us save the environment and lives."

The team urges community members to remain vigilant when using fires and is encouraging them to remove fuel loads around their properties that can spread fires.

Written by Editorial

KZN uMngeni drought relief team hits the ground running

The recently launched drought relief High Altitude Team has had an excellent debut, working along the Umgeni River to increase the water supply to communities dependent on this water source.

The drought relief team is removing alien invasive vegetation along the Umgeni River from Wartburg to Nagle Dam, to safeguard the water supply for community members using this river.

HAT Project Manager, Henry Nene, says, "We have been frilling eucalyptus, acacia, Lantana camara and syringa plants in order to clear the catchment for the Umgeni River.

"As we all are aware that alien invasive plants drain more water than indigenous plants, frilling basically means we debark a portion of the trees. We then apply a chemical that



The uMngeni drought relief High Altitude Team debarking alien trees

will kill the tree without cutting it down, ensuring that we increase the water supply to Umgeni River," says Nene.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Working on Fire participates in Durban Business Fair



Working on Fire at the exhibition stand

Working on Fire was part of the Durban Business Fair's 20-year celebrations. The fair has much to celebrate, especially the positive impact it has had on emerging businesses. To date, a staggering 33 500 businesses have participated since 1998.

With a special focus on inspiring and equipping entrepreneurs with the appropriate skills to grow and sustain their businesses, it has become a key tool for the City of Durban to accelerate the development of SMMEs.

The Fair has grown from strength to strength and has produce a number of remarkable entrepreneurs who have contributed to reducing the high unemployment rate in KwaZulu-Natal.

KZN Fire Awareness Training Officer Khulani Zulu says, "We had a great reception at our exhibition stand, from people living in Durban wanting to know more about us, to local municipalities interested in our services."



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

WOF dispatchers are ready to tackle the summer fire season



WOF dispatchers revise operational procedures during their seasonal training session in Gauteng

Whether a Working on Fire (WOF) Team is requested to do prescribed burns on a farm, is deployed to a wildfire

somewhere in the mountains or needs to be transported to an event or training camp, Dispatch and Coordination is

involved. According to Tracey Carter, HOD for WOF Dispatch and Coordination, the department is an integral part

of Working on Fire's operations and therefore its staff need to always be in top shape.

Consequently, the Working on Fire Dispatch and Coordination Department conducted dispatch refresher training in preparation for the 2018/2019 Western Cape summer fire season at the beginning of November.

"This training was very successful. Everyone participated with enthusiasm and made suggestions and voiced their opinions. I thank them for their hard work and wish them well for the season ahead," says Carter.

Written by Editorial

Stakeholders gather to celebrate IDDR

Stakeholders from Joe Gqabi District Municipality, Walter Sisulu Local Municipality, SAPS, the Department of Transport and Working on Fire gathered in Jamestown on 21 November to celebrate International Day for Disaster Reduction under the theme 'Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience'.

According to the head of Disaster Management at Joe Gqabi Municipality, Patrick Moko, the IDDR is about highlighting how people and communities around the world are reducing their exposure to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of reining in the risks that they face.

Fire Awareness Training Officer Zola Hans educated the community members present on the dangers of fires, causes of fires, how to prevent fires and what to do in case of fires.

"People should not throw away cigarettes that are not totally extinguished. They should stop leaving candles near curtains and also avoid leaving burning stoves unattended as these actions can cause fires and lead to disasters," says Hans.

Community members were also taught how to handle disasters.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Working on Fire educated communities on the dangers of fire during IDDR



Working on Fire prepared former firefighter for her new job

Former firefighter gets a better job

Former firefighter Busiswa Sana thanks the Working on Fire programme for empowering her with many skills that assisted her to be where she is today. Twenty-eight-year-old Sana recently got a better job at Eastern Cape Park and Tourism Agency (ECPTA).

"I matriculated in 2008 at Noyebo Senior Secondary and I did not go to university but joined a one-month community project that provided me with a certificate in basic health," says Sana.

She says she later got a job at Zama Cleaners for a period of three months. "Life was not easy but I was always positive about life," she says.

Sana joined the WOF programme as a firefighter in 2012 at Longmore Base in the Eastern Cape. Sana says that she was selected two years later to attend the Type 2 Crew Leader course which she passed very well.

"I came back and worked very hard in my new position which then paved the way for me to be sent on the Type 1 course in 2016.

She says that being a female leader was not easy but with support from management and team members she managed to be one of the good leaders.

"I was working with the Baviaanskloof Team by the time I got my new job at ECPTA," Sana says, adding that WOF gave her many skills, including communications, firefighting, leadership, financial management and presentations skills.

"These skills are assisting me a lot in my new job," says Sana. She advises all firefighters to aim high, have a goal and never give up no matter what.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Harrismith storeperson passionate about entrepreneurship



Dingane Mazibuko, Harrismith Team storeperson

Dingane Mazibuko, who serves as a storeperson at the Harrismith Team in the Free State, celebrated 13 years of service in the WOF programme this year. He has been in the programme since 2005.

Mazibuko runs several small businesses to supplement his WOF income, including a small spaza shop and a brush cutting business, but he's most passionate about his recycling business.

Mazibuko says he has been recycling for the past three years and works

closely with many businesses and public and private organisations in the small town of Harrismith where he collects materials such as plastic bottles, cardboard, paper, cans and glass bottles. He sells these items to a recycling plant in town.

"I enjoy doing business very much. It is my passion and it assists me in providing for my family," says Mazibuko.



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

Participant on the move



Sello Thwala, crew member of Leeuwfontein team finally gets a positive exit from the programme

Sello Thwala, one of the founding crew members of the Leeuwfontein Team who joined in 2012, has officially exited the programme to join Coca-Cola in Johannesburg as a stock packer.

He says patience has been his biggest weapon in the long time he has waited to land a permanent job. "I am ready for the new challenge because I am already equal to the task at hand. A programme intervened in my life when I had no income. It has given

me refuge during stormy and rough weather," he says.

Thwala says others who exited the programme inspired him to be steadfast and focus on reaching greater heights but it has not come easily.

Crew Leader Rachel Khomola says she wishes her departing colleague well and trusts that he will develop further.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Aspirant boilermaker

Nkosinathi Banda, a firefighter at the Wedela Team, completed a boilermaking course at West College in Carletonville before joining the programme.

He joined the programme because he couldn't get an opportunity to train to acquire the necessary experience and employable skills. He is ready to exit should a job or training opportunity arise.

Twenty-seven-year-old Banda says a six-month internship will do for him to exit the programme. "We have seen and learned how gold is cooked and purified at one of Sibanye's refinery centres," he says. With mines closing in Carletonville, he says although this is brought some sadness, there was always

hope of a positive change in the near future.

The WOF programme is helping Banda to advance some of his life goals.

He says, "I have been able to feed and clothe my child. This has made me a proud father to my son. There are a lot of things that I have learned as a firefighter, especially in the area of occupational health and safety."

Banda is currently aiming to acquire a driver's licence. He says the stipend makes a difference in his life and he no longer depended on his parents.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer



Nkosinathi Banda is a young aspirant boiler maker