



### Greetings,



As the year draws to a close and thoughts turn to holiday and relaxation, LEFPA would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our members, their families and staff a peaceful, blessed Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Our office closes on the 15th December, returning to full function on 9th January 2017. We have a skeleton staff operating from the 3rd January, more details on page 3. Until next time.

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## Annual LEFPA Fire Season Function

The annual LEFPA Fire Season function was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> October at De Vette Mossel. This event, held towards the end of the season, gives LEFPA an opportunity to thank everyone for their unstinting dedication and effort throughout the season. The work of runway crews, dispatch, pilots, management and service providers is recognised and acknowledged.

Proving the point, LEFPA pilots were kept busy during the afternoon attending to fires breaking out as a result of lightning. An early evening storm over Nelspruit and a power failure at the venue threatened to spoil the event but undaunted, LEFPA soldiered on!

Appropriately, the theme was *Fire and Ice* and Spit Master Andre took charge of cooking two sheep and a bush pig on the spit. Mussels and homemade bread opened the meal while salad, vegetables and rice accompanied the tender meat.

Chairman Duncan Ballantyne welcomed the guests, thanking Mike Martyn from Silvix who sponsored the popular draught keg. Numerous and well earned awards and certificates were handed out:

- All the pilots received a certificate for participating in the 2016 Fire Season for LEFPA
- Dispatch, Permit Issuers and LEFPA Ground Crews from Nelspruit and Waterval Boven also received certificates
- Best Airstrip in the LEFPA Operational Area went to Ngodwana Airstrip
- Best Loading Crew in the LEFPA Operational Area was won by Endawin Airstrip
- Most Improved Airstrip - a tough choice as both Elandsdrift and Rutland worked hard, but the award went to Elandshoogte
- The 2016 Pilot's Pilot (voted for by the pilots) was Hylton Taylor from AFS

Three prizes were awarded by Dispatch to the pilots, based on time-keeping, response, paperwork and cooperation within a team environment:

- Best spotter pilot - Francois van Eden
- Best chopper pilot - Egg van Dijk
- Best bomber pilot - Hylton Taylor



Dispatchers Robert, Lourens and Carla get a big thank you from Annelise van Wyk (KLF)



Hylton Taylor receiving his Pilot's Pilot trophy from Dispatcher Robert Rodgers

Rob Taylor, Duncan Ballantyne and Erick Nel

The Best Ward in the LEFPA Operational Area went to Injaka and was handed over to Bernadus Meyer by Duncan Ballantyne.



**Bernardus Meyer from Injaka receives the Best Ward trophy from Duncan Ballantyne**

Then it was time for the many thanks. First to be thanked was the Admin staff and Board Members. Mark Jackson thanked Duncan Ballantyne for his efforts over the year and for steering the LEFPA ship.

Corné Martyn added her voice and thanked everyone for attending and making the evening such a success. She had special words of gratitude for Andre Scheepers, for his assistance and leadership during the 2016 season.

**The Spitbraai Master himself - Andre Scheepers**



Cooking all that meat for a large, hungry crowd didn't phase Andre one bit! Under Andre's considerable braai chef's belt lie sheep, pig, chicken, blesbok, bush pig and mutton rolls but he has his eye on putting a springbok and a warthog onto his customised spitbraai.

Coffee and koeksisters rounded the evening off and Andre would like to extend his thanks to the organisers for their hard work and to everyone for attending.



**Dispatch, Pilots and Management - all in the same boat!**



## LEFPA Training for the National Prosecuting Authority

In our September issue we featured a thank you letter from one of our members for the post-fire support he received from LEFPA, all the way to the Supreme Court. In the heat of the fire action it's easy for members to forget that once the flames are extinguished, matters jump into the vital investigation phase. Uncovering the causes can lead to prosecution.

It's essential, therefore, that the National Prosecuting Authority are up to speed with Act 101, the National Veld and Forest Fire Act. Andre Scheepers ran a training day for the NPA in the LEFPA Boardroom on the 31st Oct, where he covered Chapter 7 (Offences and Penalties) and Chapter 8 (Enforcement) for about 30 lawyers from the Nsikazi Region (Ehlanzeni district).

This proactive measure by LEFPA aims to make the prosecution of negligent and criminal causes of veld and forest fires a smooth and successful process for members.

## Greetings from the Pilots

LEFPA received notes from two of our pilots, Rob Taylor and Quentin Steyn, as they left at the end of the 2016 Fire Season.

*I would like to wish you all - management, dispatchers and particularly all the pilots for a truly memorable season. It was a pleasure and an honour working with you guys. I cannot remember how many seasons I have done (30+) but this one I will remember. To you and yours a great Christmas and a cracker of a start to the New Year.*

**Rob Taylor**

*Thank you LEFPA Dispatch for a great 2016 season. It was a pleasure working with all of you and we hope to do it again next year. I am now off to Letaba and will be leaving the group for the remainder of the 2016 season. Thank you to all the resources I have worked with in the LEFPA Operational Area. You guys are all amazing. Keep safe.*

**Quentin Steyn Spotter Pilot**

Our thanks to you both for your tireless dedication and skills. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your families from all at LEFPA.



**Rob Taylor**

## Ben Bothma Retires



A special service award was given to Ben Bothma at the annual Fire Season function. 'Oom' Ben has been a LEFPA stalwart since the founding meeting on the 17th October 2000.

As Komatiland Forest's Fire Risk Manager, Ben served on various sub-committees over the past 16 years, including serving LEFPA as Vice-Chairman.

In 2009 Ben was awarded a book prize for his contribution to LEFPA.

It's always hard to say farewell to a friend and one of LEFPA's pillars, however, we wish Oom Ben everything of the best for his well earned retirement.



## October Statistics

Lowveld 14:00 Actual FDI						Rain (mm)
<b>Total</b>	7	75	63	8	0	<b>45.4</b>
<b>May</b>	2	23	6	0	0	23.5
<b>Jun</b>	2	15	13	0	0	6
<b>Jul</b>	2	15	13	1	0	8.5
<b>Aug</b>	0	10	18	3	0	2.4
<b>Sep</b>	1	12	13	4	0	5
<b>Oct</b>	2	14	13	2	0	36.3
<b>Nov</b>						

Escarpment 14:00 Actual FDI						Rain (mm)
<b>Total</b>	5	83	57	7	0	<b>34.6</b>
<b>May</b>	0	27	4	0	0	23.5
<b>Jun</b>	1	17	10	1	0	6
<b>Jul</b>	3	17	10	1	0	8.5
<b>Aug</b>	0	10	19	2	0	2.4
<b>Sep</b>	1	12	14	3	0	4.7
<b>Oct</b>	0	16	12	3	0	29.3
<b>Nov</b>						

## Activities for the Month - December

- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Start to plan for the next fire season.
- Start to spray roads to ensure access.
- Plan for invader species control in fire breaks and open areas.
- Slash burning allowed if weather permits - get a burning permit from LEFPA.



### Important Note:

The LEFPA office will close for the year on Thursday 15th December. A skeleton staff will be available between 06h30 and 11h00 from the 3rd to 6th January 2017 in order to issue any permits required.

The office returns to full strength and regular operating hours on Monday 9th January 2017.