



Greetings,



Spring has bounded in with some warm weather cheer, and remaining in a lighter vein we report on the potjie competition which was keenly contested recently. It's been a quiet season so far (long may it last), and we applaud our members for their preparation and vigilance. There is a sharp reminder about the value of your LEFPA membership in our story below and it's reassuring to know that LEFPA sticks with their members every step of the way, long after the fire has passed. Until next month!

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A member gives a big 'thumbs-up' to LEFPA

A relieved and excited LEFPA member has given LEFPA a huge thumbs up after the successful conclusion of his lengthy court battle. The member, who wishes to remain anonymous, suffered damage and loss to his property west of Nelspruit in August 2012 when he lost irrigation piping, grazing and hectares of established macadamia trees through a fire which had begun on neighbouring land.

As an active, paid up LEFPA Member he complied with all the relevant requirements of LEFPA and had all the necessary fire breaks and equipment in place. After Nelspruit based LEFPA fire suppression crews had doused the fire, the member contacted LEFPA manager Andre Scheepers for assistance with the follow-up investigation, the gathering of evidence and to take more than 50 pictures less than 24 hours after the fire broke out.

LEFPA supported the member every step of the way through a drawn out legal fight with his neighbour, which went as high as the Supreme Court before the member's neighbour and insurance company negotiated a settlement. The member was refunded a substantial amount for the damage and loss incurred, and says he owes it all to the willing support and guidance he received from LEFPA management, investigation and legal teams.



Andre believes the immediate and detailed documentation of this fire was key to the successful resolution of the matter, because it's difficult to remember specifics more than 3 years after the fire took place.

The benefits of LEFPA membership in return for the annual fees (only R324-00 for up to 100Ha and R770-00 up to 500Ha, thereafter R1-54 per title deed Ha) are highlighted when disaster strikes and this good news story underlines the full scope and value of being part of LEFPA.

Membership of LEFPA is supported by the National Veld and Forest Fire Act 101 of 1998.

Congratulations to everyone at LEFPA who played a role in achieving this happy ending with grateful thanks from LEFPA member L02980.

Letter of Appreciation

Andre recently received the following letter of appreciation from another grateful LEFPA member. Thank you to Stephen Hardy for taking the time to get in touch. Appreciation goes a long way with the team and is highly valued.

Hi Mr. Scheepers

Just to thank LEFPA for sending out their crew yesterday afternoon to fight and curtail an uncontrolled burn. The team (call take 108385), headed by Constance arrived shortly after 15h00 and had completed their task by 16h20. The area of burn falls within the Bellevue farm JU 104.

They were efficient, friendly and very well prepared with protective clothing, firefighting equipment and a vehicle equipped to store this equipment. The team knew what they were doing.

I entered an estimate of 8ha burnt in the document Route form 268170 yesterday. I have since GPS'd the boundary and find that the area burnt is 9.1 ha.

Thanking you again.

Stephen Hardy

The Spirit of Win-Win for All

A recent initiative in the Vygeboom Ward to collaborate and assist with neighbouring communities and emerging farmers saw three farms receive firefighting tools from Sappi Forests.

The recipients are - Mahlabathini community, a neighbouring farm of Sjonajona on the Badplaas/Nkomati mine main road, Onverwacht farm also on the Badplaas/Nkomati mine main road and Kees Zyn Doorns farm (Ndwandwe leased farm).

These farmers burn firebreaks next to the R38 road and were given a tractor-drawn watercart.

The communities were delighted to receive this assistance as they have never obtained any equipment for putting out small fires. As cattle owners, protecting their grass is critical to them.

This is an exciting initiative because it creates awareness and promotes taking ownership of responsibilities.



Mandela Day at St John's

LEFPA's rather appropriate Mandela Day contribution was to assist St. John's Mission Station outside Barberton by burning all their firebreaks. Surrounded by dry grass veld, the complex is severely at risk every year from runaway veld fires. Under the control of Base Manager Jackson Mabuza, a full crew quickly completed the burning of the firebreaks within the space of a morning.



St John's began as a mission station over 50 years ago and today is a home for about 40 HIV-Aids orphan children, ranging from newly-born to about 16 years old.

The children are cared for by Catholic nuns who hail from various parts of the world.

Supported largely by the people of Barberton and the greater Mbombela area, the Centre continues to expand as the needs of the children grow.

The tangible sense of deep love and caring those in charge have for the children draws people to assist St John's. Madiba was renowned for his love and concern for children and no doubt he would be proud of the work of St John's.

Adapting and Improving GIS

Charles Hopkins is the database fundi behind the latest technology developments currently being trialed by LEFPA. By combining the LEFPA member database from the Pastel Accounting System with geographic information and with a lot of computer wizardry, Charles has expanded the Geographic Information System (GIS) to include member details behind the map.

Very simply this means that clicking on a map point brings up the member at that point and all the member's details: name, contact information, what is farmed or on the property and who the neighbours are



It can further identify what sort of membership he has, either basic or with aerial fire fighting support. This is vital information when fires break out.

Charles is further developing the application to be available to members. When this feature is ready for rollout, members will be able to update their details, ensure the resources listed on the database for them are correct and apply for a burn permit online, instead of having to phone in to the Call Centre and recite all the information each time they call in.

Administrator Corné Martyn is working closely with Charles to explore ways in which to further enhance the system to offer fast, detailed information.

Corné Martyn and Charles Hopkins

Battle of the Potjies

Canary Walk shopping centre held their second potjiekos competition on the 23rd July, using the fun event to raise funds for Kamagugu Inclusive School for special needs pupils.

There's nothing like the whiff of wood smoke and a three legged pot to get the juices (both creative and gastronomic) flowing and LEFPA jumped in boots and all, entering four teams of four very competitive members with each group keen to prove their potjie the best. As a team building exercise, the day proved to be a winner.

LEFPA Office fielded the all-woman team of Zanele, Nomcebo and Ingrid headed up by team leader Corné and cooking up a chicken curry pot.

LEFPA Ops, led by Robert and ably supported by Carla, Lourens and Mark and went indigenous with their venison impala pot.

Jackson was the team leader for LEFPA Base and cheated by having 5 in his team - Busi, Tina, Gertrude and Thembelihle. The team doubled up their entry making both a beef and an offal potjie.

Duncan took charge of the LEFPA Board team along with Mark and Francois and they cooked a lamb shin pot. Andre was there, chirping and making a noise for the team but his contribution was entertainment rather than culinary.



The organisers threw in a last minute curved ball and called all team leaders together, telling them that they had 30 minutes to prepare an appetiser with 3 chicken feet, 3 Brussel sprouts and a tin of pilchards to which they could add anything that the team had at hand for their pot.

No prizes were won by any of the LEFPA teams but Andre believes that the Board's appetiser was special. The judges for the day were the well known "Lekker Bekke" of the Lowveld who had their hands and mouths full judging 38 potjies.

The teams were well supported and everyone had a good time, even the children who expended large amounts of energy on the jumping castle and Buscor bus when they weren't hugging Bokkie!

Francois putting the Board team's special starter together

Activities for the Month - September

- No more firebreak burning allowed.
- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Check airstrips on a weekly basis.
- Distribute your standby rosters to all neighbours.
- Obtain FDI forecast on a daily basis from LEFPA
- Study weather systems and check forecasts on the internet.
- Perform daily and weekly checks of all equipment, using checklists.
- Perform checks to ensure readiness and quick reaction at all times.



General Info:

- Basic Firefighting Training is available to LEFPA members. Interested parties can contact the LEFPA office.
- All membership fees have been invoiced. If you have not yet received your invoice please contact Corné at the LEFPA office.
- FDI weather emails and SMSs are available to LEFPA members, contact Corné for more information.

www.lefpa.co.za

