



Lowveld & Escarpment Fire Protection Association Newsletter

Issue 21 October 2017

## Greetings,

October signals the approaching end of our fire season. As we know, fire is an opportunistic element and won't hesitate to take advantage of weather conditions and fuel loads. Don't hang up your fire awareness hat when the calendar flips over to 1st November - giving seasons a date is a man made practice. Keep following the LEFPA Activities of the Month on the back page of each issue and wait for good rains, heralding the Lowveld wet season, before relaxing your fire alertness. Until next time.



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## Letters of Praise

LEFPA has received some warming letters of gratitude that we'd like to share with you. Firstly, Eghardt Nel, Farm Manager at Hannah Game Lodge writes...

*UITSTAANDE DIENS EN BYSTAND DEUR  
LEFPA SPAN TYDENS VOORBRANDE*



*Dit is vir my aangenaam om u mee te deel van die uitstaande diens en bystand deur die LEFPA span wat ons behulpsaam was met voorbrande vanaf 30 Julie tot 4 Augustus 2017. Ons het 'n totaal van 1100ha voorbrande gemaak. Die Projek Bestuurder, Queen Thabethe, was uiters professioneel en het haar span goed bestuur. Ek wil graag die ander lede ook by name uitlig: Calvin Mnisi: Crew Leader Type 1; Zama Khazimula: Crew Leader Type 2; Tsepo Nkambule: Crew Leader Type 2 en Mabuso Lsiba: Voertuig Bestuurder. Behalwe vir die uitstekend werk wat hulle gedoen het, was hulle altyd vriendelik en bedagsaam, en did geld vir die hele span wat by ons was. Dit is vir ons 'n voorreg om lid van LEFPA te wees met die kaliber mense wat in julle diens is. Dra asseblief ons dank en waardering oor aan die span. Ons sien uit om weer in die toekoms saam met hulle te werk.*



Then Johann van Heerden, Estate Manager for The Rest Nature Estate, also sent through a thank you note:

*Baie dankie dat jy julle Span uitgestuur het na ons gistermiddag op kort kennisgewing, dit word opreg waardeer deur ons. Uitstekend diens van die LEFPA span onder die leierskap van Zama, Lucky en Sydney.*

**THE REST**  
NATURE ESTATE

The LEFPA crews are always bolstered when members take the time to appreciate their efforts. Many thanks, Eghardt and Johann.

## Never Forget

Although risk is part of the firefighter's job, it is particularly sad when one loses his or her life on duty. Last month marked the 16th anniversary of the attacks on the New York World Trade Centre towers that shocked the world.

343 firefighters, the bulk of emergency services that responded on the day, died in the towers and their loss was felt here by firefighters in Mpumalanga. Mike Meyers and Ron Spadafora, members of the New York Fire Department who from time to time visit LEFPA to conduct training, were both in the action. Ron's health, like many other responders, was affected by his work in the towers.

Current fires in Montana prove that life, and fires, carry on and brave firefighters continue to put their lives on the line in order to protect person and property. LEFPA salutes each and every firefighter, wherever they are.

For a heartbreaking look at how a magnificent landscape can be reduced by a towering inferno, and for a glimpse at what firefighters face, click <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2kEYBAfcyQ#action=share>



## Watch Out for LEFPA's New Transport Vehicle

Getting fire crews to and from fires is understandably a keystone of fire suppression and the time had come to retire the aging fire truck and two elderly bakkies that were being used to transport LEFPA crews. Vehicle reliability couldn't be counted on and the costs of maintaining these vehicles were rising.

The Board approved selling all three vehicles and replacing them with a new Hyundai H100, which was actioned. To minimise costs, the canopy and seats from one of the retiring bakkies were retained and installed in the new vehicle. The canopy earned a new coat of highly visible neon green before it was branded with the LEFPA logo and contact details as well as Miilo fire awareness.

With the new H100 on the road, LEFPA can continue to reliably service members across our area of jurisdiction.



## LEFPA Rocks AGFO

The second AGFO Expo was held at Casterbridge Lifestyle Centre 14-16 September. Once again, LEFPA had a stall and arranged demonstrations for an enthralled crowd on Friday and Saturday.



The Working on Fire crew show off their drill

The Working on Fire Mbombela crew put on drill displays which were followed by aerial firefighting drops by Orsmond Aviation's bomber 70 and bomber 95, piloted by Riaan Foley and Rob Taylor respectively.

The kiddies' favourites Bokkie and his friends, Bongani and Bomber, were on hand to educate the youngsters about 'Using Fire Responsibly'.

LEFPA took the opportunity while on show at AGFO to launch the new transport bakkie for the Mbombela fire crew.



Allison Cooper's exciting photo of Riaan Foley's drop



Left to right: Vaughan Lascelles (LEFPA Vice Chairman) and Andre Scheepers (Manager), watched by the LEFPA Awareness crew, present the keys to Crew Leader and driver Goodman Madonsela



## Fire Liability in Residential Areas - Part 3

Jaco Badenhorst continues his series of articles covering fire in residential areas, a must-read for everyone. Jaco points out that these guidelines are basic fire awareness pointers for residential and rural dwellings. Readers should be alert for any possible fire danger points in your home that are not covered below.

### Fire awareness in residential areas or at bush lodges:

- Owners and managers must safeguard all dwellings against unexpected, unplanned or runaway fires by cutting back all vegetation to a minimum of 15m from all buildings;
- All combustible material must be removed from the proximity of dwellings;
- All dwellings must have at least two fire beaters in an accessible and visible place;
- All dwellings must have the prescribed number of fire extinguishers in working order and serviced on a yearly basis;
- All dwellings must have the prescribed number of fire hoses in working order and serviced on an annual basis;
- All designated braai areas must have a fire lid that can cover the whole fire or coals when left unattended;
- No hot ash is permitted to be dumped anywhere near combustible material;
- No open fires are permitted anywhere except in designated fire safe areas;
- All thatch buildings must be treated with a fire retarder;
- Extra care must be taken when making chimney fires in a thatched building;
- All grinding and welding must be done in an open safe area with no combustible material in proximity;
- All gas bottles and other flammable materials (oil, diesel, petrol etc) must be kept in a safe fire proof area;
- All electrical installations must be maintained to avoid short circuits;
- Take care of your burning cigarette butts;
- Fire Emergency Contact Numbers must be on display in all dwellings;
- Ensure that your insurance (including third party insurance as well as public liability) is in place.

### Fire awareness on farms and small holdings:

- FDI and awareness thereof must be second nature;
- Learn to recognize the weather conditions associated with high fire danger: temperature, wind speed/direction and humidity;
- Owners of thatched houses must take additional precautions by installing drenchers, using fire blankets and having fire extinguishers at hand;
- Invest in well-maintained fire-fighting equipment (such as a petrol/diesel-powered water pump);
- Create a veld fire plan, cover the eventualities of both staying and defending the property or leaving it ahead of the veld fire;
- Restrict the use of farm machinery on days when the fire danger is high;
- Be extra careful when using welding, cutting and grinding equipment;
- Establish firebreaks between your land and neighbouring land as well as roads or railways;
- Train staff in firefighting techniques and safety standards for burning rubbish, etc.

Membership of the Lowveld and Escarpment Fire Protection Association (LEFPA) is not only for commercial landowners, every property owner can benefit from joining the Association. Contact details are on the front page of every issue of **All Fired Up**.

## The Mpumalanga Show

The new look Mpumalanga Show was held at Mbombela Stadium from 31st August to 3rd September. Wildfire ambassador Bokkie visited the York Timbers stand, much to the delight of the children.

Bokkie is a popular figure at these events and his message of using fire responsibly is well received by the youngsters. They all enjoy a cuddle from Mliilo and return home full of stories about fire safety.



## The Rest Nature Estate Fun Run

LEFPA sponsored a waterpoint which acted as a refreshment station for both the out and return route for the recent The Rest Nature Estate Trail Run. The route started at Curro School, went through The Rest Nature Estate and returned to the finish at Curro's sports ground.

The waterpoint was set up and ready by 6am with ice-cold water and Coke as well as biscuits, jelly sweets, suckers, Bar-ones and juicy oranges. The 21km race started at 7h20 and the 5km and 10 km races kicked off at 7h30. Before long, the waterpoint was overwhelmed by thirsty runners, who complimented LEFPA for having the coldest refreshments of the day.

Cheerfully manned by Corné (LEFPA Administrator), Queen (LEFPA Assistant Base Manager), Busi (LEFPA team crew leader) and Tina (LEFPA crew member) who handed out cold drinks and energising snacks, the ladies were assisted with the set up and braai by Mbongeni (LEFPA crew member).

Johann van Heerden, manager of The Rest Nature Estate, kindly arranged for Sanlam to sponsor the entry fees for the 6 runners from LEFPA who took part in the 10km race - Timmy Shogwe, Lucky Lubisi, Simon Sithole, Innocent Lubisi, Mbuso Mkhathshwa and Sydney Fakude. In spite of a busy week spent suppressing fires night and day prior to the event, the LEFPA team ran a good race and finished in the top 10. Their results were:

Lucky – 4<sup>th</sup> place Timmy – 5<sup>th</sup> place Mbuso – 6<sup>th</sup> place Innocent – 7<sup>th</sup> place Simon – 8<sup>th</sup> place Sydney – 9<sup>th</sup> place. Congratulations guys!

A super fun-filled day was had by all and the waterpoint crew found a new use



for the knapsack sprayers – refreshing the runners, most of whom enjoyed the cool spray. LEFPA looks forward to taking part next year and climbing up the rankings in the results!



## Activities for the Month - October

- 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



### Important Note:

- Basic Firefighting Training is available to LEFPA members. Interested parties can contact the LEFPA office.
- FDI weather emails and SMSs are available to LEFPA members, contact Corné for more information.

• **SUCCESS** cannot be spelt without **U**. Attend and participate - we need your contribution!