

GP

WEATHER TODAY

JOHANNESBURG: HIGH 21° LOW 9°



PRETORIA:

HIGH 27°

LOW 13°



VEREE

Crew aid storm victims

Working On Fire members help in rebuilding the shacks of people affected by the storm

NTOMBI NKOSI

WORKING On Fire's 25 crew member team of Maropeng, west of Johannesburg has helped in rebuilding the shacks of people who were adversely affected by the storm that ripped through the Western Rand a week ago.

Assistant base manager for the team, Bheki Dube, said they only assisted the community of Orient squatter camp outside Magaliesberg which was hardest hit.

"We sympathise and share pain with these poor displaced community members. That is why we decided to help rebuild their homes, their shacks. It is a generous honour one can offer them," Dube said.

The raging storm destroyed many shacks in the area and displaced people were housed at a community hall in Magaliesberg where the Working on Fire team is based.

"We are rehabilitating some of the corrugate sheets to rebuild the shacks. It has not been easy but we are making headway each day," he said.

Dube said the team had been professional in executing its operations in this disaster hit area.

"We are ensuring that they restore and reclaim their lives to normality because they can't live in the hall forever. Secondly, the kids need to return to school.

"Community members appreciate our contribution," Dube said.

He said the team has been supportive to both municipality's disaster unit and the community by working closely.

Talking about the storm, Dube said he had never seen a life-threatening storm accompanied by strong gale force winds that ripped through an area and left the ground surface waterlogged.

He said this disaster touched and inspired team members to help the community to rebuild.

He said some community members are still traumatised after the disaster.

Dube said part of Working on Fire's mandate was to save lives.



"We are expecting to revive and rebuild 15 to 20 shacks in the coming days. People want to return to their homes soon," he said.

FRONT LINE: A Working on Fire crew lend a helping hand to rebuild the shacks destroyed by the recent storm.

Assistant general manager of the Working on Fire programme in Gauteng, Mthandeni Malinga, said they were helping because they were part of the communities since the team operates in this area.

He said he had seen this devastation and the team was playing a critical part of the rebuild of the shacks.

Working on Fire is a government-funded, job-creation programme focus-

ing on implementing Integrated Fire Management in South Africa.

They employ more than 5 000 young men and women who are fully trained as wildlife fire fighters and are stationed in more than 200 bases across the country.

Working on Fire is an expanded public works programme funded by the department of environmental affairs.

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