

Working on Fire Mpumalanga fighting fit, and ready to roll

A total of 24 teams, made up of more than 500 firefighters, from Working on Fire Mpumalanga concluded their Yellow Card Assessment Training for the upcoming Winter Fire Season. Teams from the Highveld region, namely Piet Retief, Wakkerstroom, Volksrust, Ermelo, Breyten, Badplaas, Warburton, Balfour, Mayflower, Belfast, and Loskop took part in Yellow Card Assessment Camps at the Ermelo showgrounds and completed their assessments on Monday, 26 April. Teams in the Lowveld region, namely Dullstroom, Nelspruit, Barberton, Lydenburg, Lefpa, Nkomazi, Wilgeboom, Salique, Injaka, Graskop, Mlambongwane and Waterval Boven finished their assessment at the Kishugu Training Academy in Mbomela on Sunday, 25 April.

In Secunda, the Sasol team concluded their training at their base, the Sasol Fuel plant, on Thursday, 29 April. The assessments ensure that firefighters are physically fit and theoretically and mentally prepared for the upcoming Winter Fire Season between May and October. The training consisted of a fitness assessment, which included the 2.4 kilometre run, sit-ups, push-ups and pull-ups. Firefighters were also theoretically assessed with tests and practically assessed on various firefighting techniques, which included a firebreak, which helps prevent a runaway fire from spreading. Teams also conducted a firewall exercise, an activity in which firefighters run through flames with their protective gear, to get rid of the fear of fire and acclimatize themselves to the heat if and when they were to get trapped during a fire. The assessment ended with a route march, in which teams participate in a 10 kilometre march, to test their endurance and strength as they can be expected to go for long hours

combating fire on the fire line. All these assessments are aimed at strengthening their firefighting skills.

"Our firefighters are ready to assist Fire Protection Associations, partners and stakeholders in fire suppression operations. We urge landowners to get into contact with us so we can assist with our much-sought-after Integrated Fire Management services, which in-

cludes amongst others, prescribed burning, fuel load reduction, community fire awareness, and fire suppression plans," Working on Fire Provincial Communication Officer, Ms Amanda Mthembu said. "We urge communities to be more vigilant during this fire season and not to start unnecessary fires, particularly during dry days this winter. We appeal to community members to remove un-

necessary rubble on their properties, which can pose a serious fire risk. Properties next to grasslands need to ensure there are sufficient fire breaks between their properties and these grasslands," Ms Mthembu concluded. The Working on Fire Programme is part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and is funded by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.



Working on Fire Mpumalanga teams participate in the firewall exercise, as well as the teams standing tall during a pass out parade, where they received their Yellow cards, which mean they are mentally and physically ready for the fire season.