

NRZ marks 120 years



NRZ officials and representatives of customers hold a banner to mark the organisation's 120 years birthday

National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) used this year's Harare Agriculture Show (HAS) to launch the countdown to the 120 years anniversary.

NRZ marked 120 years since the arrival of the first train into the country on November 4 1897 South Africa to Bulawayo.

As the milestone approached, NRZ organised events to run concurrently with HAS to mark the start of the countdown to the celebrations.

The 120 years anniversary logo and banner were unveiled amid pomp and ceremony in front of scores of people who passed through the NRZ stand.

Entertainment at the event was provided by drum majorettes from the Eastern Area and a band made of the NRZ employees- Dende Rengoma.

Representatives of major customers including Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC), Tongaat Hullet and Grain Marketing Board (GMB) also attended the event to show their solidarity.

Manager Eastern Area Mr Steven Mupondi said the future was bright for the company as it embarks on the recapitalisation project.

He said service delivery would improve once recapitalisation was completed.

"We apologise that at times, our service is not up to scratch. We apologise to our customers for the inconvenience we cause them. We have embarked on a journey of recapitalisation to improve our service. We hope that with time, we will give you enough wagons," he said.

Public Relations Manager Nyasha Maravanyika said 2017 was an important year for the organisation as apart from marking 120 years of existence, it was undertaking the recapitalisation programme.

He said over its long existence, the organisation had safely transported people and goods.

Mr Joseph Katete of GMB said when moving maize they first think of NRZ as their preferred transporter.

Engineer Sam Makuvaza of ZPC said without NRZ, it would be difficult for this company to survive.

"Most of our critical equipment is carried by rail. Coal to small thermal power stations, diesel to power generators at Hwange," he

said.

To liven the mood after speeches, dance competitions were held for the public and winners walked away with branded @120 years NRZ T Shirts. Due to the entertainment provided, NRZ pavilion was among the last to be vacated when the show ended on Saturday with people only leaving when the fireworks started around 8pm.

NRZ is marking its 120 years of existence amid optimism that the future is bright after Government gave the go-ahead to the organisation to negotiate with Diaspora Investment Development Group/ Transnet Consortium for the \$400 million recapitalisation deal. November 4, 1897 is the day chosen to mark the official arrival of the train into Bulawayo. Before arrival of the train, goods were brought into the country by ox wagons.

We apologise that due to a technical challenge, we were unable to carry pictures of most functions we covered. The matter is being addressed.

NRZ workshops rebrand

By Bongiwe Dube

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) used this year's Mine Entra to announce the arrival of the Inter-Rail-Tech brand to the market.

Inter-Rail-Tech is the brand adopted by the NRZ for its mechanical, electrical and structural workshops in Bulawayo and Mutare to market services to outside customers and generate revenue for the organisation.

Inter-Rail-Tech attracted huge interest from the visitors at the exhibition.

Stand Manager Engineer Charles Dube said the introduction of Inter-Rail-Tech to the public was a success.

“Interest in the Inter-Rail-Tech brand was very high. We experienced a good response on the kind of services that Inter-Rail-Tech is able to offer. Visitors were interested in a variety of capabilities of our workshop.”

Services offered by Inter-Rail-Tech include rewinding of motors, general machining, pressure and relief valve repairs, hire of mobile compressors and jack hammers and casting among others.

A number of companies showed great interest in doing business with Inter-Rail-Tech and a Steering Committee made up of staff from the workshops has been set up to ensure success of the initiative.

Among the companies which made inquiries include Ingwebu Breweries, Zimasco, Davies Granite, Nugget Mine, Mimosa, Rubber Products, Acol Chemicals, Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC) and Toppick Investments.



NRZ staff members who manned the Mine Entra stand

The Inter-Rail-Tech initiative has yielded positive results as there have been companies bringing business to the workshops after Mine Entra.

“Since the end of the Mine Entra companies like Davies Granite, Shepco BMA, Shape It Adhesive and RioZim Kadoma have come to the workshops for jobs.

“We have also made telephonic follow-ups. What is now outstanding are visits to the various companies and individuals, but so far the future looks promising for Inter-Rail-Tech.”

Mr Dube said the structure of the NRZ was affecting business as it slowed down responses to inquiries from customers.

“A separate office to run affairs of Inter-Rail-Tech is needed and must be adequately furnished and staffed.

“We have also made recommendations for a customer responsive quotation and costing

schedule to be done by the Mechanical Accounts staff, which cuts down on time taken to produce the quote from two days to less than two hours.

“Alternatively our technical staff can be trained in the current costing schedule thus cutting down on the bureaucracy currently at play.” Now that the Mine Entra is over, the Steering committee is working on winning the confidence of five big companies for starters and then come up with final recommendations to management on the way forward.

Before the launch of Inter-Rail-Tech brand, NRZ workshops were offering their services to outside companies on a small scale for a few clients. The plan is now to scale up services and open up the workshops to as many companies as possible on a much larger scale.

Grade Seven pupil averts disaster

By Bongwiwe Dube

Nozipho Sibanda, a 13-year old Grade Seven pupil at Sawmills Primary School, averted disaster when she saw a broken railway line on her way to school and immediately reported to the Station Master at Sawmills. Sawmills Station Master Mr Evaresto Maungwa said that the track was broken, and had it not been reported could have led to derailments.

“Nozipho acted responsibly for a primary school pupil. Had she not observed the broken track on time, it could have cause derailment.”

He said that it was a recent damage and they had not noticed it prior to being advised by Nozipho.

“We had not noticed that the rail was broken although we have patrol man who patrol every day. It was too early and they had not done their morning patrol. This was a recent damage and we immediately asked the welders to fix the rail.

NRZ has always appreciated people who come forward to report damage to its infrastructure which could lead to derailments and loss of life.

In the past whistle blowers were rewarded according to the type of damage averted. However, due to economic reasons, this was no longer the case.

NRZ successfully hosts new steam train charter

NATIONAL Railways of Zimbabwe's (NRZ) reputation for its steam locomotives continues to attract keen interest from steam locomotive enthusiasts.

Far Rail Safaris, a German company, chartered an NRZ steam train for what was a highly successful week-long inaugural excursion which started in Bulawayo and ended in Victoria Falls with stops in between for 29 international tourists.

The tourists were from Germany, United Kingdom (UK), Japan, Austria, Australia China and the United States of America (USA).

The tourists wanted to experience the NRZ's Garratts, reputed to be the only operational ones in the world in their original condition.

For the tour, steam locomotives 414 and 611 were used and both performed well to the delight of passengers.

Meticulous pre-tour planning by NRZ employees from several branches ensured success of the run which took place from 10 to 17 July.

Far Rail Safari is the second company this year to charter an NRZ steam train, following on the heels of long term charterer Geoff Cook Safaris, which until now have been the sole foreign company to run regular steam safaris on the NRZ network.

Passenger Services Assistant Mr Wonder Mukuyu said the objective of the tour was achieved with the customer's expectations being exceeded. “The customer was not only satisfied, but delighted.”

Meanwhile, Mr Mukuyu said NRZ workers put in a commendable effort to ensure success of the run.

He said a few workers went beyond their call of duty and deserved to be given commendation letters by management for their performance.

These were Mr S. Ngwenya from Steam Shed, Mr A. Simango and Mr M. Nyoni both from Train Inspectors.

“Mr Simango provided top shelf performance. He covered everything to make sure trains departed on time. At one time, he slept for two hours only but managed to work for 12 hours the next day on our way to Victoria Falls.

“Mr Nyoni was also brilliant, fine tuning the smoke during run past using his experience to meet the demands of the customers.

“Mr Ngwenya, a coal trimmer, worked tirelessly with a lot of dedication for long hours to make sure coal was always available for firing the locomotives. They deserve commendation letters together with the others,” Mr Mukuyu said.

NRZ in the community

By Tinaye Duri

THE National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) values and prioritises its corporate social responsibility.

This responsibility has helped NRZ to engage, learn from, respect and support the communities and cultures in the nation.

Institutions, which include Jairos Jiri Association (JJA) and Founders High School, have benefited from the warm and kind embrace of the NRZ.

Jairos Jiri Association, located in Matshobane, Bulawayo, receives over 30 tonnes of coal, from Hwange Colliery Company Limited (HCCL) which lasts four years.

The coal is used to cook and heat bathing water for the handicapped in the rehabilitation centre.

HCCL started donating the dry cobbles since early 1970s up to date.

NRZ then transports these dry cobbles, from Hwange to Bulawayo station, for free.

This year, the kind gesture of these two companies, was again received with open arms.

On the 11th of July 2017, NRZ handed over 30 tonnes of coal to the association.

Public Relations Manager Mr Nyasha Maravanyika said NRZ had a duty to help associations such as Jairos Jiri.

“We are happy to be here as NRZ because we feel that we are part of the community and part of Jairos Jiri, specifically. Our obligation, as the NRZ, is to be of vital importance to associations like Jairos Jiri.

“As an organisation, it is our mandate to see you content and well kept.

“This is why we are here to play a part in Jairos Jiri's everyday life”.

He went on further to mention HCCL's role in the donation.

“We thank HCCL, in absentia, for their generosity.

“HCCL informed us that they want to donate coal to Jairos Jiri Association but do not have the means to transport the coal to Bulawayo.

“Therefore, we as NRZ took it upon ourselves to transport this coal by rail, leaving Colbro Company the duty to transport it from the station to the centre by road”.

The centre felt privileged to have these companies ready to support them.

The Vice Chairperson of the Jairos Jiri Association Committee, Mrs Sanele Mlauzi, expressed the centre's gratitude for the generosity.

“The Jairos Jiri Association is very proud to be associated with local companies, such as HCCL and NRZ that support the welfare and social rights of people with disabilities.

“We are gathered here to witness the official handover of a donation of 30 tonnes of dry cobbles by HCCL to Jairos Jiri Vocational Training Centre.

“On behalf of Jairos Jiri Association, I express our sincere gratitude to HCCL as well as the NRZ, and make a promise to you to make good use of the donated dry cobbles”.

Mrs Mlauzi described the importance of coal to the centre.

“This centre runs a kitchen with four 500 litre in-built oil-jacketed pots that use dry cobbles for heating purposes”.

“These pots are big enough to cook and heat bathing water for everyone, hence making them, and the coal, essential in creating a comfortable

environment for the children in the centre”.

The Jairos Jiri Association's Committee continuously emphasised the pivotal role played by HCCL, NRZ and Colbro Company in the upkeep of the centre.

The NRZ's Corporate Social Responsibility does not end with Jairos Jiri Association only.

NRZ, together with the School Development Committee (SDC), played a pivotal role in building a guard house for Founders High School.

The SDC donated the material which was used to build the guard house for the school.

The NRZ, upholding its CSR values, provided labour to partner with the SDC in making Founders High School a safe environment, conducive for learning.

NRZ's obligation, as a bulk and passenger transporter, is not only to move the nation, but also to sustain a symbiotic relationship with the society on whose licence the organisation operates and gets its longevity.

Southern Area hold fund-raising sports gala

By Bongwiwe Dube

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) Southern Area Sports Council (SASC) held a successful fund-raising sports day at Raylton Sports Club in Bulawayo.

NRZ employees from various stations including Victoria Falls, Hwange, Dete, Sawmills, Gwayi, Shangani and Gweru had a chance to mingle informally while competing in different sporting disciplines at Raylton Club in Bulawayo on 19 August 2017.

Long serving workers said the sports day fondly reminded them of days gone-by when the organisation used to host the GM Sports Gala. The General Manager's Sports Gala was last held in 2008.

One worker said efforts should be made to re-introduce the Sports Gala as it provided an opportunity for workers to get to know each other better in an informal setting while also enjoying themselves.

The Southern Area Sports Day saw a massive turn up of teams taking part in Soccer, Netball, Pool, Darts, and Tug of War.

The games were officially launched by Manager Southern Area Mrs Ainah Dube-Kaguru who said sports was important to the organisation as it helped relieve stress and brought workers together.

She urged the athletes to exhibit true sportsmanship during the games.

Miss Skhangele Ndebele, chairperson of the SASC, was impressed by the huge turnout of athletes and supporters.

She said the games aimed to raise funds for sporting activities in the Southern

Area through selling T-shirts. Although Miss Ndebele would not reveal their target or how much was raised, she said she was happy with the amount.

“We received quite a huge turnout for the sports day, especially from Gweru since it was our first time to invite them.

We usually invite teams from Southern Area only, but this time we decided to invite Gweru since it was a fundraising event”.

“The money raised from the fundraising was not much; we cannot say it was a loss. At the same time we did not get much,” she said.

She said they would like NRZ sports galas being resurrected.

“We used to go for nationals but due to a number of challenges we have not been doing so, but we plan to do so in the near future. We are aiming higher and money permitting we would love to go for the nationals,” she said.

Winning teams at the Sports Day walked away with token monetary prizes.

Bulawayo emerged winners in most games. They drew first with Dete in Netball, came first in pool and darts and runner-ups in Tug of War.

Gweru gave Southern teams a run for their money as they took first place in the tag of war and second place in Darts and Pool..

RESULTS

NETBALL

First Round

D e t e 1 8 ; S a w m i l l s 4
Westgate 4; Sawmills 5

W e s t g a t e 3 ; H w a n g e 4
Gweru 5; Hwange 2

G w e r u 5 ; V i c F a l l s 10
Sawmills 1; BYO 15
BYO 12; Dete 6

Second Round

Gweru 5; Hwange 2
Westgate 4; Sawmills 5
Vic Falls 12; Westgate 1
Gweru 4; Dete 8

Semi Finals

BYO 60; Gweru 0 Walkover after Gweru refused to play
Dete 15; Vic Falls 1

Finals

Dete 7; BYO 7

SOCCER

First Round

BYO 3; Vic Falls 3
Gweru 2; Shangani 3
Sawmills 1; Vic Falls 2

Second Round

G w a y i 0 ; G w e r u 5
Hwange 2; Gwayi 0
BYO 1; Sawmills 2
Dete 0; Vic Falls 2
Shangani 4; Hwange 1

Third Place Playoff

Gweru 4; Sawmills 1

Finals

Vic 0; Shangani 6

POOL

Doubles

BYO 3; Gweru 1

Singles

BYO 6; Gweru 1

DARTS

PLAYED ONLY SINGLES

BYO 19; Gweru 17