

# Railroader Digital Newsletter

## 5/2018

### **NRZ targets 100 00 tonnes per week for full salaries**

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) will be able to pay full salaries to its workers if freight volumes reach 100 000 tonnes a week, the General Manager Engineer Lewis Mukwada has said.

Addressing a planning seminar to come up with the organisation's plans for 2019 attended by representatives from various branches and sections, he said it had been management's desire to pay full salaries by the end of this year.

Eng. Mukwada said freight volumes had been averaging between 70 000 and 80 000 tonnes a week during the year although in August they reached 89 000 tonnes in one week. He said the company was relying on a few core customers for most of its business and was failing to meet their needs resulting in the loss of tonnage every week due to a dwindling resource base.

The general manager said the company had also made a pledge to pay balances of the 2015 bonuses in the second half of the year and at current performance levels cannot pay both full salaries and

bonuses at the same time. Eng. Mukwada said although the NRZ was leasing equipment from Transnet under the Interim Solution agreement pending the finalisation of the Recapitalisation Agreement with the Diaspora Infrastructure Development Group (DIDG) / Transnet Consortium, the equipment comprising 14 locomotives, 200 wagons and five coaches was yet to benefit the organisation fully.

"That equipment we are paying for monthly in foreign currency and the expectation is we sweat that equipment. As of now in terms of current performance we need to improve to get the full benefit of that equipment," he said. The general manager said the company had been reviewing salaries since last year from 50 -60 percent to the current 80 to 90 percent.

"One of the major things we wanted to do this year was to pay full salaries by the end of the year. Starting from last year we were reviewing the net disbursements and trying to im-

prove them. Currently paying 80 to 90 percent and we are at a point the cash flows are overheated".

But he said there was need to push business up if the salary disbursements were to be sustained without adversely affecting cash flows. Eng. Mukwada said the company's safety record also needed to be improved as accidents were resulting in huge revenue losses.

"Safety is a major issue. The rate of accidents has increased. We are getting to a point where every day three, four accidents are reported and the disruption to operations is devastating," he said.

He said there was need to reduce accidents in the last part of this year and next year. As we go towards the end of the year, we need to make concerted efforts to address factors causing accidents. They can bring us down in 2019 if they continue to increase," he said.

In the three months from April to June 2018 that the Interim Solution Equipment has been in operation, NRZ customers pledged 919 254 tonnes of business but NRZ was able to move 856 476 tonnes.

# Former NRZ CIA, an aura of professionalism

After joining the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) as a young man with a luxuriant afro hairstyle, Mr Daniel Sithole left on retirement in July 2018 with a bald head symbolising the changes he has seen with the organisation over the years.

Mr Sithole, who served as Chief Internal Auditor bade farewell to colleagues after a career with the organisation spanning 27 years.

At a farewell ceremony in the boardroom attended by members of the Management Executive (Manex) and Branch Heads, Mr Sithole showed his other side as a man who can crack jokes.

Many people, including work-mates from his branch, saw him as a quiet person.

Acting Chief Internal Auditor Mr Abednicho Mnkantjo said his former boss was so quiet that it was difficult to know what he liked or didn't like. But Mr Sithole revealed a lighter side of himself when he threw anecdotes as he recounted his days at the NRZ.

He had some in giggles when he told how he served under five general managers but four of them left without a party being thrown for them as had happened to him.

"I have seen six general managers but served under five. I appreciate that you are holding a farewell function for me. Most of the GMs just left without a ceremony," he said.

The General Manager Engineer Lewis Mukwada said Mr Sithole was a consummate professional who despite challenges facing the organisation always made sure the company released its annual audited re-



*The General Manager Eng. Lewis Mukwada presents a present to retiring Chief Internal Auditor Mr Daniel Sithole in the boardroom*

sults.

He said many parastatals had gone for years without releasing audited financial results.

He said just because the organisation had challenges did not mean it had to forego or ignore important tasks. He said the same way at household level when people don't stop bathing or washing their torn clothes because things were tough was the same way Audit carried out its mandate in the face of challenges.

"Clothes might be torn but some people remain smart. This is what we try to emulate through Audit. Despite the challenges, every year we had a clean audit. Not only that, we submitted audits on time.

"A lot of parastatals have not had an audit for 10 years but in our case our books are audited every year. It is this high regard of professionalism with which we came to regard Mr

Sithole," he said.

Eng. Mukwada said the professionalism instilled by Mr Sithole should not end with his retirement. He said the board appreciated the work Mr Sithole was doing as Chief Internal Auditor.

Mr Sithole said when he joined the NRZ during its good times, it was the employer of choice.

"I believe those good times will come back again," he said.

Mr Sithole will devote most of his time to community service including his passion of working with the Boys Scouts Movement. He also plans to do a Diploma in Bible Studies and Leadership. The Audit Branch also held a separate farewell party for Mr Sithole which was attended by his wife, daughter and most staff members from the branch where testimonials were given about the former Chief Internal Auditor.

# Passion, drive and energy made Engineer Kaguru at NRZ

The term he “rose through the ranks” aptly describes Engineer Wellington Kaguru’s career path at the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ).

Joining the NRZ Electrical Test Laboratory in 1983 as a Laboratory Assistant, he retired 35 years later as Principal Engineer (Electrical).

Few people have risen from junior posts to lofty management positions.

But in Eng. Kaguru’s case, his meteoric rise is not surprising. The man was passionate about professional development. He holds a Master’s Degree in Business Administration, a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Management in addition to several diplomas. Col-

leagues described how Eng. Kaguru also inspired them to develop themselves professionally. Acting Principal Engineer (Electrical) R. Chikanda said he together with others in the Electrical section were lucky to have worked under Eng. Kaguru. “He spent many years guiding

and inspiring everyone in the workplace. He will be remembered for the great things he did not only for this organisation but for every worker in the workplace.

“Thank you for opening many opportunities for me and my co-workers and for being so passionate about our career advancement,” he said.

Eng. Kaguru joined NRZ in 1983 and worked for one year

as Laboratory Assistant then became a Laboratory Technician for five years and for 19 years he was an Engineering Assistant from 1989 to 2008. He was an Electrical Officer for a brief period. In 2009 he became Principal

Engineer (Electrical) with overall management responsibility for the Electrical section. Acting Chief Engineer (Infrastructure) Eng. Delphino Makamache said Eng. Kaguru was part of NRZ family for 35 years, until 31 March 2018 when he retired.

The farewell ceremony at the Training Centre was at-



Director Marketing Mrs Elector Mafunga (Right) presents a farewell gift to Mrs Ainah Dube Kaguru while Eng. Kaguru and acting Director Technical Services Eng. Alfred Gunzo look on

as Laboratory Assistant then became a Laboratory Technician for five years and for 19 years he was an Engineering Assistant from 1989 to 2008. He was an Electrical Officer for a brief period. In 2009 he became Principal

tended by Eng. Kaguru’s family including his wife, Mrs Ainah Dube-Kaguru, acting Director Technical Services Eng. Alfred Gunzo colleagues and workmates.

# Train tours a hit with schools

## By Ashley Gunzo

School train tours are a potential source of revenue for National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) Rail Leisure as many schools are keen on organising train trips to places of interest as part of their curriculum.

Recently, three primary schools in Bulawayo came together and hired passenger coaches to Figtree where children from Grade ECD A to Grade 3 enjoyed a day long excursion.

About 800 pupils, who paid \$25 each, took part in the excursion.

The tour which was organised by Exclusive African Adventures included children from Moray, Kumalo and Godlwayo primary schools in grade ECD A to grade 2. The young ones were accompanied by their teachers.

The adventure started off in high spirits at Bulawayo train station where children were treated to entertainment which was provided by Lu-

nar Events which did not disappoint in lifting the children's spirits.

The purpose of the trip was to give the children first-hand experience in a train something which the children will never forget.

A teacher at Kumalo Primary School, Mrs Ester Moyo, thanked the NRZ and the organisers of the trip for affording them the opportunity to ride on a train, something which most of the children had never done.

"In my 21 years of experience as a teacher I have never experienced a train tour with my pupils. We have learnt a lot and we hope more and more trips of this nature are organised as they help not only the children but it makes it easier for us teachers to educate the young ones as they now know the moving train not the one in their books" she said

A spokesman for Exclusive

African Adventures, who asked not to be named, said they were planning more similar trips with more schools in the city to entertain while at the same time educating the young ones. "We are also planning to take them in long distance trips to resort areas such as Victoria Falls and Hwange". He said their partnership with the NRZ was yielding results.

While the trip was a success, concern was raised over failure to keep to schedule. The train which was supposed to leave at 8.30 and return at 4.30 only left around midday and returned around 7pm.

Rail Leisure is a business unit of the NRZ's Passenger Services which provides recreational and leisure train services.

It runs steam trains, charter trains and short excursions on special occasions such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day.



# My View

## When kids have more sense than adults

When 13-year-old Nozipho Sibanda was recently honoured for reporting a broken railway track, one of the officials at the presentation ceremony remarked and I quote “she did what some adults could not do.”

I thought maybe the official was exaggerating and giving too much credit to the little girl. Perhaps no adult had passed through the place before her and she was the first to see the broken rail. However, an incident which I witnessed later has made me change my mind. Young children have a better sense of responsibility than some adults.

A crew of foreign filmmakers hired coaches and a locomotive for their scenes. While shooting scenes in the Westgate/Central Mechanical Workshops (CMW) area, a

little girl coming from school collapsed a few metres from the railway track well within the railway reserve land. Everyone on board the train saw the girl’s friends standing over her as they waited for her to recover. Initially, everyone thought it was a minor problem. The girl could have fainted due to hunger.

The train made several runs with the girl still lifeless on the ground. More than four hours later it became evident that something was seriously wrong with her.

Although the adults on the train made comments about the girl, pretending to be concerned, no-one wanted to take

responsibility to stop the train to help her or call an ambulance.

Yes, the train had been hired and the filmmakers had tight schedules to meet. But human life is more important than everything else.

The train crew, as people in charge of the train, should have taken the initiative to stop just as Nozipho took the initiative to alert NRZ officials about the broken track.

Up to now I don’t know what happened to the girl. I hope she recovered but honestly it didn’t look good and I think every adult who was on the shoot that day should hang their heads in shame. We indeed proved that Nozipho did what “some adults could not do”.

# Mr Sithole's Retirement in Pictures



The former Chief Internal auditor poses with members of the Management Executive



Mr Sithole with colleagues from the audit branch



Workers follow proceedings at Mr Sithole's retirement ceremony



Mr Sithole receives a gift from acting Chief Internal Auditor Mr Mnkantjo while his wife (left) looks on



Mr Sithole poses with members of staff from his former branch and guests



Audit staff members listen to speeches during Mr Sithole's retirement party at Audit Branch

# Eng. Kaguru's Retirement in Pictures



Eng Kaguru is joined on the dance floor by Director Marketing, his wife and acting Director Technical Services



Ex colleagues pose for a picture with retiring Principal Engineer (Electrical ) at his farewell party



Former colleagues and workmates follow proceedings at Eng Kaguru's farewell party



The table is set with Eng. Kaguru's farewell gifts



Eng. Kaguru with his children and grand children

Please send articles and pictures of activities in your branches and sections to the Editor on [amutemi@nrz.co.zw](mailto:amutemi@nrz.co.zw) or [pubre-loffice@nrz.co.zw](mailto:pubre-loffice@nrz.co.zw). We also welcome suggestions to improve the newsletter.