

## GM allays retrenchment fears under new JV Company

The joint venture company to be formed by National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) and the Diaspora Infrastructure Development Group (DIDG) /Transnet Consortium, which will take over the operations of the NRZ, will come up with a staff structure which will determine if any workers will be retrenched, the General Manager, Engineer Lewis Mukwada, said. Eng. Mukwada took an opportunity by trustees of the NRZ Pension Fund to brief workers on the proposed changes to the fund to give an update on the recapitalisation programme to employees at New Headquarters.

He said in his interactions, one question that he is frequently asked on the recapitalisation programme is on retrenchment.

Eng. Mukwada said if there were to be any retrenchments, these would be minimal and packages would be negotiated at the Railway Employment Council before the deal was operationalised.

But he said since the purpose of the recapitalisation exercise was to increase business, he expected the new company to actually employ more people.

“One question I have been asked so far is are there going to be retrenchments. NRZ and the consortium are going to negotiate on the structure of that new company and agree. We are also going to agree on numbers. As NRZ we froze recruitments and promotions to minimise the possibility of



**General Manager Eng. Lewis Mukwada**

retrenchments. The new company should increase business and, if anything, we should be looking for more people than we have.

“If, however, it turns out certain positions are not needed, we have to go to REC and negotiate for packages before the new company operates but I believe it will be minimal,” he said.

Eng. Mukwada said the new Joint Venture Company will only take over the freight and passenger businesses of the NRZ.

Real Estates, Training Centre and Catering sections will remain with the old NRZ.

NRZ assets will also not be transferred to the books of the new company but will be leased to it over a period of 25 years.

“For these assets, the JV Company will pay a monthly charge to the NRZ,” he said.

Eng. Mukwada said the NRZ had asked government to advance it a loan to pay off arrears owed to workers and the pension fund in the short term and then repay the Government since it was no longer taking over debts of its entities.

“No investor will want to come in and inherit a debt of \$400 million. Previously what used to happen is we would go to the Government and say ‘can you please take over our debt’? Government in terms of new policy is not taking over debts.

“The proposal we have put to government is: ‘we are going to get money from the new company over the next 25 year but employees and the pension fund can’t wait 25 years to get their money’. So we have asked government to advance us something we give to employees in the short term and then pay government over 25 years,” he said. The General Manager also paid tribute to workers for continuing to undertake their duties despite the challenges facing the company.

He said workers were still reporting for duty although they were not being paid on time.

“Whether salaries are coming late, you have been coming to work and doing what is required of you.” he said. Eng Mukwada complemented the organisation for enduring

challenging times and observed that the NRZ is still operational unlike other companies in Bulawayo which closed down. The NRZ is embarking on a \$400 million recapitalisation project which will result in the for-

mation of a Joint Venture Company in which the shareholders will be NRZ and the DIDG/Transnet Consortium. The company will take over some operations on the current NRZ for the next 25 years.

## Minister of Transport visits NRZ



Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development Hon. Joel Biggie Matiza (holding water bottle) is shown around the Mechanical Engineers' Workshops during a tour of the NRZ

The Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Honourable Joel Biggie Matiza, visited the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) in October 2018 to get an appreciation of the organisation's operations. Minister Matiza started his tour of the NRZ by meeting senior management at the New Headquarters where he was given an overview of the organisation by the General Manager, Engineer Lewis Mukwada. Minister Matiza said there was a need for the organisation to be innovative, especially with its Real Estate. He said the organisation could make

a lot of money if it leveraged on its vast real estate portfolio. After the briefing, the Minister was taken to the Mechanical Engineers' Workshops (MEs) where he was shown the various production processes. The Minister also toured NRZ subsidiary Road Motor Services (RMS) and was a participant at the Mine Entra conference held at ZITF grounds from 10-12 October 2018. The visit by the Minister was his first to the organisation since his appointment to lead the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development

by President Emmerson Mnangagwa in September 2018, taking over from Dr Joram Gumbo who was transferred to the Ministry of Energy and Power Development. Meanwhile, President Mnangagwa recently appointed a new Deputy Minister and permanent secretary for the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development. Advocate Fortune Chasi is the new Deputy Minister and Engineer Amos Marawa is the new permanent secretary. NRZ board chairman Mr Larry David



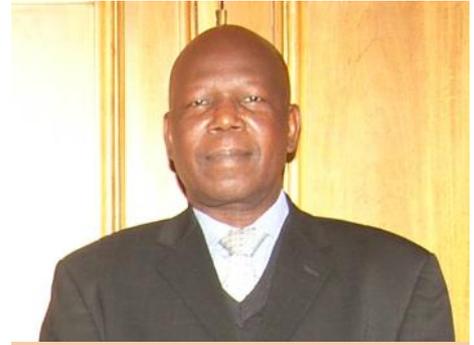
Advocate Fortune Chasi

Mavima was also appointed Minister of State for Provincial Affairs for the Midlands Province.

This followed his election as Senator for Shurugwi - Zvishavane in the July 30 2018 harmonised elections.

To that end, Mr Mavima tendered his resignation from the NRZ Board to focus on his new portfolios.

Brigadier General William Dube is currently the acting NRZ Board Chairman.



Brigadier General William Dube



Senator Larry David Mavima

# The unsung heroes of Dete

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) Dete Clinic is playing an important role in discharging the organisation's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by offering services to the local community.

The nurse and staff at the clinic are the unsung heroes and heroines of the CSR programme as they treat members of the local community who come with various ailments.

Although the clinic was primarily set up for NRZ workers in Dete, Hwange, Victoria Falls and their dependants, the local community has also benefitted immensely from the health facility.

The sister-in-charge Sister M. Hadebe said although there were council and government

health facilities in the area, many members of the local community preferred seeking treatment from the NRZ Clinic because there were no queues and delays associated with public health centres.

"The local community appreciates our service. They think we render better service and there is privacy," she said.

The clinic has a catchment area of about 4 800 people.

The clinic offers a number of services including testing and treatment of HIV, testing and treatment of TB as well as family planning and Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) and maternity.

It has an Opportunistic Infections (OI) section which gives Anti-Retroviral (ARV) drugs



Sister M. Hadebe

and counselling and support services.

"Drugs we have but there is a national shortage," said Sister Hadebe. Some of the drugs especially ARVs and those for TB treatment were provided by the Government.

Sister Hadebe said in the past NRZ employees shunned the clinic when it came to HIV testing preferring to go to other centres where they were not

known.

However, more workers were now coming for tests because they knew their privacy was guaranteed, she said.

The clinic took part in a Government sponsored immunisation campaign against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) which causes cervical cancer. A total of 205 girls aged between 10 and 14 were immunised.

Sister Hadebe said the most common ailment attended to at the clinic among NRZ workers was pneumonia.

She attributed this to workers being exposed to the cold during winter while working in the open.

The clinic also offers outreach

programme to Victoria Falls but said fuel shortages were affecting this aspect of their work while the ambulance broke down in August and has not been repaired, adversely affecting operations. She said one of the major challenges facing the clinic was that of water.

“We can go for a week. When there is no water a client brings two litres of water for our hand washing,” said Sister Hadebe.

She said they had made a request for a water tank, popularly known as Jojo tank, to be installed at the clinic and they were still waiting for it. Water to Dete is supplied by the Zimbabwe National Wa-

ter Authority (Zinwa).

The clinic was established to cater for NRZ workers when Dete was established as a station many years ago.

The NRZ provides nursing staff, drugs and other medical consumables needed in the treatment of patients and successful running of the facility.

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# Commercial Clerk makes history

A commercial clerk in the Marketing department has made history by becoming the first female employee in the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) to graduate with a degree in Logistics and Transport Management from the Great Zimbabwe University (GZU).

Miss Roselilah Madzokore, who is based at the Eastern Area headquarters in Harare, graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in Logistics and Transport Management in October.

The degree is a relatively new programme at GZU having been introduced in 2013.

She said she decided to embark on the degree programme because it was relevant to her job and transport and logistics was the backbone of the organisation.

Miss Madzokore said it had vastly increased her knowledge of the industry and the supply chain.

She said the Logistics and Transport Management degree was a powerful qualification which was recognised

by many organisations.

“The programme was good and exciting. NRZ is a transporter and it adds value to the supply chain. The degree touched on everything from



Miss Roselilah Madzokore

import to export and helped me to understand customers and documents,” she said.

She paid tribute to her seniors in the marketing department who gave her study leave and special

leave days to enable her to attend her block release classes.

Miss Madzokore joined the NRZ in 2003 as a typists and in 2006 was promoted to trainee commercial clerk.

She has been a commercial clerk since 2008.

The NRZ assists its workers undertaking studies in courses relevant to their jobs by granting them paid study leave and special leave to allow them to prepare for examinations.

Workers studying approved courses can take up to 14 days study leave a year.

In the past the organisation refunded fees of workers who would have successfully completed their courses. However, this incentive is no longer there due to challenges facing the organisation.

# My View

## Shall we wait for snakes to do our job?

Snakes give many people the creeps. Just the thought of the slithering creature is enough to give most people goose pimples.

The majority of people, except those snake catchers featured on snake documentaries on National Geographic, must suffer from ophidiophobia.

Now that it is hot, snakes have started emerging from hibernation. Soon reports of snake sightings and bites will abound.

I hope this time, there would not be a repetition of the last rainy season's incidents when two people were bitten by snakes on NRZ premises. Fortunately none of the bites were fatal but it must have been a traumatic experience for the persons involved.

With current drug shortages and pharmacists demanding payment in hard currency, being bitten by a snake this time round would be really bad news.

One effective way to prevent them from visiting is to keep grounds clear of grass and any other debris. If the ground is clear, snakes will be visible from a distance thus can be avoided.

However, if grass is allowed to grow and workplace areas resemble forests, snakes will come.

Snakes tend to avoid open spaces where they are exposed to predators.

Scary as they are, snakes do not go out of their way to attack people. Most of the times people get bitten because they would have accidentally stepped on snakes camouflaged by vegetation.

Which brings me to the juicy part of



Flash back. A coach on fire at Repair Siding last year

my story.

As an organisation, we are taking a knee jerk approach to simple house-keeping issues.

Remember the fire that destroyed the stabled coaches at Repair Siding last year?

It took the inferno for the powers that be to order the cutting of tall grass around that area.

Yet they had been seeing the grass grow out of control every day until the fire incident.

The Repair Siding looks different today compared to last year because efforts are now being made to cut the grass in the area and as well as relocating coaches which were becoming an eye sore.

But the question is did it have to take the destruction of coaches by fire to realise that the grass needed

cutting.

The same goes for clearing grass at the museum. It took the snake biting incident to spur those responsible into action.

As one moves along the railway network, one sees grass at level crossings obstructing the view of motorists to the dangers of oncoming trains.

Let us pray it would not take a major accident to have the grass cleared. It should not take a tragedy or disaster for us to do our jobs.

It is imperative that all work areas are kept smart. Apart from keeping away snakes and other disasters, it will enhance the organisation's corporate image.

As one official once said you do not need a lot of money to keep your environment smart.

Just a few hoes and physically fit

# Railways in the post-World War 11 boom

By John Batwell

Rhodesia came out of the Second World War ready for major growth and future development.

When the War broke out in 1939 the railways were geared to cope with heavy traffic with a backbone of well experienced staff.

The threat of war had created a great demand for base metals such as copper, chrome, zinc, lead and asbestos which the country could supply.

Six years on, the end of the war saw the need for more rolling stock and track overhauling besides other run-down facilities.

Many railwaymen returning from active service were disenchanted with their old jobs and were unsettled, while many resigned as the boom in industry and commerce led to greater employment choices.

New staff had to be recruited from abroad among the many ex-servicemen who desired a new life in a sunny developing country of which so many had had a taste.

Extensive remodelling of traffic yards, new goods' depots, new and additional locomotive depots, workshop expansion, relaying of track and hundreds of new houses for staff became the order.

An influx of new settlers attracted by good prospects, delightful climate and an atmosphere of relaxed living conditions free from the crowded life of Europe were instrumental in giving the railways the manpower to undertake the rehabilitation and modernisation of the network in all its facets.

In the locomotive manufacturing factories in the United



*The mid-fifties saw the development of Mpopoma station and the large marshalling yard on the west flank of the city of Bulawayo. Here a passenger train enters Mpopoma from the Westgate, Bulawayo end*

Kingdom, the frenzy continued in terms of fulfilling worldwide orders that had been delayed by the War. British manufacturer Beyer Peacock sent personnel out on trips looking for new business and Rhodesia Railways (RR) proved to be a lucrative customer purchasing some 180 Garratt type steam locomotives just over a decade to the year 1958.

The Garratt type locomotive was designed for arduous work and its articulation lent itself well to sinuous routes through hilly topography.

The post war boom in business and industry was felt particularly in the main centres of Salisbury (Harare), Bulawayo and the Wankie (Hwange) coalfields area where traffic movement was at its heaviest and therefore called for early attention in the 1950s.

In the cities of Salisbury and Bulawayo, the railway was traversing major urban and suburban roads which was

proving more dangerous with the increased rail movements. The construction of the large marshalling yards at Lochinvar just outside Salisbury facilitated the deviation of the railway - to the Mashonaland farm lands - out of the city centre and its northern suburbs. The deviation now ran west of Salisbury to meet up at Mount Hampden junction. Some 20 kilometres of line, running through the outskirts of the CBD, were lifted and land handed over to the municipality with benefit to town planning as well as the end of the headache of dangerous level crossings.

Before the early stages of Lochinvar marshalling yard had been completed, an extensive deviation of the main Bulawayo-Salisbury line near Norton was called for.

This deviation was necessitated by the Hunyani Poort water catchment for Salisbury with its rapidly growing needs and an industrial area at Norton. While Salisbury had its issues

with meeting rising rail traffic, in Bulawayo the boom was bringing huge problems for the overtaxed facilities and torrent of imports from South Africa. Bulawayo also had to deal with the increasing copper and coal traffic passing through from the north.

The line eastward from the city to Gwelo (Gweru) and on to Salisbury crossed many roads in the urban area and before the end of the Second World War, the city engineer put through a proposal to RR to deviate this rail route round the west and north of Bulawayo. Held over until after the war, Bulawayo was about to witness not only this but a number of alteration schemes which embraced the deviation of the Cape main line from South Africa between Bellevue and Bulawayo; the deviation of the north line from Bulawayo via Westgate to Mpopoma; the provision of a massive marshalling yard at Mpopoma, seven kilometres from Bulawayo, at the junction of the deviated Salisbury and Victoria Falls main lines; and the construction of a new double-track railway from Mpopoma through the northern outskirts, with road-over-rail bridges, to Cement station, enabling the lifting of the original Salisbury

main line through Suburbs halt and Kumalo. Mpopoma yard comprised the laying of fifty-six tracks and sidings. The lifting of the line through Suburbs and Kumalo meant Bulawayo became a terminus with dead-end station platform lines.

The re-aligning of the line from the south released space for a new and larger motive power depot to accommodate the new procurements from overseas. The new depot saw the inclusion of a locomotive turntable - the first of only two in the country - repair and ash pits, offices, stores, mess and wash rooms, and an electrically-operated coaling plant. The opening was in April 1953.

Mpopoma's opening was two years on in May 1955. The Mechanical Workshops put themselves on the map too during this time with the "home-made" class 12B 4-8-2s.

A quantity of spare class 12 frames and a number of class 11A type boilers were available and Chief Mechanical Engineer F. E. Hough decided it was within the bounds of possibility for a batch of ten locomotives to be built using the spares.

Construction began on the

prototype class 12B in Bulawayo in 1954 with completion of the small fleet in 1955. The 12Bs spent most of their brief seven-year span with RR working from Kafue until displaced by bigger powerful Garratts.

The class was then sold off to Mozambique Railways. Politically this was now the era of the decade-long Federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland.

It was in the Wankie colliery area that yet another major deviation was made. Mineral traffic out of the Copperbelt and coal movements called for a realignment providing an easier grade for trains to traverse.

An easier grade meant heavier trains could be marshalled. In the mid-50s, power station, copper mine and railway coal orders were leaping.

A thirteen kilometre sinuous deviation was created through the hilly Matabele countryside, RR got its one and only tunnel and a new exchange yard with the coalfields was created at Thomson Junction. To this day, this serpentine section of railway provides a playground for steam locomotive enthusiasts from all over the world wielding their photographic equipment!

The countryside is rugged with elevated photographic vantage points and hard-working, loud locomotives to boot.

**To be continued...**



A goods train arrives from the east, via the city's suburbs and several level crossings, into Bulawayo before the station became a terminus.

# NRZ Sports Galas: Two success stories

**By Methembe Dube and Daisy Nyoni**

This year's edition of the Midlands Area Sports Council gala attracted a lot of sports enthusiasts from different parts of the province who thronged Triangle Sports Club to participate in different sporting activities.

The two-day event, held on 08-09 September 2018, lived up to expectation with the NRZ being applauded for encouraging sports development in the province.

Midlands Area Sports Council chairman, Mr Lizwe Mpofo, said the gala was held for the first time in a long time this year due to financial challenges.

However, plans were under-way to revert to making it an annual event, he said.

Mr Mpofo said to add flavour to the gala, teams and sports-persons from outside the NRZ were invited to participate.

The tournament had a number of sporting disciplines such as chess, darts, pool, netball and soccer.

Six football teams battled it out in the tournament and in the end Mkoba Crusaders walked away victors after they stunned NRZ Leopards in a thrilling final which ended 1-0

Mr Mpofo said as event organizers they were very happy to have hosted such a successful event.

"We hope to continue having events of this magnitude annually but next year we want to attract a lot of people. We are appealing for more partnerships with corporates so that we promote sport in the country," he said.

"NRZ prides itself as a stake-

holder-driven institution, hence we occasionally create platforms for interactions such as sports tournaments which create an opportunity for the company to interact with its customers"

Midlands province is a haven for sporting talent, as many young athletes have gone to prove their excellence at the national stage.

However, the lack of a stage to showcase their talent has proved to be a major setback for these young athletes in realizing their goals.

The tournament ended with a braai and entertainment. The participants were kept on their toes as they were treated to music and energy-filled performances from the local upcoming musician T Nash. Meanwhile, Sporting teams from the Southern Area converged in Victoria Falls in September for the Southern Area Sports Council (SASC) gala.

The teams participated in various sporting disciplines which included netball, soccer, volleyball and darts.

The SASC secretary, Mr Takura Diamond Murada, said netball teams were the most organised of all the teams that took part at the gala.

"The ladies' netball teams have been the most organised and had their act together and they played in the most organised way," he said.

Netball teams which participated at the gala were Westgate, Hwange, Sawmills and Victoria Falls team A and B. In soccer, there was Gwaai, Bulawayo Mechanical Engineers, Westgate, Victoria

Falls, Sawmills and Hwange. In darts only two teams, Bulawayo and Victoria Falls, participated, with both teams dominated by male players. Ms Mutongeseyi Siziba, one of the only four woman darts players, lamented the low participation by women in the sport.

"From last year we have been trying to put together a solid team for the ladies but its proving very difficult as most ladies are not interested in the sport," she said.

NRZ, through the Welfare section, holds monthly competitions in three area in order for employees and their dependents to interact socially in an informal setting.

It is through these events that they mix and get to know each other better.

Galas have resulted in employees bonding , going beyond just meeting at work during business hours.

However, financial challenges facing the organization have seen the NRZ scaling down on sporting activities and the annual General Manager's Show where best participating teams from the area galas met has not been held for some years now .

**If you have stories you want to appear in the Railroader Digital Newsletter please contact the Editor on**

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# NRZ in pictures



Transport and Infrastructural Development Minister Hon. Joel Biggie Matiza meets with NRZ senior management



Director Marketing Mrs Elector Mafunga joins engineers from the Mechanical Engineers' Workshop to pose for a picture with the Minister after his tour



Security Services Manager Mr L Ndlovu (second from Right) with staff from his branch



The General Manager, Engineer Lewis Mukwada, chats to NRZ employees manning the Inter-Rail-Tech stand at

Mine Entra 2018



Sister Hadebe with Dete Clinic staff



Visitors at Inter-Rail-Tech stand at Mine Entra 2018