

NGWATHE FLIES TO UKRAINE

...And learns how to be a successful racer

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PARYS – Ngwathe local municipality Mayor Joey Mochela and seven members of a 16-member 'Team Ngwathe' flew to Ukraine on Monday, August 20 to join a South African team participating in the international Powerboat event to be held in Ternopil on Saturday, August 25.

"Most of these learners are from our townships hence the developmental project is mainly aimed at producing black professional Powerboat Formula 1 pilots from the townships where the sport was rarely known before this particular initiative," said Mayor Mochela.

She said powerboat concept was presented to the council by Zam Entertainment and it has accommodated lots of young people between the age of 12 and 16 from previously disadvantaged areas.

Pilots from Ngwathe include teenage girls Sibongile Beyaphi (13) and Puleng Direko (17) teenage boys Lehlohonolo Lephuting (16) and Branden Naude (15), Modibedi Thoote (15), Rebone Thabane (15), and Bafana Dlamini (14).

The teenagers who were also high performers at school come from humble backgrounds from areas such as Parys, Heilbron, Koppies, Edenville and Vredefort, that comprise Ngwathe municipality.

"The trip shall also serve as empowerment, capacity building and motivation for our young future stars. Our councillors and the community at large played a vital role in identifying these young pilots and we are grateful for that collective effort," Mochela added.

A former Formula 1 Powerboat Promoter in South Africa Christo de Jager said the team was the best selected. "This team is one of the best teams in South Africa and we are going to witness history when Puleng Direko becomes the first black Powerboat Formula 1 Pilot within the next few years," de Jager said.

When Zam Entertainment initially came up with the concept, the municipality grabbed the opportunity as it felt the kids and their level of dedication had finally produced positive results.

Zola Key of Zam Entertainment and the current event organiser and National Formula 1 promoter said the sport has been growing since two decades ago.

"F1 powerboat racing has been established in South Africa more than 25 years is one of the biggest Formula 1 National Championship series in the world. The South African Formula 1 Powerboat Series is a dynamic sport offering adrenalin, power, speed, technology, precision, close competition and excitement in abundance," Key said.

“Our programme includes swimming lessons, motivational talk, life skills & academic assistance offered by Professionals such as David Basson and Senior Media Practitioner and motivational speaker Victor Mecoamere.”

Spokesperson for Ngwathe local municipality Steve Naale, told Public Eye the young aspiring pilots would attend as observers to motivate them to achieve national colors and be able to compete at this level in the future.

He said council and other government agencies have been rallying behind local athletes.

Phakisa Freeway sponsored the trip under the auspices of Free State Tourism Authority in conjunction with Fezile Dabi District Municipality and Ngwathe Local Municipality.

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