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SA's Life-Sized Heritage Gets A Johnson Crane Hire Lift

History was hoisted high recently as Johnson Crane Hire lifted life-sized bronze statues from the Long March of Freedom collection to move them to a new home.

The exhibition of 96 important historical figures celebrate 350 years of South Africa's history through the lives of those sculptured. It has been on view to the public at Fountains Valley in the City of Tshwane since September 2015 and is being relocated to the Maropeng Visitors Centre at the Cradle of Humankind in Mogale City.

The National Heritage Project Company commissioned Johnson Crane Hire to move the heavier statues.

These included the sculptures of

- Chief Kgosi Kgamanyane Pilane, chief of the Bakgathla-ba-kgafela;
- King Maqoma, Xhosa military commander and King of the Ngqika Xhosa;
- King Hintsa Kakhawuto of the house of Phalo, paramount chief of amaGcaleka and King of the Xhosa and
- Paramount Chief Sandile Kanqika, chief of amaNgqika and paramount chief of the amaRharhabe Xhosa.

"We were very proud to have been asked to move these historically important statues," says Cedric Froneman, sales executive for key accounts at Johnson Crane Hire. "The larger statues were lifted using our Liebherr LTM1030 2.1 all-terrain mobile crane with 35 ton capacity and transported on a low-bed truck."

According to Froneman, the statues each weighed about 1,000 kg or one ton and were wrapped for protection before lifting. They were then lifted with polyester slings under the experienced direction of a rigger to avoid damaging them.

The works have been enjoyed by thousands of domestic and international visitors, and the new, well-developed venue promises to improve the exposure of these statues to general public.

The Long March to Freedom collection is planned to grow into a procession of over 400 bronze statues over time. Visitors can walk through the loosely spaced procession, beginning in the 1700s with rebel chiefs and renegade missionaries. The historical progression moves along generations of freedom fighters, until they meet Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela at the dawn of South Africa's democracy.

HEROES LIFT PIC 01 : Bronze statues of heritage figures – weighing around a ton each – were lifted by Johnson Crane Hire.

HEROES LIFT PIC 02 : Statues were wrapped for protection before lifting.

HEROES LIFT PIC 03 : Johnson Crane Hire's 35-ton all-terrain crane at the Maropeng Visitors Centre.

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