**PRESS RELEASE**

North puts its best foot forward with Rebel range

***24 August 2016:*** *Effective personal protective equipment (PPE) footwear is essential for workers in numerous industries, ranging from heavy engineering and mining, to manufacturing and forestry. PPE specialist North stocks a comprehensive range of working boots manufactured by Johannesburg-based Rebel Safety Gear, which boast internationally-recognised SABS and ISO 20345 safety certification, in addition to featuring stylish and comfortable designs.*

North has been an authorised Sub-Saharan African distributor of the entire Rebel footwear range, from general work boots through to more sophisticated high-spec products, since 2007. Rebel Safety Gear general manager **Rob Gingell**, who boasts 11 years’ experience in the PPE industry, states that North is one of the biggest, and one of the best-known PPE distributors in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“If you want your product to get to all areas of the PPE market, then North has to be one of your distributors, plain and simple. The company has an extensive network of branches, and its sales teams are well-trained, and market products to end-users in the correct manner. We can rely on North to do justice to our products,” he explains.

Gingell stresses that this is a mutually-beneficial partnership. “No man is an island. Rebel cannot design and import footwear, as well as distribute it to the thousands of end-users. We want to specialise in providing footwear solutions, and we need our distribution partners to specialise in selling the products to the end-users. This is exactly what Rebel and North have achieved.”

The best-selling Rebel product is the Chukka boot, which has been around since Rebel’s establishment in 2005. Gingell reveals that workers throughout Africa ask for it by name. “It still remains the most popular. However, the Rebel Team prides itself on listening to the market, and makes sure that it is continually bringing out new products based on what the market needs. Our boots are stylish, and can cope with the most rugged working environments imaginable.”

According to Gingell, Rebel strives to ensure that North gets its products in the quickest possible turnaround times. “We often accompany North sales staff when they visit customers, so that we can assist them in solving any footwear problems. We provide North with great product that is easy to sell. In turn, they assist us with marketing our products, as well as getting them to the end users. We also assist the North branches in other African countries with product from our bond store, which allows them to land the product at better pricing.”

This partnership is a major benefit to the industry in general, says Gingell. “If our distributors are out in the market doing a good job of selling our product, then we can concentrate on our job, which is to provide the market with great looking, high quality products at the best prices. We can also concentrate on making sure that we always have the products in stock, and that we give the best service. If both the manufacturer and the distributor are doing their jobs well, then the partnership ensures that end-users get good product, quickly. This reflects well on the PPE industry as a whole.”

Gingell admits that the PPE industry in South Africa is currently plagued by cheap and low-grade products, and advises that investment in tried-and-trusted brands will ensure long-term cost savings and greater safety for employees. “The market seems to be over-traded, and there is a perception that the only way to survive is by cutting margins. This is not a new phenomenon, and the developed world has negotiated its way out of this problem. However, it requires the local industry to revert back to selling the quality aspects of PPE, and sticking with trusted brands that have the resources to develop quality PPE that considers worker safety as being more important than just cost.”

The slowdown in the construction and mining and industries is another challenge, however Gingell believes that these slowdowns can also have a positive impact. “Tough markets give us the opportunity to focus on our business, and make sure that we are doing everything right. Together with our distribution partners, we have to go out and look for new opportunities and new markets for our products. Rebel is a South African company, and our roots are proudly in Africa. Slowdowns in industries are part of life in Africa, and we cannot let it get us down.”

Gingell is overwhelmingly optimistic about the future outlook. “North currently seems to be riding the crest of a wave. The company is expanding aggressively, its branding is fresh, and it comes across as an energetic, motivated company. These are the sort of partners that Rebel identifies with, and wants to be associated with. Although we have been partners for a long time, we always feel enthusiastic to work with North, and we hope that the relationship will continue to grow.”

***Ends***

**Notes to the editor**
There are numerous photographs specific to this press release. Please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the North Safety Products Africa link.

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