**PRESS RELEASE**

Skyriders to focus on African partners, new inspection technology in 2022

**18 January 2022:** Ongoing inspection, repair and maintenance for a major petrochemical producer, in addition to work at various pumped storage schemes and even a hydro power station for Eskom, was a major focus for [Skyriders Access Specialists (Pty) Ltd.](http://www.ropeaccess.co.za) in 2021, comments Marketing Manager **Mike Zinn**.

In terms of the former, a highlight for Skyriders last year was using the new Zenith vertical inspection solution from the US to inspect the internal structure of tanks at a large petrochemical tank farm depot in Germiston. The two-phase project involved moving large plant and equipment off of these big storage tanks to facilitate access, followed by deploying the Elios SkyEye drone and the Zenith solution.

Developed by Interactive Aerial based out of Traverse City in Michigan in the US, Zenith is a simple-to-use, interactive, remote drop camera system that allows users to survey 150 m of vertical space, negating the need for costly downtime, human entry and the many related health and safety issues. The system provides fully automated inspections of even the hardest-to-reach vertical asset.

Skyriders’ ongoing involvement with Eskom’s pumped storage schemes represents one of the most challenging industrial environments it has been involved with to date, as it has to comply with the strict requirements of the Mine Health & Safety Act 29 of 1996. “We are keen to introduce the possibility of using our Elios SkyEye drone to carry out inspection work here, as it will reduce the time taken and the risk for all involved,” says Zinn.

He adds that Skyriders’ drone division showed significant growth last year, and hopes that more opportunities will arise to deploy the new Zenith vertical inspection solution as well. “At the moment, much of this kind of inspection work consists of ultrasound wall thickness testing, which is best carried out by our rope access teams,” adds Zinn.

Highlights of 2021 included completing a successful project in Namibia for a repeat client. Meanwhile, the bulk of Skyriders’ business last year continued to be inspection, repair and maintenance. Zinn attributes this to more and more clients realising that rope access is a viable and highly effective solution to opt for when the cost of access, which has traditionally been scaffolding, is disproportionate to the scope of work. “Our combination of rope access and drones, for example, has proven time and time again to deliver significant savings and benefits for our clients.”

Skyriders is currently planning a basic maintenance project for its major petrochemical client. “High-pressure or mechanical cleaning is not an overly technical process, so it does not make sense to spend an inordinate amount just to gain access to the interior of these tanks. It is estimated that on this project alone, rope access can result in a 70% saving on the total project cost,” reveals Zinn.

“For clients that are cash-strapped due to various reasons, it just makes sense for them to use rope access to inspect their structures and maintain them to the required safety and production standards, and at the same time save a considerable amount of money and time.”

With regard to prospects for 2022, Zinn highlights that Skyriders is looking to expand further into sectors like cement, agriculture and food and beverage in Africa. “There is definite potential for sustained growth on the continent. Our major challenge is to find the right partners to enter these specific markets and countries,” says Zinn.

For example, Skyriders has partnered successfully with Australia-based Resolute Mining in Mali and Canadian-based international mining company Dundee Precious Metals in Namibia. “What we want to focus on in 2022 is to continue working with such partners,” says Zinn. He points to a recent project at a hydro power station dam wall in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Skyriders carried out a maintenance scope that would not have been possible by traditional means of access, and at the same time giving its client valuable exposure in that country.

While many companies have adopted a ‘wait and see’ approach since the Covid-19 pandemic, Zinn says that business is showing signs of returning to normal, with Skyriders entering 2022 with a couple of major contracts under its belt. This follows a bit of a lull at the end of 2021, ascribed to companies taking stock of their essential maintenance requirements and budgeting accordingly.

“We are quite busy, with a few good contracts to start us off. We hope that this trend will continue throughout the year, and that the South African industrial environment does not have to retrench or downscale any further. We extend our sincere gratitude to those clients who continue to entrust us with their high-level projects, and look forward to continue building on these relationships,” Zinn concludes.

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**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this release, please visit [http://media.ngage.co.za](http://media.ngage.co.za/) and click the Skyriders link to view the company’s press office.

**About Skyriders**  
Skyriders (Pty) Ltd., established in 1998, is a leader in the South African rope access industry, providing cost- and time-saving solutions to clients in the power generation and petrochemical industries who require rope access aided inspection, NDT and maintenance work to be done in difficult to reach, high-up locations.

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