**PRESS RELEASE**

Skyriders is flying high in Mali

*Skyriders continues to live up to its reputation of being the leading provider of rope access-aided inspection, non-destructive testing (NDT) and maintenance-related services to African industries, following the company’s permanent appointment at Syama gold mine in Mali.*

**30 November, 2011:** Specialist rope-access expert Skyriders has been permanently contracted to carry out routine maintenance and inspection work at Syama gold mine in Mali, following its successful extension of Resolute Mining’ssmokestack from 75 m to 100 m.

Skyriders marketing manager **Mike Zinn** points out that the company’s team of rope access experts managed to successfully extend the stack in 2008 without the use of a crane, ultimately resulting in Skyriders being contracted to do regular inspection and maintenancework.

“Accessing a 100-m-high smokestack is challenging, but for Skyriders this is an ideal environment. Most of the infrastructure on mines is high and scaffolding is needed to service such structures, which is expensive and time consuming, especially when the job is small,” he explains. “When the cost of access is disproportionate to the work that has to be performed, Skyriders offers a cheaper, faster and safer alternative access method that can be used in various locations on a mine.”

The Skyriders team is now contracted by Resolute Mining to carry out inspections and maintenance related repairs on the smokestack every four months, notes Skyriders project leader and level 3 rope access technician **Jansen Madike.** “The primary function of our role is to inspect the stack, and to repair any defects. If any complex repairs needto be undertaken, we will install the necessary scaffolding in order to ensure that the relevant specialists can gain access.”

Once inside the stack, Madike explains that the Skyriders rope access team installs aerial work platforms known as ‘skyjacks’. “The first task is to place a beam at the top of the structure and to secure it, before hanging the cables that are attached to a cage at the bottom. The cage is then hoisted up; thereby, enabling welders and other maintenance workers to safely stand upright while carrying out the necessary work.”

Madike adds that the stack produces large amounts of sulphur dioxide, which poses a significant threat to the structural integrity of the tower. “When cooling sulphur dioxide is combined with moisture, it becomes highly-corrosive sulphuric acid which corrodes any metal severely. As a result, a large amount inspection work and recoating needs to be undertaken in the future.”

During the inspection process, Madike notes that the Skyriders team of rope access specialists visually survey the metal for any corrosive damage, before testing the thickness of the wall using ultrasound. “The Skyriders team of 5 rope access specialists typically complete an inspection in 2 days, and almost always ahead of schedule. This world-class service ultimately ensures that the client does not lose valuable time or money as a result of scheduled or unscheduled shutdowns.”

Although Skyriders’ scope of the project has been highly-successful to date, Madike does admit that the work is physically and mentally challenging. “A large amount of our work is undertaken through abseiling, which requires a high degree of fitness and concentration. What’s more, it usually takes two days of travel to get onsite, as we fly from OR Tambo International in Johannesburg to Nairobi in Kenya. From there, it is a seven-hour drive to the site in Bamako, and we generally do an induction straight away, before starting the work the next day. All these aspects of the job are exhausting; however, Skyriders boasts the best team in the business and our string of successful results, combined with a 22-year zero-fatality record, is proof of that.”

Around 20 percent of Skyriders’ work is currently mining-related, and Madike is confident that the company can increase that market share in the future. “As investment increases in mining operations across Africa, so too does Skyriders’ potential for growth. Having already displayed our capabilities first-hand to Resolute Mining, I am confident that we can secure more mining contracts moving forward into 2012,” he concludes.

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**There are numerous photographs specific to this press release. Please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Skyriders link.

**About Skyriders**Skyriders (Pty) Ltd, established in 1988, 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.

**Skyriders Contact**Mike Zinn
Skyriders Marketing Manager
Phone: (011) 312 1418
Email: mike@skysolutions.co.za
Web: [www.skysolutions.co.za](http://www.skysolutions.co.za)

**Media Contact**Ryan Collyer
NGAGE Public Relations
Phone: (011) 867-7763
Fax: 086 512 3352
Cell: 072 377 5000
Email: ryan@ngage.co.za
Web: [www.ngage.co.za](http://www.ngage.co.za)

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