**PRESS RELEASE**

SA’s rope access industry on the up and up

***10 December, 2013:*** *Since its establishment in 1999, Skyriders has developed a reputation for being a market leader in the provision of work-at-height solutions, rope access aided inspection and non-destructive testing (NDT).*

Skyriders marketing manager **Mike Zinn** points out that he is confident that the company’s successes will continue into the future as a result of forecasted growth in South Africa’s rope access industry.

Zinn points out that the market is showing positive growth in that there is currently a high demand for jobs that require cost-effective means of doing work-at-height. “The two main sectors showing growth are industrial rope access, which services oil and gas, heavy inland industries and the construction industries; and the commercial rope access sector, which services the painting, general maintenance, window washing and outdoor advertising industries.”

Despite the current demand for jobs that require cost-effective means of doing work at heights, Zinn points out that the barriers to entry in the rope access industry is relatively low. “This is becoming a major challenge in our industry. Anyone with a bit of capital and a level 1 rope access qualification can start a rope access company. However, what they don’t realise is that they fall short on the required additional skills, site experience and supporting structures to successfully deliver and meet an industrial clients’ needs.”

Zinn adds that all rope access specialists should be accredited and recognised by The Institute for Work At Height (IWH)an organisation that governs all height-related industries, including scaffolding, mobile elevated work platforms, cherry pickers, rope access and suspended platforms; with an aim of creating safety awareness and in turn professionalism in the overall work-at-heights industry.

Zinn states that the institute is becoming strict, with standards and governance improving rapidly. “Skyriders has always tried to set the standard with regards to safety and quality; we have acquired our ISO 9001:2008 and the OHSAS18001:2007 accreditations.”

Looking to new developments within Skyriders, Zinn says that the company is in the process of refurbishing its Midrand premises in order to offer a basic rigging course to internal and external rope access technicians. This will complement the other courses on offer (fall arrest, rope access Level I to III), explains Zinn.

“We have utilised instructors from M&M – a Cape Town-based rigging training company. M&M is well known in the industry for administrating thorough and professional rigging training,” explains Zinn.

Since July, this year, Skyriders has offered and completed two courses in conjunction with M&M and Height Wise – a solely owned subsidiary of Skyriders.

“The intense five-day course includes theory, safety, maintenance, inspection and practical training. Zinn points out that the course is tough: “Only around 80% of the students who have been through the training have passed to date. Students do, however, have the opportunity to be re-evaluated twice.

Skyriders has on-going contracts at Medupi and Kusile coal-fired power stations. Where they carry out a wide variety of tasks including bolting, torque verification, painting, NDT and safety nets in the Limpopo Province.

“A large portion of the work that we do at Medupi and Kusile involves assisting non-rope access qualified riggers from other companies in positioning their rigging equipment so that they can rig and move ducting, piping and steel work into place,” he explains.

Skyriders is also involved in a number of other high-profile projects, including the construction of a new smokestack, at Syama gold mine, in Mali, which was completed in July, this year. Zinn points out that Skyriders was originally contracted by Australian mining-house Resolute Mining in 2009 to carry out inspections and maintenance-related repairs on another smokestack.

“This year, however, Resolute Mining contracted Skyriders to assist in building the new smokestack from scratch. A seven man team from Skyriders bolted the stack together and, as the stack progressed vertically, the team added ladders and platforms,” explains Zinn.

Skyriders has also completed the installation and general maintenance of a smokestack for copper miner Palaborwa Mining Company (PMC), in Phalaborwa, Limpopo, in July this year.

“We were required to access the top of the smokestack at PMC and remove and replace the upper section of a ladder that had been badly corroded. What’s more, we also performed maintenance activity on PMC’s aircraft warning lights on the various smoke stacks,” states Zinn.

Meanwhile, Skyriders is also busy with inspection and general welding maintenance of the ducting at South African cement producer AfriSam’s facility. “AfriSam has a large amount of ducting that moves product, air and dust that it is very susceptible to wear and tear. Skyriders sent a four-man team into the ducts to do the necessary welding and repair,” explains Zinn.

***Ends.***

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

**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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