**PRESS RELEASE**

Maintaining international safety standards through rope access

***10 July, 2014:*** *Hard-to-reach inspection and repair work has been successfully completed on time and within budget on the ducting between the boilers and the smoke stacks at the SAPPI Ngodwana pulp and paper mill in Mpumalanga by leading rope access specialists Skyriders.*

The SAPPI Ngodwana Mill is a fully-integrated kraft mill that is responsible for producing pulp for newsprint and containerboard, as well as for in-house use. In order to maintain its internationally recognised ISO 14001 environmental management and ISO 9002 quality management status, SAPPI has been relying on rope access aided repair and inspection services from Skyriders since 2006.

Skyriders marketing manager **Mike Zinn** notes that the company’s latest scope of work, carried out over a 5 day period in March 2014, included internal inspections and minor repairs of the ducting from the chemical recovery boiler through the precipitators to the smoke stack.

"In order to complete this challenging task, the team of five rope access technicians made use of ultrasonic wall thickness measuring instrumentation, in order to complete a comprehensive inspection from the boiler to precipitator, and from the precipitator to the smoke stack. Some minor welding was completed to repair damaged areas," he explains.

According to Zinn, the tight deadlines of the project posed a challenge as the plant was undergoing routine maintenance shut down. "Several specialist skills were required for this demanding project, as the ability to measure ultrasonic wall thickness and welding while suspended at height requires great skill and expertise."

The SAPPI Ngodwana Mill boasts a production capacity of 210 000​ tons per annum (tpa) of dissolving wood pulp, 200 000 tpa of unbleached chemical pulp and 110 000​ tpa of mechanical pulp. Its paper capacity includes 230 000 tpa of kraft linerboard, and 140 000​​ tpa of newsprint​ material. Due to this large scale capacity, Zinn notes that prolonged downtime leads to major operational losses.

"Rope access aided inspection and repair has provided SAPPI Ngodwana with significant savings in terms of cost and time, as scaffolding can be costly and time consuming, and the cost can be disproportionate to the work that needs to be carried out. A proven track record has resulted in Skyriders successfully maintaining repair and inspection contracts onsite since 2006," he adds.

Given the successful working relationship between SAPPI Ngodwana and Skyriders to date, Zinn is optimistic of the potential for future growth."Our main aim with regards to SAPPI Ngodwana is to secure more regular inspection and repair work on the ducting, boilers and smoke stacks, while offering confined space solutions to ensure a more comprehensive service,” 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 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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