**PRESS RELEASE**

Rope access, a reliable solution for maintenance in power generation

***06 February, 2015:*** *Time constraints are a challenge when working for power producers, as they have tight schedules, and there is always pressure to complete the maintenance shut downs as quickly as possible. Despite these pressures, leading rope access specialist Skyriders has successfully provided quality rope access services to Eskom for over 15 years.*

Most power stations are large facilities consisting of boilers, cooling towers and smoke stacks. Skyriders marketing manager Mike Zinn indicates that safe access to these facilities is a challenge, and scaffolding can be time consuming and expensive to erect. “The rope access offered by Skyriders is not reliant on scaffolding, which allows trained technicians to complete tasks much quicker.”

Zinn notes that rope access is one of the most efficient ways to carry out maintenance with rapid rigging and de-rigging, as there are not two separate teams needed to construct the rigging and then carry out the maintenance. “The rope technician carries out the work. Rope access also provides the teams with the flexibility needed to complete tasks at various locations quickly.

Skyriders has successfully completed recent maintenance work at three of Eskom’s power stations, Matimba, Medupi and Tutuka power stations using rope access. The work at Matimba required working at a height of 250 m. The steel erection at Medupi made use of rope access as it was a quicker and cheaper alternative to scaffolding. The recent work at Tutuka required industrial vacuum cleaning work on hard-to-reach structures that were inaccessible using scaffolding.

At the Medupi power station, Zinn reveals that Skyriders was tasked with carrying out maintenance on the station’s water treatment plant. The water treatment plant is responsible for processing all of the processed water from the power station, including run-off water and the process water from the plant. This water is treated and pumped back into the system.

“The columns of the Medupi water treatment plant are approximately 6 m high, and by using rope access, the maintenance team was able to get to the top of the columns and complete the necessary work quicker and easier than if they had used scaffolding,” he explains.

Skyriders has also carried out various projects at the Matimba power station since 2003. The most recent project required maintenance work on two of the station’s stacks. This involved a high pressure wash of the two stacks and the application of acid resistant paint to the top 40 m of the 250 m high stacks. This project faced several difficulties, but these were successfully overcome by the team of eight highly trained rope access technicians.

Zinn states that fly ash debris can be harmful and lead to negative effects on the environment and efficiency of a power station. “In November 2013, Skyriders was appointed by Eskom to remove this debris from all inaccessible structures at the Tutuka power station. These structures included; the boiler house, turbine hall, ash handling plant, structural beams, side walls and cable trays.”

Skyriders has been carrying out general rope access maintenance and inspection at Tutuka power station since 2005. Although scaffolding has been used in the past, rope access has been proven to be a more efficient means of gaining access to high elevation structures, particularly in the power generation sector. Rope access is also significantly faster and cheaper, as well as more flexible.

Zinn adds that Skyriders has also had a permanent rope access maintenance and inspection team at Kendal for ten years, assisting with various tasks such as boiler internal inspections, inspections of the PF pipes, coal bunkers, terrace bins, precip hoppers and ducting. “Teams have also carried out maintenance on the roof and side sheeting, bucket elevators, smoke stacks to name a few.”

Skyriders offers a variety of rope access aided services to numerous industries, such as power generation, mining, heavy industry and facilities management. These services include non-destructive testing (NDT) and inspection, concrete inspection, maintenance and repairs, application of coating systems, work at height safety systems, welding, and confined space rescue and standby.

Zinn believes that the Skyriders team has proven itself highly skilled and proficient in the power generation sector. “The highlighted successes at Eskom power stations has resulted in the company being contracted for additional work at some of the facilities, and the future outlook for Skyriders remains positive,” 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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