

MEDIA RELEASE

13 August 2015

Groutville Development sets the standard for quality

Leading black-owned engineering consulting firm GIBB is proud to be associated with the award winning Groutville Housing Project in KwaZulu Natal, which has seen over 600 houses already handed over to proud new homeowners – who have previously never lived in, nor owned, proper homes.

The settlement which was awarded *Best Informal Settlements Upgrade Project Award* at the Govan Mbeki Awards recently, has been hailed as exemplary for its high quality standards and has raised the bar for similar constructions in South Africa.

At a media roundtable, journalists were invited to discuss infrastructure development in Kwa-Zulu Natal, the inherent challenges and great milestones achieved by GIBB.

Media were then taken to the Groutville Settlement to meet the residents and experience first-hand, the vibrant and progressive community they call home.

Ninety-year old Beauty Cele until last year lived in a tiny shack her entire life.

Cele will live the rest of her life out with dignity in a stable home, which according to professionals at GIBB, embodies the priority of housing for all South Africans, especially, the previously disadvantaged.

“I am very grateful, there isn’t much time left and at least I can be at peace with this home,” she said.

Another proud new home owner, is 58-year old Makson Joseph who suffered a stroke last year.

Although he lives alone and is struggling to cope, the security of a proper home, assists greatly in his trying circumstances.

“I suffered a sudden stroke in March last year, this home is all I have,” he said.

GIBB was appointed by the KwaDukuza Municipality in August 2003 as project managers and engineers to assist with upgrading the existing informal settlement of Etsheni and Njekane through the construction of 1 980 low income houses and municipal services.

The priority of proper housing for all South Africans, echoed by Nelson Mandela in 1995 at the closing ceremony of the United Nations Habitat II African Housing Minister`s Conference in the US World Trade Centre, has been immortalised in Groutville.

“The world can be divided into those countries where the nation is comfortably housed, and those where housing is part of a daily struggle for survival. Most countries in Africa, including South Africa, fall into the latter category. And this is a reflection of the challenges we face to ensure that our peoples do indeed enjoy a better life,” Mandela said.

The development was approved in May 2010, with the funding approved by the Department of Human Settlements in June 2010.

Labour Intensive construction was one of the objectives on this project and this has been a success in terms of ploughing back to the community. The project has reached 18% of the 20% targeted contract participation goal of local labour employment.

GIBB also supplied 20 community care homes with furniture such as stoves and fridges. These community care homes accommodate orphans with their house mothers and there are six children on average living in one care home.

“A significant challenge faced by this project has been sanitation. The Department of Human Settlement’s subsidy for low income housing allows for basic services. Due to the density of the development and the fact that it is in an urban environment, the ILembe District Municipality and KwaDukuza Municipality reached an agreement that the project should be developed with waterborne sanitation and not ventilated improved pits (VIPs) as originally planned for,” said GIBB Civil Engineer, Sean McCormick.

“The KwaDukuza Municipality decided at this time to continue with the project, constructing houses and civil services while sourcing funding to allow for waterborne sewers,” he continued.

“Despite the challenges, the houses are now being completed and handed over with VIPs as the interim solution to sanitation. Waterborne sewers will be provided in the near future, with bulk infrastructure already under construction,” explained McCormick.

“At all three hand over ceremonies, political principals have cut the ribbons on three different houses. The significance of these houses is that they each belong to priority beneficiaries such as an elderly woman, a disabled member of the community who heads his family and the child headed family in the local community,” concluded McCormick.

Ends.

About GIBB:

GIBB is South Africa's leading black-owned engineering consulting firm, with an impressive track record of excellence spanning over 55 years in the following sectors: Airports and Aviation, Architecture, Dams, Hydropower and Underground Work, Environmental Services, Integrated Infrastructure, Power and Energy, Railway Engineering, Roads and Highways and Traffic and Transportation. We have national offices in South Africa and various offices across the continent.

GIBB is uniquely positioned to support the public and private sectors in delivering on the future infrastructure needs of South Africa. We have proven expertise and a strong team of locally grown, world-class talent which allows us to confidently and consistently deliver excellence. More than this, GIBB is uniquely geared to work in Africa. We deeply understand the infrastructure challenges on our continent and are structured to deliver on these needs with local teams and local knowledge. We understand Africa, because we are from Africa. We are committed to the powerful future of our continent, which we believe is defined through engineering and related services. We believe that this is the future of Africa defined.

Visit us at www.gibb.co.za

Issued by:

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide:

Kerry Hodgkinson

011 709 9900

kerry.hodgkinson@ogilvypr.co.za

On behalf of:

GIBB

Rowan Sewchurran

011 519 4600

rsewchurran@gibb.co.za