

SPECIFIER

WARMING HEARTS & HOMES IN BRANDFORT

24 October 2011

Saint-Gobain Gyproc continued its investment in the Breaking New Ground housing sector in South Africa with its participation in Women's Build 2011 in Brandfort, Free State, which took place during Women's Month in August. Saint-Gobain Gyproc and Isover donated 55 insulated ceilings to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the Women's March in 1956.

Women's Build 2011 was opened by the Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, Zoliswa Kota-Fredericks. Speaking at the opening, Senamile Mazibuko, Gyproc's business development manager, said, "Fitting a home with insulated ceilings means that its occupants have a cooler home in summer and that they spend much less energy on heating their home in winter. A home with a ceiling is also easier to keep free from dust and it looks much better inside," she added.

Gyproc pledged its RhinoBoard 6.4mm gypsum boards and Isover Aerolite ThinkPink glass-wool insulation at an event hosted by the Department of Human Settlements earlier in the year.

"This is the second big drive that we have made to show the importance and benefits of ceilings and insulation to the new owners in affordable and social housing projects," says Mazibuko. "Earlier this year, we partnered with Habitat for Humanity and the People's Housing Process to build 40 houses in Diepsloot, all of which had insulated ceilings and interior walls built using Gyproc Rhinoboard 15mm gypsum boards."

Gypsum products are lightweight, easy to build with, and are manufactured in South Africa from natural products. The company runs three training academies – in Centurion, Cape Town and Durban – where emerging entrepreneurs can learn how to install the boards and acquire the skills they need to run and manage their own businesses.

"We extended the spirit of our academies to Women's Build," said Mazibuko. "We worked with our installation partner, TEPA Ceilings and Partitioning, and the appointed contractor to introduce our steel brander system. We will also train 10 volunteers, residents of Brandfort who participated in the Women's Build project, on how to install the ceiling systems. This kind of skills transfer is essential for people living in communities like Brandfort to be able to become economically active in the future."

The houses in Women's Build 2011 were primarily for women, in line with the activities of Women's Month. The first bricks of the day were laid by MEC Mamiki Qabathe and the Mayor of the Masilonyana Local Municipality, Mr Koalane. Beneficiaries included 102-year old Nkgono Memeng, Elizabeth Obango and Mamothibi Juliana Moshane, who lived in a shack with the eight children she cares for, before she received a properly built home.

"Brandfort is a particularly cold area in winter and our hearts were warmed when we saw the relief on the faces of the new home owners as they realised that their homes would be so much warmer at night, saving them the money that they would have spent on energy for heaters."

The handover ceremony was attended by the Minister of Human Settlements, Tokyo Sexwale, Premier of the Free State, Ace Magashule, and Mrs Winnie Madikizela Mandela who for many years during the apartheid era was banished to Brandfort.

[Source: <http://www.specifile.co.za>]