PRESS RELEASES

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Ecolab Announces Major Downtown St. Paul Expansion

ST. PAUL, Minn. - December 23, 1996 - Ecolab Inc. announced plans for a major expansion of its downtown St. Paul headquarters. The plan envisions the long-term lease of the Capital Centre building, extensive renovation of the building and redesign of the existing plaza. Total cost is estimated at approximately $12 million. This expansion, which may add up to 600 new jobs to Ecolab's downtown employment and includes the establishment of a corporate employee training center, is the result of the company's strong growth. In addition, these moves will annually bring over a thousand additional Ecolab associates on rotating assignment to downtown St. Paul.

"St. Paul represents the roots of our company and the hub of our fast-growing global organization," said Ecolab President and Chief Executive Officer Allan L. Schuman. "Ecolab's worldwide sales have grown more than 50 percent in the last five years and our sales coverage today exceeds $2.4 billion. Our associates number more than 14,000, including our European joint venture. At Ecolab's downtown St. Paul headquarters alone, employment has grown by more than 30 percent since 1986, to 1,060 today. This facility expansion plan is consistent with our long-standing commitments to achieve strong growth for our shareholders, to remain a vital part of downtown St. Paul and to support our loyal Ecolab associates in the Twin Cities area."

"We are a very aggressive company with plans for both expansion of our existing businesses and through future acquisitions," Schuman continued. "The additional space announced today will enable us to gradually and efficiently accommodate our recent growth and acquisitions, support our ambitious plans for future business development and maintain top service levels to our customers and global sales force. We are excited by the business opportunities ahead and by the fact that we were able to expand in our downtown facility."

Ecolab currently occupies two buildings on Wabasha Street in their entirety, and leases two floors of the Capital Centre, adjacent to its main building. The expansion project announced today includes leasing the remaining 13 floors of Capital Centre and creating Ecolab University, a state-of-the-art training facility serving all Ecolab divisions.

Ecolab looked at many options that would accommodate its growing business, and expanding to Capital Centre best meets company needs. Under a long term lease agreement with the Frauenshuh Companies, Ecolab will take space in Capital Centre as current tenant leases expire. Plans also include renovation of the plaza area in front of Ecolab Center, the renaming of Capital Centre and changes to Capital Centre's facade to create a unified appearance of the two buildings.

Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing and maintenance products and services for the hospitality, institutional and industrial markets. For the year ended December 31, 1995, Ecolab reported sales of $1.3 billion; including European joint venture sales of $0.9 billion, Ecolab's global sales coverage exceeded $2.2 billion.

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