PRESS RELEASES

Dec 10, 1997

Ecolab to Acquire Industrial Cleaning Products Company

ST. PAUL, Minn., December 10, 1997: Ecolab Inc. announced today it has agreed to purchase the specialty chemical business of Grace-Lee Products Inc., a Minneapolis, Minnesota-based manufacturer and marketer of cleaning products for the U.S. industrial market. Annual sales of the business to be acquired, which primarily serves the vehicle wash market, are approximately $16 million. Grace-Lee will retain its manufacturing operations. Ecolab will issue shares in consideration for the acquired business. Closing is subject to approval by Ecolab's Board of Directors, clearance under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act and other closing conditions.

Allan L. Schuman, President and Chief Executive Officer, stated, "This acquisition will provide another extension of our business within our Circle the Customer strategy. Ecolab's customers include a broad range of national and international companies which operate large vehicle fleets, and we will be able to expand our range of products and services to meet those cleaning needs. This market, together with the non-fleet vehicle wash market, is over $500 million in size in the U.S. alone and represents another good growth opportunity for Ecolab. We welcome the addition of Grace-Lee's people, who have built a fine service tradition over the past 65 years, and look forward to aggressively growing the business and better serving our customers."

Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing and maintenance products and services for the hospitality, institutional and light industrial markets. For the year ended December 31, 1996, Ecolab reported sales of $1.5 billion; including European Joint Venture sales of $0.9 billion, Ecolab's global coverage reached $2.4 billion. Ecolab shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the Pacific Stock Exchange under the symbol ECL.

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