PRESS RELEASES

Oct 2, 2001

Ecolab Revises EPS Outlook

ST. PAUL, Minn., Oct 2, 2001 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Ecolab Inc. announced that because of the difficult economic environment in the travel and lodging industries it has revised its outlook for diluted earnings per share for the third quarter ended September 30, 2001 to the $0.43-$0.45 range. The company had previously said that it expected earnings per share of $0.46-$0.48. Ecolab earned $0.46 per diluted share in the third quarter 2000. The company will announce its actual third quarter results on October 18, 2001.

Given the current economic conditions, it is extremely difficult to project future earnings at this time, but the company's best present estimate is that full year 2001 diluted earnings per share will be in an approximate range of $1.45-$1.50. Ecolab previously said it expected diluted earnings per share to be in a $1.61-$1.63 range for 2001. The company earned $1.50 per diluted share in 2000 from its ongoing operations.

Allan L. Schuman, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer commented, saying, "The current concerns over travel have resulted in unprecedented declines in the lodging and convention business, and its ripple-down effects have also affected other areas of the hospitality industry, including restaurants. While we have a diverse customer base that enables us to offset some of this, the extraordinary events, and the general economic uncertainty and slowdown have presented a challenge to our earnings for the remainder of the year.

"We continue to work aggressively to offset this slowdown, and have undertaken a number of activities to enhance sales growth in this difficult environment. New products, new accounts, cross-selling, various promotional activities, enhanced service levels and a focus on global programs are but a part of that effort, and we are seeking other ways to deliver better sales and profit results for our shareholders. We will continue to work hard to deliver our results in these challenging times, and will show the commitment and aggressiveness for which Ecolab's people are so well known."

Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing, pest elimination, maintenance and repair products and services for the hospitality, institutional and industrial markets. For the year ended December 31, 2000, Ecolab reported sales of $2.3 billion; including European joint venture, Ecolab's global sales coverage was $3.1 billion. Ecolab shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the Pacific Exchange under the symbol ECL.

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This news release contains various "Forward-Looking Statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These include statements concerning our 2001 third quarter and full year earnings per share, and other financial and business prospects. These statements, which represent Ecolab's expectations or beliefs concerning various future events, are based on current expectations that involve a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those of such Forward-Looking Statements. These risks and uncertainties include, with respect to the 2001 third quarter, unanticipated adjustments resulting from the financial closing process, including changes to reserves. Risks and uncertainties with respect to 2001 full year results include restraints on pricing flexibility due to competitive factors and customer consolidations; cost changes in oil or raw material prices or unavailability of adequate and reasonably priced raw materials; the occurrence of capacity constraints or the loss of a key supplier, which in either case limit the production of certain products; the effect of future acquisitions or divestitures or other corporate transactions, as well as our ability to achieve plans for past acquisitions, including difficulties in rationalizing acquired businesses and in realizing related cost savings and other benefits; market or regulatory factors which could affect the Company's ability to reacquire shares; the costs and effects of complying with: (i) the significant environmental laws and regulations which apply to the Company's operations and facilities, (ii) government regulations relating to the manufacture, storage, distribution and labeling of the Company's products and (iii) changes in tax, fiscal, governmental and other regulatory policies; economic factors such as the worldwide economy, interest rates, currency movements, euro conversion and the development of markets; the occurrence of (i) litigation or claims, (ii) the loss or insolvency of a major customer or distributor, (iii) natural or manmade disasters, (iv) the occurrence, or lack of, significant political or military reaction to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (v) severe weather conditions affecting the food service and the hospitality industry and (vi) unanticipated issues relating to the European conversion from national currencies to the Euro; loss of, or changes in, executive management; the Company's ability to continue product introductions and technological innovations; and other uncertainties or risks reported from time to time in the Company's reports to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Ecolab undertakes no duty to update its Forward-Looking Statements.

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