PRESS RELEASES

Jan 4, 2005

Ecolab Acquires Water Care Company

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan. 4, 2005--Ecolab Inc. announced it has acquired Midland Research Laboratories Inc., a Lenexa, Kansas-based provider of water treatment products, process chemicals and services serving the commercial, institutional, industrial, food and sugar processing markets. Midland has sales of approximately $16 million. No other details were announced.

Commenting on the acquisition, Douglas M. Baker, Ecolab's President and Chief Executive Officer, stated, "This acquisition reflects Ecolab's ongoing interest in water care products and services to the middle market, focusing on customers in our existing core markets including hospitality, healthcare and food and beverage processing."

With 2003 sales of $3.8 billion, Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing, pest elimination, maintenance and repair products for the hospitality, foodservice, institutional and industrial markets. Ecolab shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the Pacific Exchange under the symbol ECL.

Ecolab news releases and other investor information are available on the Internet at www.ecolab.com.

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