Sonoco Board Elects Two New Directors

July 18, 2001

HARTSVILLE, S.C., July 18 /PRNewswire/ -- Caleb C. Fort, principal and co- chairman, The Merit Group, Inc., Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Edgar H. Lawton, III, president and treasurer, Hartsville Oil Mill, have been elected unanimously by the Sonoco (NYSE: SON) Board of Directors to fill a board retirement and existing vacancy, effective July 17, it was announced today by Charles W. Coker, chairman. Both were also nominated by the board of directors for election at the annual meeting of shareholders in April 2002.

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Fort, a 1984 graduate of the University of South Carolina, has been co- chairman of The Merit Group since 1990. The company supplies the paint and wall covering industries. He was previously a partner in The Fort-Wolfe Group, a private investment firm, from 1985 to 1990. He will fill the board seat of Edgar H. Lawton, Jr., who is retiring from the board.

Lawton was graduated from the University of Richmond with a B.A. degree in economics and received an M.B.A. degree in 1989 from the Babcock School of Business at Wake Forest University. He became president and treasurer of Hartsville Oil Mill in 2000 after serving in various positions since 1983. Hartsville Oil Mill is one of the nation's largest manufacturers of cottonseed products. He will fill the board seat vacated by C.D. Spangler, Jr., who resigned from the board for personal reasons early this year.

"We are pleased that Caleb Fort and Ed Lawton have agreed to join our board of directors. Both bring entrepreneurial backgrounds that will further strengthen our board's diversity of viewpoints," said Coker.

Sonoco, founded in 1899, is a $2.7 billion manufacturer of industrial and consumer packaging products and provider of packaging services, with approximately 295 operations in 33 countries serving customers in 85 nations. For more information regarding the Company, visit our Web site at www.sonoco.com.

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