Sonoco to Close One of Two Plants in Wausau, Wisconsin

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HARTSVILLE, S.C., Aug. 11 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), the global packaging company, today announced that it will close its composite can plant in Wausau, Wis., and consolidate those operations into existing facilities in Greenville, Wis., and Chicago, Ill. The closing will be phased over the remainder of this year, with completion expected by year-end.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19991006/SNCLOGO)

This consolidation is part of the Company's previously announced plans to reduce its average cost structure by more than $60 million.

The plant, located at 840 S. 66th Ave., has approximately 42 employees. The Company will offer outplacement assistance and in some cases will offer transfers to other Sonoco operations.

Sonoco also operates a metal ends facility at 833 S. 60th Ave. in Wausau that will remain open. This facility employs approximately 70 personnel.

The Company previously consolidated two composite can facilities at Jackson, Tenn., into one plant following extensive tornado damage in May to the closing facility. As a result of the consolidation in Jackson, the Company's total number of employees there was reduced from approximately 215 to 199.

"It is always difficult to close a facility, particularly when you have people as dedicated as our teams at the Wausau and Jackson composite can facilities. Unfortunately, this action is necessary to reduce Sonoco's overall cost structure in light of difficult general economic conditions and rising costs associated with raw materials, energy, medical, and pensions and postretirement expenses. These consolidations will in no way adversely affect our ability to serve our markets and customers," said Rodger Fuller, division vice president, Consumer Products - North America.

Sonoco, founded in 1899, is a $2.8 billion manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with more than 300 operations in 32 countries serving customers in some 85 nations. For more information on the Company, visit our Web site www.sonoco.com.

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