Sonoco and Ball Corporation Sign Agreement

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Hartsville, S.C. and Broomfield, Colo., Aug. 27 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Global packaging companies Sonoco (NYSE: SON), and Ball Corporation (NYSE: BLL), have signed a long-term agreement for Sonoco to provide all of Ball's requirements for easy-open, full-panel ends for food cans, effectively immediately, it was announced today. Sonoco will provide the ends through its Sonoco Phoenix business unit. Further, the companies will jointly market and sell food cans with easy-open ends.

"We are very pleased to have forged this important strategic alliance with this leading packaging company," said George M. Smart, president, Sonoco Phoenix. "Easy-open ends are an important and rapidly growing part of the metal packaging industry. This agreement brings together a leading producer of easy-open ends with a leading producer of metal food cans. This agreement will especially be a winning situation for food processors that rely on metal cans to protect and preserve their products."

"Convenience and changes in consumer preferences have led to the increased demand for easy-open food can ends," said Brian M. Cardno, president, of Ball Corporation's metal food container operations. "As we saw demand increasing, we had several options on how to respond. After careful study, it became apparent to us that the best option was to form this alliance.

"It is a great solution-matching what Ball does best with what Sonoco Phoenix does best -- and our customers benefit from the experience of these two leaders in the food packaging industry. We also expect further opportunities for development of other innovative products between the companies," Cardno added.

About Ball Corporation

Ball Corporation is one of the world's leading suppliers of metal and plastic packaging to the beverage and food industries. The company also owns Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. With the addition of Ball Packaging Europe, acquired in December 2002, Ball expects sales in 2003 of approximately $5.0 billion, $4.5 billion from its two packaging segments and $500 million from its aerospace and technologies segment.

About Sonoco Phoenix

Sonoco Phoenix is the leading manufacturer of steel easy-open closures in North America for metal, plastic and composite containers. Today, the market for easy-open closures is experiencing a high growth rate in the consumer products industry, driven principally by the increasing ready-to-serve food segment and consumers' desire for convenience. Customers around the world use Sonoco Phoenix closures for food and non-food applications. Sonoco Phoenix was created in 2001 when Sonoco purchased Phoenix Packaging. Sonoco Phoenix operates six closure manufacturing facilities in the United States and is adding manufacturing capabilities in Brazil in 2004.

About Sonoco

Sonoco, founded in 1899, is a $2.8 billion manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with approximately 300 operations in 32 countries serving customers in some 85 nations. More information about the Company is available on its Web site at sonoco.com .

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release may include forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws, commonly identified by such terms as "anticipates" and other terms with similar meaning. Although the companies believe that the assumptions upon which the forward-looking statements are based are reasonable, they can give no assurance that these assumptions will prove to be correct. Actual results or outcomes may differ materially from those expressed or implied by such statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from the expectations are disclosed in both companies' separate filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. All forward-looking statements in this press release are expressly qualified by such cautionary statements and underlying assumptions. Neither company makes any representations about the accuracy of the information of the other company contained in their respective filings.

SOURCE Ball Corporation; Sonoco