Sonoco Names John Grups Staff Vice President, Operating Excellence

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Responsibility for Process Improvement, Supply Management and General Engineering

HARTSVILLE, S.C., Dec. 19 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- John M. Grups, formerly division vice president-Global Operations, Consumer Products, Sonoco (NYSE: SON), has been promoted to staff vice president, Operating Excellence, effective December 31, 2003, it was announced today by Harris E. DeLoach, Jr., president and chief executive officer.

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

Grups will have responsibility for the Company's overall productivity improvement program, including the Six Sigma and Lean Manufacturing operating philosophies; Sonoco's Customer Satisfaction Through Excellence initiative; Corporate Supply Management, including Purchasing and Logistics functions; and, General Engineering.

"In today's increasingly competitive global marketplace, it is imperative that we achieve and sustain appropriate operating costs and leadership positions in product quality and service. Therefore, we are expanding and redefining Sonoco's corporate Operating Excellence function, under John Grups' leadership, to include responsibility for helping identify and implement world class operating processes and executing aggressive supply management initiatives," said DeLoach.

Grups (53) is a 1974 graduate of The University of Missouri with a B.S. degree in Math and a B.A. degree in Philosophy, and a 1976 graduate of Purdue University with a master's degree in Industrial Management. He joined Sonoco in 1976 and has held a number of manufacturing and operational positions. Sonoco, founded in 1899, is a global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with approximately 300 operations in 32 countries serving customers in some 85 nations. Additional information about the Company can be obtained at the Sonoco Web site at www.sonoco.com .

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