



Sonoco Celebrates Opening of New Manufacturing Facility in Brazil

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HARTSVILLE, S.C., Jan. 20 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), the global packaging company, has opened a new manufacturing facility in Resende, Brazil, to produce steel easy-open closures for use on metal cans, according to Charles L. Sullivan, Jr., senior vice president, Consumer Products. Annual capacity of the plant is projected to be more than one billion closures.

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

The Resende plant, which is part of the Company's Sonoco Phoenix business unit, is strategically located between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and accessible to critical supply points and ports. The facility will serve as Sonoco's center for export to world markets as well as supplying the Brazilian market, the fourth largest packaging market in the world.

"Sonoco's expansion in Brazil is part of a global growth initiative to leverage Sonoco Phoenix's superior easy-open closure technology and its reputation for excellent customer support and technical assistance. The new plant provides a unique opportunity for Sonoco to meet the needs of companies in Brazil and around the world that want to convert to Sonoco's easy-open closures," said Sullivan.

"Sonoco's investment in Brazil allows the Company to increase production capacity to meet growing consumer demand for easy-open closures throughout the world. Consumers prefer the convenience these closures add to canned foods because a can opener is not needed to open the package. Instead, the consumer uses only fingers to easily remove the closure. Food producers in Europe and North America have embraced Sonoco Phoenix's easy-open closures as a new way to differentiate and promote their products and have been experiencing significant increases in market share and category growth. Sonoco believes the same will happen in Brazil," said Sullivan.

"Brazil offers many opportunities for growth, since there is no comparable steel easy-open closure technology available," explains Paul McClure, business development manager for Sonoco Phoenix. "Brazilian consumers will enjoy this new packaging feature. Sonoco Phoenix closures are significantly easier to open than other closures currently produced in Brazil, reducing the risk of cut fingers. Easy-open closures give consumers a new reason to buy a product- they like the convenience."

McClure says Brazilian food companies also will benefit from Sonoco Phoenix's easy-open closure technology. "Sonoco Phoenix's closures withstand the high temperatures required for processing many foods. Our expertise in coating and special manufacturing techniques greatly reduces the risk of corrosion inside and outside of the package. These benefits allow food processors to improve their filling and sealing processes."

Initially, the plant is operating with three manufacturing lines that produce 300 diameter easy-open closures suitable for a wide range of canned processed foods, including meats, seafood, vegetables, tomato products, dairy products and pet food. Sonoco plans to add additional manufacturing lines in the near future.

Sonoco Phoenix is the business unit of Sonoco that manufactures steel, aluminum and peelable membrane easy-open closures for metal, plastic and composite containers. Customers around the world use Sonoco Phoenix closures for food and nonfood applications. Sonoco Phoenix was created in 2001 when Sonoco purchased Phoenix Packaging, which was founded in 1993. Sonoco Phoenix operates seven manufacturing facilities in the United States and Brazil.

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. More information about the Company is available on its Web site at www.sonoco.com.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION

Statements included herein that are not historical in nature are intended to be, and are hereby identified as, "forward-looking statements" for purposes of the safe harbor provided by Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. The words "estimate," "project," "intend," "expect," "believe," "anticipate," "objective," "goal," and similar expressions identify forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding offsetting high raw material costs, adequacy of income tax provisions, refinancing of debt, adequacy of cash flows, effects of acquisitions and dispositions, adequacy of provisions for environmental liabilities and financial strategies and the results expected from them, and producing improvements in earnings. Such forward-looking statements are based on current expectations, estimates and projections about our industry, management's beliefs and certain assumptions made by management. Such information includes, without limitation, discussions as to estimates, expectations, beliefs, plans, strategies and objectives concerning our future financial and operating performance. These statements are not guarantees of future performance and are subject to certain risks, uncertainties and assumptions that are difficult to predict. Therefore, actual results may differ materially from those expressed or forecasted in such forward-looking statements. Such risks and uncertainties include, without limitation: availability and pricing of raw materials; success of new product development and introduction; ability to maintain or increase productivity levels; international, national and local economic and market conditions; fluctuations in obligations and earnings of pension and post-retirement benefit plans; ability to maintain market share; pricing pressures and demand for products; continued strength of our paperboard-based engineered carrier and composite can operations; anticipated results of restructuring activities; resolution of income tax contingencies; ability to successfully integrate newly acquired businesses into the Company's operations; currency stability and the rate of growth in foreign markets; use of financial instruments to hedge foreign exchange, interest rate and commodity price risk; actions of government agencies; and loss of consumer confidence and economic disruptions resulting from terrorist activities.

Information about the Company's use of non-GAAP financial measures, why management believes presentation of non-GAAP financial measures provides useful information to investors about the Company's financial condition and results of operations, and the purposes for which management uses non-GAAP financial measures is included in the Company's 2002 Annual Report on Form 10- K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Additional information concerning some of the factors that could cause materially different results is included in the Company's reports on forms 10-K, 10-Q and 8-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Such reports are available from the Securities and Exchange Commission's public reference facilities and its Web site, the Company's investor relations department and the Company's Web site, www.sonoco.com .

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