OSHA Honors Sonoco Plant's Safety Program

October 4, 2004

HARTSVILLE, S.C., Oct. 4 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Sonoco's customer- dedicated Pack Center in Devens, Mass., has been awarded STAR Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) Worksite status by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), Brad Ross, vice president/GM, Packaging Services, has announced.

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

STAR designation in the performance-based VPP recognizes employers and employees who work with OSHA to achieve employee injury/illness rates below their industry average through exemplary occupational safety and health programs. The Devens Pack Center is one of 1,000 U.S. worksites to have achieved VPP status.

"In October 2003 the plant's Safety Team, with management support, introduced their plan to achieve VPP STAR status," said Ross. "Employee participation was immediate and enthusiastic. Achieving STAR status in 2004 was one of the plant's strategic safety objectives and everyone -- management and full-time and temporary employees -- worked hard to make it happen."

To be considered for the honor, the plant had to complete a VPP Self- Assessment Checklist and submit an application that filled a three-ring binder that demonstrated management leadership and employee involvement and participation in the safety program, included OSHA injury logs for the past three years and year-to-date, worksite hazard analyses, employee suggestions, incident investigation reports, Safety Team meeting minutes, plant emergency action plans, training records and Hazardous Energy Control Program.

An OSHA VPP Team visited the Pack Center for five days in March 2004, reviewing its safety program, auditing its components and interviewing selected full-time and temporary employees.

Four months later, OSHA notified Devens' Safety Team that United States Labor Secretary, Elaine L. Chao, had signed the plant's VPP STAR award letter indicating that it had achieved the prestigious honor.

"Safety has always been core value at Sonoco," said Harris E. DeLoach, president/chief executive officer, Sonoco. "When OSHA visited the Devens Pack Center, its Total Incident Rate was 56 percent better than other U.S. packaging services worksites. The plant's exceptional safety performance makes Sonoco employees and investors proud and proves the value of Sonoco's employee-driven safety teams."

Sonoco (NYSE: SON), founded in 1899, is a global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with more than 300 operations in 36 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. For more information on the Company, visit our Web site at http://www.sonoco.com .

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