Sonoco Announces Decision Not to Reopen Downingtown, Pa., Paperboard Mill

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HARTSVILLE, S.C., April 7 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), the global packaging company, announced today that it will not reopen its Downingtown, Pa., recycled paperboard mill following a fire on March 20 that caused approximately $500,000 in damage, according to Marty Pignone, vice president - Paper North America.

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

The plant, located at 300 South Brandywine Avenue, Downingtown, Pa., has 71 employees and principally serves the Company's internal converting operations. The Company will offer outplacement assistance to employees.

"Downingtown has been a good mill with excellent employees, and we regret that this decision is necessary. Factors that led to this decision include the significant investments that would be needed to repair the fire damage and the fact that incremental productivity improvements across our paper mill system have created adequate capacity to assimilate the volume currently produced at Downingtown. The Downingtown mill has an annual production capacity of approximately 73,000 tons," said Pignone.

Sonoco, founded in 1899, is a $3.2 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with more than 300 operations in 35 countries serving customers in some 85 nations. Additional information about the Company is available at http://www.sonoco.com .

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/CONTACT: Allan V. Cecil, Vice President, Sonoco, +1-843-383-7524, or allan.cecil@sonoco.com /
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