Sonoco Receives Healthy South Carolina Challenge Community Award

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COLUMBIA, S.C., May 18 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Sonoco, the global packaging company based in Hartsville, S.C., today received a 2006 Healthy South Carolina Challenge community award from Governor Mark Sanford and First Lady Jenny Sanford in a ceremony held at the Governor's Mansion.

Sonoco received the business category award for successfully working to improve the health of its employees and the community. In addition, Darlington County, S.C., Sonoco's home county for more than a century, was recognized as the winner of the Healthy S.C. Challenge.

"We are pleased that Sonoco, its employees and our community are being recognized by this important program," said Cindy Hartley, senior vice president of Human Resources. "Our proactive safety and wellness programs focus on encouraging healthy lifestyles which improve the quality of life for our employees and their families while increasing productivity and reducing costs."

Hartley pointed to the following successes as examples of Sonoco's efforts in improving its employees' health and safety:

- Safety: Sonoco's worldwide employees recorded the fifth consecutive safest operating year on record in 2005 with a Total Incident Rate (TIR) of .84 (annualized number of reportable injuries per 100 full-time employees). This record significantly surpassed the national average of 6.6 for all of U.S. manufacturing. To encourage its safety culture, Sonoco conducts extensive on-the-job safety training and work place inspections, including quarterly audits of seat belt use by its employees and contractors.

- Health Risk Assessments (HRAs): Approximately 250 of Sonoco's Darlington County employees and spouses have completed HRAs, which were analyzed by a professional third-party wellness firm. Individualized, confidential results and recommendations are forwarded to participants who have the opportunity to work with a health coach or participate in recommended healthy lifestyle activities.

- Stop Smoking Program: Sonoco reimburses employees up to $325 for nicotine patches, gum or other quit-smoking aids and conducts campaigns to encourage them and their families to quit smoking.

- Walking Program: A walking trail was established around Sonoco's Hartsville headquarters and manufacturing operations and employees are encouraged to regularly use the trail as part of their individual exercise programs.

- Health Care Education: Sonoco provides information to better educate employees on the true cost of medical services and treatments. This effort emphasizes ways to drive down medical costs paid by employees, encourages participation in tax-advantaged programs, such as flexible spending accounts, and educates employees on ways they can protect or improve their health through lifestyle choices.

The Healthy S.C. Challenge is an outcome-based, cooperative effort aimed at encouraging individuals, communities and organizations across the state to show shared responsibility in developing innovative ways to improve the health of South Carolina citizens. For more information about the Healthy S.C. Challenge, please visit www.healthysc.gov, or contact Meghan McGuire at 803/737-2325.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco (NYSE: SON) is a $3.5 billion global manufacturer of consumer and industrial packaging products and provider of packaging services, with more than 300 operations in 35 countries, serving customers in 85 nations. Additional information about Sonoco is available at http://www.sonoco.com.

CONTACT:
Roger Schrum

Sonoco
+1-843-339-6018
roger.schrum@sonoco.com