Sonoco Permanently Closes Rockton, Illinois, Paperboard Mill

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HARTSVILLE, S.C., Dec 02, 2008 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging companies, announced today that it is permanently closing its Rockton, Illinois, uncoated recycled paperboard mill, according to James Harrell, division vice president and general manager, Paper North America.

The mill, located at 200 Hawick Street, has the capacity to produce approximately 38,000 tons annually of paperboard used primarily to supply coreboard and edgeboard markets. The plant closure will impact 44 employees. The Company will offer severance pay, benefits continuation and outplacement assistance to employees.

"We have continued to experience a decline in market demand for uncoated recycled paperboard which has led us to make the tough decision to permanently cease production at the Rockton mill," said Harrell. "In today's challenging economy, we are focused on managing our mill supply structure to create greater efficiencies that will strengthen our presence in the marketplace."

Following the closure, Sonoco will operate 22 uncoated recycled paperboard mills and 32 paper machines globally, including 12 mills and 20 machines operated in the United States and Canada. Capacity from the Company's remaining mill system will be used to meet its customers' supply needs. Earlier this year, Sonoco closed its 48,000-ton Montreal, Canada, uncoated recycled paperboard mill and closed a smaller 5,000-ton specialty paperboard machine at its Holyoke, Massachusetts, mill.

About Sonoco

Sonoco, founded in 1899, is a global manufacturer of industrial and consumer 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.

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