

Sonoco Releases 2009 Annual Report to Shareholders

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Company's Annual Meeting Scheduled for April 21, 2010

HARTSVILLE, S.C., Mar 17, 2010 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging companies, today announced that its 2009 Annual Report to Shareholders is now available on the Company's Web site at <http://www.sonoco.com>, in the "Investor Relations" section. The annual report entitled, "Lean, Fit and Ready to Grow," reviews Sonoco's financial performance in 2009 while highlighting how Sonoco has leaned its cost structure, further reduced debt to create one of the fittest balance sheets in the Company's history and continued to focus on growth.

"Clearly, 2009 was one of the most difficult, and yet one of the most rewarding years for Sonoco. The continuation of the deepest global recession in decades significantly impacted volumes Companywide, particularly in our businesses which serve industrial markets," Harris E. DeLoach, Jr., chairman, president and chief executive officer, wrote in his letter to shareholders in the *2009 Annual Report*.

"In response we moved quickly to lean our business by sizing our manufacturing footprint to meet the new market realities of our served markets. In addition, we realigned our businesses and streamlined our management organization. By proactively 'managing the guts' of our business, we significantly reduced costs, achieved record productivity and improved annual gross profit margins to the highest level since 2007."

Throughout the *2009 Annual Report*, case studies are outlined that illustrate Sonoco's strategy and successes during the year, including: the "game changing" Flavor Lock Lid and new composite paperboard can that Sonoco produces for Kraft Foods' *Maxwell House* coffee; Sonoco's successful packaging services and growth in Wroclaw, Poland; and Sonoco Recycling, Inc.'s growth in residential recycling in the Southeast United States.

Sonoco has mailed the 2009 annual report and proxy statement to its shareholders in preparation for its annual meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, April 21, 2010, at the Center Theater, 212 North Fifth Street, Hartsville beginning at 11 a.m. Eastern Time. For those unable to attend the meeting in person, a live webcast can be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.sonoco.com>, under the "Latest News" section. Those planning to participate should plan to connect to the live webcast at least 10 minutes prior to the start. The meeting webcast also will be archived on the "Investor Relations" section of Sonoco's Web site.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a \$3.6 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with about 300 operations in 35 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. For more information on the Company, visit our Web site at <http://www.sonoco.com>.

[\(download 2009 Annual Report in PDF format\)](#)

SOURCE: Sonoco

Sonoco
Roger Schrum, 843-339-6018
roger.schrum@sonoco.com