

Sonoco Announces Bowen to Retire; Grups Named Head of Primary Materials Group; Pignone Named Vice President, Global Operating Excellence

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HARTSVILLE, S.C., Sep 30, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging companies, today announced that Jim C. Bowen, 61, senior vice president, Primary Materials Group, North America, will be retiring from Sonoco following a 40-year career. As a result of Bowen's decision, John M. Grups has been named division vice president and general manager, Primary Materials Group, North America, effective October 1, 2011.

In this new position, Grups, 60, will have responsibility for Sonoco's 12 uncoated recycled paperboard mills in the United States, Canada and Mexico; Sonoco Recycling, Inc.; and the Company's Adhesives and Forest Products divisions. He will continue to report to Jack Sanders, president and chief operating officer.

"John is a 35-year veteran of Sonoco and has extensive manufacturing experience, including serving as division vice president, Global Operations, Consumer Products, along with other operating leadership and plant management responsibilities," said Sanders. "For the past eight years, he has led our Operating Excellence initiatives, which have enhanced our Six Sigma and Lean Manufacturing operating philosophies and improved our purchasing and logistics functions."

Grups is a 1974 graduate of The University of Missouri with a B.S. degree in Math and a B.A. degree in Philosophy. He also holds a master's degree from Purdue University in Industrial Management.

In an effort to further leverage Sonoco's global manufacturing support efforts, the Company's supply management organization, including purchasing, logistics and other support services will report to Marty F. Pignone, vice president, Global Operating Excellence. Pignone, 55, will have responsibility for driving standardization with the Company's global manufacturing processes while leveraging productivity, quality, supply management, supply chain, environmental services, safety and engineering functions.

Pignone joined the Company in 1997 and has been vice president, Global Manufacturing, since 2009. He graduated in 1978 from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, with a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering and received a M.S. degree in business administration from Stanford University in 1991. Prior to joining Sonoco he worked for General Electric and Kodak.

Bowen's retirement is effective March 31, 2012, and he will continue to work on several manufacturing initiatives until that time. He has been a senior vice president since 2002, holding various senior management positions in the Company's paper, recycling, manufacturing and internal supply functions. He joined the Company in 1972 after graduating from the Pulp and Paper engineering program at North Carolina State University. He also received an MBA from Duke University.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a \$4.1 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with approximately 300 operations in 34 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. Sonoco is a proud member of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. For more information on the Company, visit our website at <http://www.sonoco.com>.

A print-quality, high-resolution photo of Jim Bowen can be downloaded at: <http://www.box.net/shared/static/639124oisp.tif>

A print-quality, high-resolution photo of John Grups can be downloaded at: <http://www.box.net/shared/static/4a0n8molasg86zbx4nzq.tif>

A print-quality, high-resolution photo of Marty Pignone can be downloaded at: <http://www.box.net/shared/static/x6lax986px.tif>

SOURCE: Sonoco

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