Sonoco Issues 2014 Annual Report to Shareholders

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Company's Annual Meeting to be Held April 15, 2015

HARTSVILLE, S.C., March 16, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Sonoco (NYSE:SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging companies, today announced that its [2014 Annual Report to Shareholders] is now available on the Company's website at [www.sonoco.com] in the Investor Relations section. The report, entitled *Grow & Optimize: Changing for the Better*, reviews Sonoco's 2014 financial performance and examines how the Company is creating a highly engaged culture of innovation to spur the development of innovative packaging solutions designed to deliver a sustainable competitive advantage for its customers around the world.

"Two years ago, we started the process of changing Sonoco for the better. These changes are providing us better opportunities to grow through new products, new markets, new customers, new services and new ways of thinking. Our process of change is also creating an environment that allows us to better harness the power of our portfolio and our people to optimize business performance," said Jack Sanders, president and chief executive officer, in his letter to shareholders.

"Our Grow & Optimize strategy is the centerpiece of our efforts to Re-envision Sonoco. Our re-envisioning involves a three-step process to boost performance, including re-imagining our culture, re-aligning our structure and re-engineering our operations. We made solid progress in re-imagining our culture to drive growth through the implementation of our i6 Innovation Process™. In addition to changing our culture to drive growth, we are beginning to implement a series of actions focused on streamlining our structure, optimizing our supply chain, improving productivity and perfecting our cost competitiveness to enhance margins and returns."

Sanders noted that in 2014 Sonoco reached many of its financial, operational and strategic commitments, delivering record sales, gross profits and base earnings. Despite a generally slow-growth global marketplace, sales topped $5 billion for the first time in Sonoco's 115-year history; gross profit reached a record $921 million, as gross profits as a percent of sales increased 40 basis points to 18.4 percent; and base earnings grew by more than 10% to $2.54 per diluted share. Sonoco also delivered on its commitment to enhance shareholder value by providing a two-year total return of 56.8%, compared with the S&P 500 two-year total return performance of 50.2%.

The annual report also provides a two-page review of Sonoco's acquisition of Weidenhammer Packaging Group (WPG), leading to the creation of a global leader in rigid paper packaging. Headquartered in Hockenheim, Germany, Weidenhammer has approximately 1,100 employees and operates 13 production facilities, including five in Germany, along with individual plants in Belgium, France, Greece, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, Chile and Russia. In addition to producing composite cans, drums and luxury tubes, WPG produces unique rigid plastic containers using state-of-the-art thin-walled injection molding technology with modern in-mold labeling. Markets served by the company include processed foods, powdered beverages, tobacco, confectionery, personal care, pet food, pharmaceuticals and home and garden products.

Annual Meeting and Proxy Information

Sonoco has mailed the 2014 Annual Report and Form 10-K and proxy statement to its shareholders in preparation for its annual meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2015, at the Center Theater, 212 North Fifth Street, Hartsville, beginning at 11 a.m. ET. Shareholders who are unable to attend the meeting in person can still access a live webcast via the Internet in the Investor Relations section of the Company's website at http://investor.sonoco.com, under the Webcast section. Those planning to listen should 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 website.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a global provider of a variety of consumer packaging, industrial products, protective packaging, and display and packaging services. With annualized net sales of approximately $5.0 billion, the Company has 20,800 employees working in more than 330 facilities in 34 countries, serving many of the world's best known brands in some 85 nations. Sonoco is a proud member of the 2014/2015 Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. For more information on the Company, visit our website at www.sonoco.com.

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