



## Sonoco Celebrates 100 Years Of Providing Packaging Solutions Around The Corner, Around The World

May 11, 1999

HARTSVILLE, S.C., May 11 /PRNewswire/ -- Sonoco is a global leader in the field of packaging, recognized the world over for providing innovative packaging solutions to all types of consumer and industrial products companies. Employing approximately 16,500 people at nearly 275 locations on five continents, its packaging products are found in pantries and plants in more than 85 countries. Yet when the Hartsville, South Carolina-based company celebrates the 100th anniversary of its founding in 1999, few people beyond its employees, customers and suppliers will understand the significant contributions Sonoco has made over the past century, contributions which touch the lives of people the world over.

(<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19990430/SONOCOBROWNING> )  
(<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19990430/SONOCOBLDG> )  
(<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19990430/SONOCOPACKAGING> )  
(<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19990430/SONOCO1950> )  
(<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19990430/SONOCOTRUCK> )

(<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19990430/SONOCOCOKER> ) While this may seem unusual, the very nature of its business -- providing packaging designed to showcase, protect, store, and carry the high profile products of the world's major companies -- keeps Sonoco in the wings. Whether it is paperboard composite canisters filled with the world's most popular snack foods; flexible bags filled with candy, gum and cookies; spiral-wound tubes bearing foil, film, paper or textiles; plastic grocery sacks packed with the week's provisions; it is the customer's name, not Sonoco's, that consumers see on the packages.

Despite the low profile, Sonoco's influence is significant in the industries it serves. A major reason for this is the company's ongoing commitment to research and development, and the millions of dollars invested each year in product development, process improvement, capital equipment and technology.

### Industrial Packaging

To maintain its position as the global technology leader in industrial packaging, Sonoco operates a network of technology centers around the world, including Hartsville, S.C.; Madison, Wis.; Brussels, Belgium; Bulleen, Victoria, Australia; and Singapore. The purpose of these centers is to constantly redefine and refine Sonoco's engineered carriers to meet ever evolving customer demands for longer, stronger, faster, lighter, cheaper fibre and plastic carriers for wound products.

In redefining the performance attributes of its engineered carriers, also known as tubes and cores, Sonoco engineers have created a new generation of testing devices and procedures that are used to accurately predict performance and match customer specifications with precision. Some examples of these include:

- The SDS (R) Tester, which measures the dynamic strength of paper mill cores and allows paper mills to select cores capable of faster running speeds and heavier loads without conducting lengthy and often costly trials;
- An Outside Diameter (O.D.) stiffness test for metallan cores that allows sheet metal producers to achieve the necessary winding tension without coil collapse;
- A radial crush test for film cores that allows customers to reduce production costs by eliminating unnecessary packaging; and for textile customers,
- A new measure of Inside Diameter (I.D.) stiffness that uses computer modeling to predict textile tube performance to achieve the best strength-to-cost ratio and virtually eliminate failure at the winder.

Sonoco's global industrial technology network assists in standardizing operations and product specifications -- a necessity in the age of global commerce-- so that the quality and precision of an engineered carrier produced in Hartsville is consistent with the same product produced in the United Kingdom, China, Australia or Mexico.

### Consumer Products

Technology also plays an important role in Sonoco's consumer products businesses, businesses which include spiral-wound composite paperboard canisters, flexible packaging, folding cartons and capsels liners. In 1988, Sonoco constructed a sophisticated 72,000-square-foot Packaging Development Center (PDC) in Hartsville, S.C. Staffed by packaging engineers and other specialists, the PDC applies leading-edge technology and

nearly 100 years of packaging ingenuity to product development, package testing, process improvement and technical assistance.

Sonoco works closely with many of the world's largest consumer products companies developing packaging solutions that incorporate attributes ranging from the latest barrier technology and consumer-friendly opening systems, unique sizes and shapes, to fill line efficiency and environmental features. Sonoco is equally adept at creating new packages for established products as it is in developing packaging for products new to the market. In 1997, Sonoco introduced the LinearPak(R) paper-bottom canister developed for Lipton's Natural Brew ice tea mixes. The package's unique, non-round shape was new to the marketplace and delivered a powerful presence for Lipton on retail shelves. Sonoco is now applying its LinearPak technology to other products, with launches slated for the nutritional supplement and beverage arenas in early 1999.

In response to consumers' demand for a more user-friendly coffee package, Sonoco has developed and introduced two new paperboard canister options for coffee roasters. The Valved Ultra-Seal(R) coffee canister features a consumer-friendly peelable membrane opening system that eliminates the need for a can opener. The membrane structure includes a one-way valve that allows freshly roasted coffee to "de-gas" in the can, dramatically reducing fill time. The second option is a vacuum canister that allows roasters to convert to canisters without changing equipment. It also features a consumer-friendly opening system. A number of U.S. and Canadian roasters are taking advantage of Sonoco's coffee packaging technology.

Sonoco's composite canisters continue to grow in popularity the world over. The Keebler Company, one of the largest bakers in the U.S., has employed Sonoco canisters to repackage and reposition perennial favorites such as Vanilla Wafers, Chips Deluxe and Cheezits for the club and drug store markets. In the U.K., KP Nuts, a division of United Biscuits, has introduced new nut mix products, called Fandangos, in easy to open and reseal canisters. Kalfany Bonbon GmbH, a German-based confectionery company, now packages a line of candies in Sonoco's latest composite paperboard canister, a twist can. In Asia, one of America's top snack foods is also a local favorite, due in part to the package.

#### Industry Trends

Sonoco has always been responsive to industry trends, and as the Year 2000 approaches, the 100-years-young packaging company finds itself well positioned to meet the challenges of the global marketplace. Having invested heavily in sophisticated information and communications technology in the late 1990's, Sonoco is now using its advanced systems for everything from order fulfillment and inventory management, packaging design and performance modeling, to logistics planning and reporting. The emphasis on precision, speed and detail is resulting in ever-higher levels of customer service and value.

The trend toward supplier consolidation promises to continue into the new millennium. Sonoco has parlayed its global reach and packaging expertise into a number of single source relationships with major industrial packaging customers. In its consumer businesses, Sonoco is leveraging its formidable internal resources to its customers' advantage. The company's ability to provide the canister, label and opening system as part of a total packaging solution allows customers to speed the product-to-shelf cycle, resulting in a significant competitive advantage for Sonoco. And with Sonoco Capseals, based in Slough, England, having recently signed a North American marketing agreement with Tri-Seal International, Inc., Sonoco has a new feather in its cap when approaching North American customers.

Sonoco is also strengthening its ability to provide an even wider assortment of plastic industrial carriers and related products, having acquired Burk, a German maker of engineered, injection molded and extruded packaging products, in February 1998. Sonoco Burk's three manufacturing operations in Overath, Vilkerath and Delmenhorst, Germany, join Sonoco Crellin, which also manufactures a variety of injection-molded plastic products at 11 plants in the U.S. and operations in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Troisdorf, Germany.

Even as Sonoco celebrates 100 years of packaging innovation, some things will remain the same. Among them is the company's commitment to sound environmental practices. As the world's largest consumer of used paper -- Sonoco collects and recycles some two million tons each year -- the company maintains a network of reclamation sites around the world for paperboard and other used material. Sonoco often teams with customers, retail stores, and municipalities on recycling initiatives, reducing reliance on landfills while turning used material into a valuable raw material. Many of Sonoco's products, from its plastic grocery bags to composite canisters, contain recycled material.

While the many packaging innovations Sonoco has introduced over the past century are cause for celebration, the company is using its centennial as an opportunity to thank the thousands of people behind its success.

"Sonoco is incredibly proud of the accomplishments we have achieved over the past 100 years. Thanks to the dedication, loyalty and support demonstrated by our shareholders, customers, employees and suppliers, Sonoco possesses both a proud past and an even more exciting future," says Peter C. Browning, president and chief executive officer.

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CONTACT: Allan V. Cecil, Vice President of Sonoco, 843-383-7524

CAPTION: SONOCO1950 SONOCO PLANT 1950 For 10 decades the people of Sonoco have been credited with helping this company grow from a one-product, one-plant operation in 1899 to a global packaging company with more than 16,500 team members at 275 locations in 32 countries. This photo was taken in the early 1950s as the first shift of people arrived for work. Contact: Allan V. Cecil, 843-383-7524. (PRNewsFoto)[HD]  
HARTSVILLE, SC USA 04/30/1999

CAPTION: SONOCOTRUCK SONOCO DELIVERY TRUCK Sonoco has been delivering packaging solutions to customers around the corner and around the world since 1899. Contact: Allan V. Cecil, 843-383-7524. (PRNewsFoto) [HD] HARTSVILLE, SC USA 04/30/1999

CAPTION: SONOCOBLDG SONOCO LOG BUILDING Sonoco's first corporate office was a log building at the manufacturing site in Hartsville, South Carolina. Contact: Allan V. Cecil, 843-383-7524. (PRNewsFoto)[HD] HARTSVILLE, SC USA 04/30/1999

CAPTION: SONOCOCOKER SONOCO COKER Major James Lide Coker founded the Southern Novelty Company in 1899. Today, this company, renamed Sonoco in 1923, is a \$2.6 billion global packaging company. (PRNewsFoto)[KC] HARTSVILLE, SC USA 04/30/1999

CAPTION: SONOCOPACKAGING SONOCO PACKAGING Sonoco is one of the world's leading packaging companies offering industrial and consumer packaging solutions to customers in more than 85 countries. Sonoco's two largest businesses are engineered carriers, used for winding all types of products during the manufacturing process; and composite cans, packaging a wide variety of products from powdered beverages and snacks

to cleansers and caulking material. Contact: Allan V. Cecil, 843-383-7524. (PRNewsFoto) [HD] HARTSVILLE, SC USA 04/30/1999  
CAPTION: SONOCOBROWNING SONOCO BROWNING Peter C. Browning, President and CEO, Sonoco. Contact: Allan V. Cecil, 843-383-7524.  
(PRNewsFoto)[HD] HARTSVILLE, SC USA 04/15/1998