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Sonic, America's Drive-In: One of *Forbes* 200 Best Small Companies

Ranking marks Sonic's ninth consecutive year on the 200 Best Small Companies in America list

OKLAHOMA CITY — *Forbes* magazine praises Sonic Corp. (NASDAQ: SONC) in its 200 Best Small Companies in America list, ranking the nation's largest drive-in chain restaurant at No. 47 – a significant jump from last year's rank at No. 122. One of only three companies profiled in the October 28 issue, *Forbes* provides a detailed report of Sonic, summarizing its history and success through the eyes of the company's top executive duo: Clifford Hudson, chief executive officer, and Pattye Moore, president.

Sonic is one of only three companies recognized on the list for at least nine or more consecutive years. As reported by *Forbes*, for the past five years, Sonic Corp. has achieved 17 percent and 28 percent annual average sales and profit growth, respectively; and earned \$39 million on \$330 million in sales in 2001.

"*Forbes*' requirements make repeat appearances on the 200 Best list difficult," said Hudson. "Our continued and long-standing progress in the rankings can be attributed to our crew members and partners who are dedicated to delivering our fresh, unique menu and customer service philosophies every day."

Sonic's consistent growth was further documented in its recent release of the company's fiscal 2002 results.

- Earnings increased 22 percent to a record \$1.13 per diluted share for the year; record diluted EPS of \$0.38 for the quarter was 19 percent ahead of fiscal 2001
- System-wide same-store sales increased 3 percent for the year—the sixteenth consecutive year of same-store sales growth for Sonic
- System-wide sales surpassed \$2 billion for the first time ever in a fiscal year period—a doubling in system sales in just five years
- Sonic opened 182 new drive-ins during the year, including 64 in the fourth quarter, or just slightly below the record pace of 191 set in fiscal 2001.

To build its Best list, *Forbes* only considers publicly traded companies with 12-month sales of \$5 million to \$600 million, a stock price above \$5 per share, a five-year average return on equity of at least 5 percent, a net profit margin of at least 5 percent, and its latest measuring tool, relative stock price strength among industry and market competitors. For more information about *Forbes*' Best list or to read the article in its entirety, visit http://www.forbes.com/free_forbes/2002/1028/246.html.

About Sonic

Sonic, which specializes in made-to-order fast food, is known for its specialty menu items and personal Carhop service. Popular menu items include Toaster Sandwiches (Chicken Club and Bacon Cheddar Burger on thick Texas Toast), Extra-Long Cheese Coneys (hot dogs with chili and cheese), hamburgers, fresh-made Onion Rings, Tater Tots and a variety of Frozen and Fountain Favorites™ such as Cream Pie Shakes and Cherry Limeades.

Sonic started as a hamburger and root beer stand in 1953 in Shawnee, Okla., and has grown to more than 2,500 drive-ins in 30 states. Sonic is the nation's largest chain of drive-in restaurants and more than three-quarters of a million people eat at Sonic Drive-Ins every day. For more information about Sonic Corp. and its subsidiaries, visit Sonic on the Internet at www.sonicdrivein.com.

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