

SOUTH CAROLINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Press Release



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HARRIS DELOACH NAMED BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Isle of Palms, S.C. — Harris E. DeLoach, Jr., chairman, president and chief executive officer of Sonoco Products in Hartsville, was named the 2008 Business Leader of the Year at the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce's 29th Annual Summit on November 13. The Annual Summit is the premier event of South Carolina's business community.

"I can think of few South Carolinians more deserving of this honor than Harris DeLoach," said Bill Boyd, shareholder with Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd PA and the chairman of the board of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. "He has been extremely successful in building and running a very complicated \$4 billion business, and he has done it the right way. He insists that his employees, customers and shareholders all are treated with courtesy and integrity. He takes care of them and in return has earned their loyalty and desire to succeed. At the same time, he has been committed to his community, his state and educational institutions, and he has generously given his time to the advancement of both. He truly deserves this honor as 2008 Business Person of the Year."

After practicing law in Hartsville for 13 years, DeLoach joined Sonoco in 1986 as vice president of administration and general counsel. He worked his way up by running several Sonoco businesses and by July 2000 was named president and chief executive officer of what is today a \$4 billion, worldwide, vertically integrated packaging company that operates in about 330 locations and has approximately 18,600 team members. DeLoach says without his company's talented team members, neither he, nor Sonoco, would be as successful as they are today.

Sonoco was founded in 1899, in Hartsville on the belief that "people build businesses." It is a core value the company still holds today. DeLoach says "it is not unusual to find two or three generations of one family working at Sonoco, and many employees have never worked anywhere else. This could be due to our company's emphasis on personal and professional development, performance rewards, safety and the company's productive, positive work environment. We are committed to helping every employee reach his or her full potential."

Sonoco has been recognized for its commitment to employee development. The company has twice been named one of North America's Top Companies for Leaders. This prestigious annual distinction is sponsored by the global human resources company Hewitt Associates, in partnership with the RBL Group and FORTUNE magazine. The companies included on the list were selected and ranked by a panel of judges using criteria that included leadership practices, company reputation, leadership culture and values, and business performance. In 2005, Sonoco ranked 20th. Then in 2007, Sonoco moved up to the 17th ranking. DeLoach credits Sonoco's people development practices and talent reviews with being two of the reasons the company was honored.

“Sonoco invests in talent reviews to make sure the right people are in the right jobs. Employees with the right performance and characteristics are evaluated and prepared for future positions. Because Sonoco likes to promote from within, the talent review process enhances our efforts to develop employees’ careers within and across businesses.”

DeLoach’s and Sonoco’s commitment to developing people also translates into helping improve the communities in which the company operates. DeLoach believes “Sonoco has an obligation to the cities where we do business. We are connected to those cities to help with the community’s education, welfare and quality of life issues.”

Fulfilling that obligation, Sonoco dedicates significant resources to education and community involvement. In Sonoco’s hometown of Hartsville, the company provides needed financial support for school programs and supplies while employees volunteer their personal time to most area schools. DeLoach currently serves on a plethora of school and community boards, including the Board of Directors of the South Carolina Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics Foundation, and the University of South Carolina Business Partnership Foundation.

“Our schools are better because of Mr. DeLoach’s thoughtful tenure on the Darlington County School board and his visible, vocal and personal support of the Governor’s School for Science and Math, Coker College and Moore School of Business,” said Michael S. Holt, mayor of Hartsville. “His continued public assertion that South Carolina’s future success depends on preparing every South Carolinian to compete economically is being heard and making a difference.”

The South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the nation’s first state chamber Accredited with Distinction by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, is the state’s largest statewide broad-based business and industry trade association representing more than 5,000 member companies and more than 600,000 member employees, with 89 percent of membership comprised of small businesses. As the unified voice for business and industry, the Chamber serves as a catalyst for increasing per capita income and enhancing the state’s global competitiveness in order to improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians.

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