



Lee Enterprises Newspapers Report Circulation Gains

May 12, 2006

DAVENPORT, Iowa--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 12, 2006--Lee Enterprises, Incorporated (NYSE:LEE), announced today that 36 of its daily newspapers reported circulation gains to the Audit Bureau of Circulations for the six-month period ended March 31, 2006, compared to the same period last year.

At the same time, visits to Lee's rapidly growing newspaper online sites climbed to more than 180 million page views in March 2006.

Combined year-over-year results for Lee's 52 midsize and small newspapers that are audited by ABC showed a decline of 0.2 percent daily and an increase of 0.3 percent Sunday. Of the 52 newspapers, 21 reported circulation gains both daily and Sunday; eight reported gains daily only; and seven reported gains on Sunday only.

Lee newspapers reporting gains both daily and Sunday are located in Santa Maria, Calif.; Lihue, Hawaii; Bloomington, Decatur and DeKalb, Ill.; Waterloo, Iowa; Winona, Minn.; Billings, Butte and Helena, Mont.; Lincoln, Neb.; Bismarck, N.D.; Albany and Corvallis, Ore.; Orangeburg, S.C.; Longview, Wash.; and Madison, La Crosse, Racine, Shawano and Chippewa Falls, Wis.

Lee's largest newspaper, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, reported declines of 1.7 percent daily and 5.0 percent Sunday, reflecting a planned reduction in lower value distribution outside the St. Louis metropolitan area and an increase in the Sunday single copy price.

Including St. Louis, total Lee circulation in the March reporting period declined 0.5 percent daily and 0.9 percent Sunday compared with a year ago. Lee's smallest newspapers are not audited by ABC. Over the last five years, from March 2001 to March 2006, using comparable data for each March reporting period, circulation among Lee newspapers has been flat daily and down 0.3 percent annually on Sunday.

"As our latest results show, circulation is a top priority for Lee," said Mary Junck, chairman and chief executive officer. "We've regained our momentum and believe we're well on our way to resuming our pattern of steady growth."

She added: "Meanwhile, our studies show that total readership, which includes multiple readers per copy and pass-along copies, remains tremendously strong, as our newspapers reach more than half to three-fourths or more of the adults in our markets."

Also, she said, "because of our rapid online growth, our audiences continue to grow among all age groups, and we reach more people in our markets today than ever before."

For example, according to Lee readership and online studies, the printed edition of the Lincoln Journal Star in Nebraska reaches 63 percent of adults in the market during an average week, she said. When combined with the newspaper's website, the reach increases to 81 percent of all adults and 64 percent of the youngest adults, ages 18-24. Paid circulation of the Journal Star increased 2.1 percent daily and 0.2 percent Sunday in the March 2006 reporting period.

In the St. Louis market, the printed edition of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reaches 52 percent of all adults. When combined with the newspaper's website, STLLToday.com, the reach increases to 62 percent of all adults and to 55 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds. Other Lee publications in that market, including 39 Suburban Journals, with distribution of 1.1 million copies a week, further extend the reach.

Lee Enterprises is a premier publisher of newspapers in midsize markets, with 52 dailies and a joint interest in six others, a rapidly growing online business and more than 300 weekly newspapers and specialty publications in 23 states. Lee's newspapers have circulation of 1.7 million daily and 1.9 million Sunday, reaching more than four million readers daily. Lee's newspaper online sites reach more than two million users, and Lee's weekly publications have distribution of more than 4.5 million households. Lee's newspapers include such diverse markets as Napa, Calif.; Bloomington, Ill.; Billings, Mont.; Escondido, Calif.; Madison, Wis.; and St. Louis, Mo. Lee is based in Davenport, Iowa, and its stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol LEE. For more information about Lee Enterprises, please visit www.lee.net.

The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 provides a "Safe Harbor" for forward-looking statements. This release contains information that may be deemed forward-looking and that is based largely on the Company's current expectations and is subject to certain risks, trends and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those anticipated. Among such risks, trends and other uncertainties are changes in advertising demand, newsprint prices, energy costs, interest rates, labor costs, legislative and regulatory rulings and other results of operations or financial conditions, difficulties in integration of acquired businesses or maintaining employee and customer relationships and increased capital and other costs. The words "may," "will," "would," "could," "believes," "expects," "anticipates," "intends," "plans," "projects," "considers" and similar expressions generally identify forward-looking statements. Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on such forward-looking statements, which are made as of the date of this release. The Company does not publicly undertake to update or revise its forward-looking statements.

CONTACT:

Lee Enterprises, Davenport
Dan Hayes, 563-383-2100
dan.hayes@lee.net
www.lee.net

SOURCE:

Lee Enterprises