



## MSA Reports Record Sales and Earnings for 2001; Global Safety Equipment Manufacturer Announces Fourth Quarter Results

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PITTSBURGH, Feb. 28 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The efforts over multiple years by the people of Mine Safety Appliances Company (Amex: MSA), Pittsburgh, Pa., to improve the company's business have paid off in 2001. The world's leading manufacturer of safety equipment today announced record sales, improved gross margins and record earnings in dollars and earnings per share for 2001.

Net sales for the fourth quarter of 2001 were \$137,401,000 compared with \$129,703,000 for the fourth quarter of 2000, an increase of 6%. Fourth quarter 2001 net income was \$9,017,000, or 75 cents per share, compared with fourth quarter 2000 net income of \$9,034,000, or 76 cents per share. Fourth quarter 2001 net income was reduced by recognition of a valuation allowance on certain deferred tax assets in the U.S. Fourth quarter 2000 net income benefited from favorable income tax adjustments in Germany and the U.S. Income before income taxes increased 28% over fourth quarter 2000.

Net sales for the year ended December 31, 2001 were a record \$542,856,000 compared with \$500,367,000 in 2000, an increase of 8%. The sales increase in local currencies was 12% before currency translation effects into the strong dollar. Net income for the year ended December 31, 2001 was a record \$31,631,000, or \$2.65 per share, compared with \$23,239,000, or \$1.89 per share, in 2000. Income before income taxes increased 55% in 2001 over 2000.

Performance in North America was especially strong, particularly due to major, long-term initiatives focusing on developing products that have worldwide applications and meet global standards, enhancing sales channel partner relationships, and improving factory productivity. Noteworthy new product offerings for the fire service market included the CairnsHelmets(R) line of firefighter head protection and the Evolution(R) line of Thermal Imaging Cameras, both of which were introduced during the fourth quarter of 2000.

A key accomplishment in 2001 was MSA Europe's return to profitability, the culmination of several years' efforts. The impact of new product offerings, major cost improvements in Germany and Britain, the sale of underutilized assets and distribution companies, and significant sales increases in the Netherlands and Central and Eastern Europe were key factors in this turnaround.

Other international operations continued steady progress and new initiatives are underway for further advancement. Local currency sales increases and earnings improvements in international markets outside of Europe were offset, when stated in U.S. dollars, by currency translation effects, due to the strong dollar.

"I am personally very pleased to report record sales and earnings for MSA this year," said John T. Ryan III, Chairman and CEO. "At the end of 1999, we set a goal of doubling earnings in three years. This was accomplished in two and despite current global economic conditions. I congratulate all our associates for developing and carrying out the initiatives that generated these fine results."

Mr. Ryan added that sales and earnings growth in 2001 reflect the diversity of MSA's markets -- both geographically and by industry segment. "These improvements are the result of our focus on new and improved products for our customers, particularly the fire service, our largest market, and of ongoing projects to streamline operations, especially in Europe."

"Particular challenges facing MSA in 2002 are the ongoing effects of the still-sluggish global economy and the threat of terrorism and its potential consequences. I believe, however, that despite these uncertainties MSA's position in many key sales and product areas is strong and our momentum growing. We are maintaining a keen outward focus on our customers and their needs, on how these needs can be met by MSA products, and on our own operational effectiveness. I am optimistic we will continue to make progress towards new multi-year goals to improve MSA's market position and financial performance," Mr. Ryan concluded.

This release contains "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements may include, without limitation, statements regarding expectations for new products, cost reduction programs, and sales and earnings. Actual results may differ from expectations contained in such forward-looking statements and can be affected by any number of factors, many of which are outside of management's direct control. Among the factors that could cause such differences are the effects of cost reduction efforts in Europe, market acceptance of new products, the global economic environment, and interest and currency exchange rates.

The results from operations for the three-month and twelve-month periods ended December 31 are as follows.

(Note: Amounts in thousands, except earnings per share and shares outstanding)

	Three Months Ended		Twelve Months Ended	
	December 31		December 31	
	2001	2000	2001	2000
Net sales	\$137,401	\$129,703	\$542,856	\$500,367
Other income	1,148	1,076	2,810	2,466
Cost of products sold	79,509	79,246	325,662	313,279
Selling and administrative costs	33,536	30,065	131,102	124,456
Depreciation, amortization				

and other costs	9,120	7,966	33,729	28,615
Facilities consolidation and restructuring charges	566	1,154	2,287	2,433
Income before income taxes	15,818	12,348	52,886	34,050
Taxes on income	6,801	3,314	21,255	10,811
Net income	\$9,017	\$9,034	\$31,631	\$23,239
Basic earnings per share	\$.75	\$.76	\$2.65	\$1.89
Diluted earnings per share	\$.73	\$.76	\$2.61	\$1.88
Average number of common shares outstanding (basic)	12,077,744	11,838,698	11,909,797	12,301,334

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