



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Sonepar USA Acquires Stuart C. Irby Co.** *Sonepar USA acquisition positions the company for strong growth in North America.*

Berwyn, PA (September 16, 2005) - - Sonepar USA, a subsidiary of the Sonepar Group, today signed an agreement to acquire the Stuart C. Irby Company effective September 30, 2005.

Founded in 1926, Irby is a \$400 million electrical distributor operating out of 35 branches in the south central and north east regions of the USA; including Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and New York. Irby holds a strong position as one of the top twenty electrical distributors in the United States, in four attractive market segments – utility, commercial, contractor and industrial – all dealing with world leading suppliers.

Tony Burr, President of Sonepar USA, says, “Irby is a company whose management talent and entire employee base embodies Sonepar’s most critical characteristics: a passion for our business. We are looking forward to joining forces with the Irby business and their associates and management team, who will continue to operate under the leadership of Michael C. Wigton, Chief Operating Officer. This important acquisition provides a unique opportunity for Sonepar to enter into the utility market sector and expand our existing industrial product

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## ADD ONE / SONEPAR USA ACQUIRES STUART C. IRBY CO.

and service offering. Their renewed emphasis on the commercial/contractor market is in line with our goals. We feel there is a strong cultural and business fit between our operations and we look forward to working together to build on the strength of the Irby name in the marketplace.”

“Stuart C. Irby Co. is very excited about joining the Sonepar family says Stuart M. Irby. Sonepar will enable Irby to expand our growth into other markets, consistent with our growth strategies. We will continue to operate and market ourselves under the Irby name.”

Michael Wigton, COO, says, “It’s a great opportunity for Irby employees to become a part of a dynamic, growth-oriented organization. As is characteristic of all acquisitions Sonepar has made over the years, we will continue to operate with our existing management team in place and will remain known in the markets we have served for 80 years as the Stuart C. Irby Co., Inc. There are no expected organizational or systems changes as a result of this acquisition and Irby will continue to grow our independent business organically as well as through further acquisitions.”

Sonepar USA operates on the east coast, mid-west and west coast and the acquisition of Irby provides an excellent opportunity for Sonepar USA to expand its presence through the strongest regional distributor in the South Central region.

Sonepar is a privately owned independent group with headquarters located in Paris (France). Sonepar is the world leader in the distribution of electrical equipment. It specializes in cables and wiring, trunking, fittings, HVAC and lighting. With operations in 29 countries across four continents, the group’s 20,000 employees and 1150 branches generates annual sales over \$8.4 billion (7 billion euros).

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Stuart C. Irby Company was founded in 1926 and is based in Jackson, Mississippi with more than 600 employees in 35 locations in nine states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas). To find out more, go to [www.irby.com](http://www.irby.com) or [www.sonepar-usa.com](http://www.sonepar-usa.com).

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