



Costco Wholesale Corporation Reports March Sales and Adjusts February Sales Results

April 8, 2004

ISSAQUAH, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 8, 2004--Costco Wholesale Corporation (Nasdaq: COST) today reported net sales of \$4.41 billion for the five weeks ended April 4, 2004, an increase of 14 percent from \$3.88 billion in the same five-week period of the prior fiscal year. For the first 31 weeks of its 2004 fiscal year ended April 4, 2004, the Company reported net sales of \$27.79 billion, an increase of 14 percent from \$24.33 billion during the similar 31-week period of the prior fiscal year.

Reported net sales were reduced by the implementation of Emerging Issues Task Force Issue No. 03-10 ("EITF 03-10"), "Application of Issue No. 02-16 by Resellers to Sales Incentives Offered to Consumers by Manufacturers", which was effective at the beginning of the Company's fiscal third quarter, February 16, 2004. EITF 03-10, which deals primarily with Costco's vendor coupon and rebate programs, reduces both net sales and merchandise costs by an equal amount, and thus will not affect the Company's consolidated gross profit or net income. Had EITF 03-10 been in effect for the comparable 5-week and 31-week reporting periods in fiscal 2003 the reported net sales increase for those periods this year would have been 16 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

Reported comparable sales increases for the 5-week and 31-week periods ended April 4, 2004, were as follows:

	5 Weeks	31 Weeks
US	10%	10%
International	17%	20%
Total Company	11%	11%

Had sales for the 5-week and 31-week periods last year been reported under EITF 03-10, Total Company comparable sales increases would have been 13 percent and 12 percent respectively. Current year sales results and comparable sales increases in all of the above comparisons for International and Total Company were positively impacted by stronger foreign currencies.

Additional discussion of these sales results is available on a pre-recorded telephone message. You can access the recording by dialing 1-800-642-1687 (conference ID# 6677911). This recorded message will be available today through 5:00 PM (PDT) on Friday, April 9, 2004.

As required by EITF 03-10, Costco has adjusted monthly sales results for February 2004 to \$3.46 billion. This compares to \$3.49 billion reported under the prior accounting rules. That adjustment reduces the total Company reported comparable sales increase for February 2004 to 10 percent as compared to the 11 percent previously reported. Had sales for February 2003 been reported under EITF 03-10, the Company comparable sales increase for February 2004 would have been 11 percent.

Costco currently operates 432 warehouses, including 319 in the United States and Puerto Rico, 63 in Canada, 15 in the United Kingdom, five in Korea, three in Taiwan, four in Japan and 23 in Mexico. The Company also operates Costco Online, an electronic commerce web site, at www.costco.com. The Company plans to open an additional 8 to 10 new warehouses prior to the end of its fiscal year 2004 on August 29, 2004.

Certain statements contained in this release constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. For these purposes, forward-looking statements are statements that address activities, events, conditions or developments that the Company expects, or anticipates may occur in the future. Such forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that may cause actual events, results or performance to differ materially from those indicated by such statements. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, domestic and international economic conditions including exchange rates, the effects of competition and regulation, consumer and small business spending patterns and debt levels, rising costs associated with employees (including health care and workers' compensation costs), conditions affecting the acquisition, development, ownership or use of real estate, actions of vendors, and other risks identified from time to time in the Company's public statements and reports filed with the SEC.

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