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Ashland Inc. Names Noal Director of European Shared Business Services

DUBLIN, Ohio, July 12, 2005 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- John C. Noal, vice president and managing director for Valvoline Europe, Middle East and Africa, has been given increased responsibilities by Ashland Inc. (NYSE: ASH) as director of Ashland's European Shared Business Services (ESBS), effective August 1. He will also lead the Ashland European Business Council, a group comprised of all of Ashland's functional and business leaders in Europe. The announcement was made by Peter H. Rijnveldshoek, senior vice president, Thermoset Resins, Ashland Specialty Chemical, Ashland Inc., to whom Noal will report as ESBS director.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20040113/ASHLANDLOGO>)

The ESBS center, located in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, provides finance, information technology, human resources, communications, legal and environmental, health and safety support to all Chemical Sector divisions (Ashland Distribution, Ashland Specialty Chemical and Valvoline) in Europe.

"With this expansion of duties, John will play an important role in building the foundation for integration of our Chemical Sector operations in Europe," said Rijnveldshoek. "We will look to John for continued thought leadership in driving the process discipline that unites employees globally by market focus, function and process."

The Chemical Sector's European markets are targeted for continued growth. "There is much more opportunity for Ashland if we operate as one integrated Chemical Sector in Europe," said Gary A. Cappeline, president and chief operating officer, Chemical Sector, Ashland Inc. "In particular, decisions to move into emerging and faster growing Central and Eastern European countries will now be made by our European Business Council versus each Ashland division making decisions independently."

Noal's career at Ashland began in 2000 as director of the worldwide Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) group for Valvoline, where he was responsible for coordinating global sales efforts with the Cummins Engine Company and automotive OEMs. In 2002, he was named vice president and managing director for Valvoline Europe, Middle East and Africa. Prior to joining Ashland, Noal worked at Conoco, Inc. (a DuPont Company) and Koch Specialty Chemical Company.

A native of Erie, Pa, Noal earned a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from The Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa; and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Houston, Texas. Noal and his family reside in Wassenaar, The Netherlands.

Ashland Inc. (NYSE: ASH) is a Fortune 500 chemical and transportation construction company providing products, services and customer solutions throughout the world. To learn more about Ashland, visit <http://www.ashland.com>.

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