



Ross Stores Reports Strong December Sales and Estimated Fourth Quarter Earnings Per Share

January 9, 2003

NEWARK, Calif., Jan. 9 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Ross Stores, Inc. (Nasdaq: ROST) today reported sales of \$452 million for the five weeks ended January 4, 2003, an 18% increase above the \$384 million in sales for the five weeks ended January 5, 2002. Comparable store sales for the same period increased 6% on top of a 9% increase in the prior year period.

For the 48 weeks ended January 4, 2003, sales totaled \$3.335 billion, a 19% increase above the \$2.804 billion in sales for the prior year's comparable period ended January 5, 2002. Comparable store sales for the 48-week period increased 8% over the prior year.

Michael Balmuth, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, said, "We are very pleased with the solid 6% gain in comparable store sales in December, especially considering the difficult retail environment and our challenging prior year comparison. Business benefited from a consistent flow of great name brand fashions for the family and the home at compelling discounts, with a special emphasis on terrific values for gift giving. As a result, we realized broadbased strength throughout most markets and merchandise categories."

Mr. Balmuth continued, "Looking ahead, we continue to forecast a same store sales gain of about 4% in January on top of a 12% gain in the prior year. We believe that the better than expected sales in November and December will add about \$.03 in earnings per share to our fourth quarter and fiscal 2002 results. As a result, we now are forecasting earnings per share of approximately \$.74 for the 13 weeks ending February 1, 2003, an estimated increase of 19% over the \$.62 reported in the fourth quarter of 2001. For the 52 weeks ending February 1, 2003, we are forecasting earnings per share of approximately \$2.52, an estimated increase of 32% over the \$1.91 reported for fiscal 2001."

Forward-Looking Statements: This press release contains certain forward-looking statements which are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause the company's actual results to differ materially from management's current expectations. The words "expect," "anticipate," "estimate," "believe," "forecast," "projected" and similar expressions identify forward-looking statements. The estimated earnings per share for the fourth quarter ending February 1, 2003 are preliminary and subject to adjustments. Risk factors include obtaining acceptable new store locations, competitive pressures in the apparel industry, changes in economic conditions, changes in the level of consumer spending on or preferences in apparel or home-related merchandise, unseasonable weather trends, and greater than planned operating costs. Other risk factors are detailed in the company's Form 10-K for fiscal 2001. The factors underlying our forecasts are dynamic and subject to change. As a result, our forecasts speak only as of the date they are given and do not necessarily reflect the company's outlook at any other point in time. The company does not undertake to update or revise these forward-looking statements.

Additional recorded information concerning today's press release and the company's future outlook can be accessed by calling 402-220-5900, PIN #2363, from 8:30 a.m. eastern time on January 9, 2003 through 8:00 p.m. eastern time on January 10, 2003. A transcript of these comments also will be made available on the press release page of the company's web site at www.rossstores.com.

Ross Stores, Inc. operates a chain of off-price retail stores offering first quality, in-season, branded apparel and apparel-related merchandise for the entire family at prices that average 20% to 60% less than department and specialty stores, as well as merchandise for the home at similar savings. The company had 510 stores at January 4, 2003, compared to 453 stores at the end of the same period last year. SOURCE Ross Stores, Inc.

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