

NEWS

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OLYMPIC STEEL REPORTS FIRST QUARTER PROFITS FOR 2002

Cleveland, Ohio -- (April 25, 2002) Olympic Steel, Inc., (Nasdaq: ZEUS), a national steel service center, today announced financial results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2002. Tons sold for the first quarter of 2002 increased 8.7% to 314 thousand from 289 thousand. Net sales decreased 4.4% to \$112.0 million from \$117.1 million in the first quarter of 2001. Net income was \$202 thousand, or \$0.02 per share, compared to a net loss of \$1.0 million, or \$.11 per share for last year's first quarter. Operating income totaled \$1.6 million, compared to \$473 thousand for the prior year period.

"We are pleased to report a return to profitability during this quarter and an increase in tons sold," stated Michael D. Siegal, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. "Operationally, continued aggressive management of cash flows, operating expenses, and our asset base is producing positive results."

"In the current environment, we're seeing a significant tightening of steel supply that is forcing an increase in steel prices for the first time in over two years. However, a recovery in customer demand remains uncertain and we are apprehensive about our customers' ability to pass on the rapid steel price increases to end consumers," commented Mr. Siegal. "The credit universe available to the domestic manufacturing industry also continues to be a concern in this environment."

"Employees at Olympic Steel are committed to performing for the shareholders' and customers' interests. We believe we are prepared to propel this company forward as business conditions improve," concluded Mr. Siegal.

Founded in 1954, Olympic Steel is a North American steel service center that is experienced in the specialized processing and distribution of large volumes of flat-rolled carbon and stainless steel products. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the company operates 13 distribution and processing facilities and participates in two joint ventures in Michigan. For further information about Olympic Steel, Inc., visit the Company's web site at <http://www.olysteel.com>.

It is the Company's policy not to make quarterly or annual sales or earnings projections for external use and not to endorse any analyst's sales or earnings estimates. Forward-looking statements in this release are made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those projected. Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements that speak only as of the date hereof. Such risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, general business and economic conditions; competitive factors such as the availability and pricing of steel and fluctuations in demand; work stoppages by automotive or steel manufacturers; and equipment installation delays or malfunctions. Please refer to the Company's Securities and Exchange Commission filings for further information.

OLYMPICSTEEL
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

(in thousands, except per share and tonnage data)

	Three Months Ended March 31,			
	2002		2001	
	(unaudited)			
<u>SUMMARY</u>				
Net sales	\$112,017		\$117,120	
Operating income	1,628	1.5%	473	0.4%
Net income (loss)	\$ 202		\$ (1,011)	
Basic and diluted net income (loss) per share	<u>\$ 0.02</u>		<u>\$ (0.11)</u>	
<u>DETAILS</u>				
Tons sold				
Direct	273,190		254,796	
Toll	<u>40,367</u>		<u>33,715</u>	
	313,557		288,511	
% change	<u>8.7%</u>		<u>(15.1%)</u>	
Net sales	\$112,017		\$117,120	
% change	(4.4%)		(19.1%)	
Cost of sales	<u>85,026</u>		<u>90,676</u>	
Gross margin	26,991	24.1%	26,444	22.6%
Operating expenses				
Warehouse and processing	7,528	6.7%	8,128	6.9%
Administrative and general	6,353	5.7%	6,742	5.8%
Distribution	4,376	3.9%	4,000	3.4%
Selling	3,352	3.0%	3,286	2.8%
Occupancy	1,159	1.0%	1,500	1.3%
Depreciation and amortization	<u>2,595</u>	2.3%	<u>2,315</u>	2.0%
Total operating expenses	25,363	22.6%	25,971	22.2%
Operating income	1,628	1.5%	473	0.4%
Income (loss) from OLP joint venture	198		(220)	
Loss from TSP joint venture	<u>(6)</u>		<u>(3)</u>	
Income before financing costs and taxes	1,820		250	
Interest expense	1,491		1,200	
Receivable securitization expense	<u>-</u>		<u>694</u>	
Financing costs	1,491	1.3%	1,894	1.6%
Income (loss) before taxes	329	0.3%	(1,644)	(1.4%)
Income taxes	<u>127</u>	38.6%	<u>(633)</u>	38.5%
Net income (loss)	<u>\$ 202</u>		<u>\$ (1,011)</u>	
Basic and diluted net income (loss) per share	<u>\$ 0.02</u>		<u>\$ (0.11)</u>	
Weighted average shares outstanding	<u>9,631</u>		<u>9,460</u>	

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OLYMPICSTEEL
SUMMARY OTHER FINANCIAL INFORMATION

(in thousands, except ratios)

	<u>March 31,</u>		<u>December 31,</u>
	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>
	(unaudited)		(audited)
Accounts receivable (a)	\$ 55,851	\$ 11,865	\$ 38,754
Inventories	70,604	84,419	72,287
Net property and equipment	109,319	116,191	111,111
Total assets (a)	249,594	224,988	235,415
Current liabilities	37,954	35,873	32,455
Total debt (a)	93,332	65,674	84,499
Shareholders' equity	121,474	123,909	121,272
Shareholders' equity per share	12.61	12.87	12.59
Debt-to-equity ratio (a)	.77 to 1	.53 to 1	.70 to 1

	<u>Three Months Ended</u>	
	<u>March 31,</u>	
	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
	(unaudited)	
Change in working capital (a)	\$ 10,634	\$ (1,734)
Capital expenditures, net	449	908
EBITDA	4,223	2,788

(a) March 31, 2001 amounts and ratio reflect \$44,000 of accounts receivable sold under the Company's then existing accounts receivable securitization program.

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