



## The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc. Announces November Sales

York, PA, December 5, 2002 -- The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc. (NASDAQ: BONT) today announced total and comparable store sales for the four weeks ended November 30, 2002 decreased 10.4% to \$73.9 million from \$82.5 million reported in the comparable period last year.

Year-to-date total and comparable store sales decreased 2.3% to \$545.8 million from \$558.7 million reported in the comparable period of last year.

James H. Baireuther, Vice Chairman and Chief Administrative Officer, commented, "Our November sales performance was disappointing. Sales in men's and ladies' apparel, as well as intimate, did not meet our expectations. Also, a shift in the calendar resulted in a later Thanksgiving this year, which negatively impacted the comparison to last year. Although sales improved for the days after Thanksgiving, we could not overcome the magnitude of the shortfall earlier in the month. Consumer spending appears to be delayed and our customer remains cautious, with price being a critical component of their decision process. As a result, our promotional efforts will be more aggressive throughout the remainder of the holiday shopping period to provide our customer exceptional value as we focus on key items and price points. We expect our sales performance in December will significantly outperform our November results."

The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc. operates 73 department stores in targeted markets in Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and West Virginia. The stores carry a broad assortment of quality, brand-name fashion apparel and accessories for women, men and children, as well as distinctive home furnishings.

Statements made in this press release, other than statements of historical information, are forward looking statements and are made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such statements involve risks and uncertainties that may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in these statements. Factors that could cause such differences include, but are not limited to, risks related to retail businesses generally, additional competition from existing and new competitors, uncertainties associated with opening new stores or expanding or remodeling existing stores, the Company's presence in and dependence on limited geographic markets, the ability to attract and retain qualified management, the dependence upon key vendor relationships and the ability to obtain financing for working capital, capital expenditures and general corporate purposes. Additional factors that could cause the Company's actual results to differ from those contained in these forward looking statements are discussed in greater detail in the Company's periodic reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.