

JCPenney Reports Strong March Sales

Comparable Department Store Sales Increase 11.4%
Catalog/Internet Sales Increase 9.7%
Management Raises Earnings Guidance

PLANO, Texas, April 8, 2004 -- J. C. Penney Company, Inc. (NYSE:JCP) reported today that comparable department store sales increased 11.4 percent for the five weeks ended April 3, 2004. Sales, which were above expectations, were strong throughout the period and across all merchandise divisions. Sales continue to reflect good sell through of fashion and basic merchandise, with a good response to planned marketing events. Sales during the latter part of March also reflected some early Easter business.

Catalog/Internet sales were also above expectations, increasing 9.7 percent. Sales reflect good results from specialty catalogs and continued strength in Internet. Internet sales increased over 50 percent, reflecting a positive customer response to expanded product offerings, value and convenience.

The Company currently expects April sales for both comparable department stores and catalog/Internet to be up low single digits.

Operating profit through the first nine weeks is tracking above last year's levels, reflecting strong sales combined with positive gross margin trends. As a result, management now expects first quarter earnings in the range of \$0.20 to \$0.25 per share compared to the \$0.05 per share earned in last year's first quarter.

Preliminary Sales Summary

(\$ in millions)

	Period ended		% Increase/(Decrease)	
	Apr. 3, 2004	Mar. 29, 2003	All Stores	Comparable Stores
<u>5 Weeks</u>				
Department stores	\$ 1,292	\$ 1,167	10.7	11.4
Catalog/Internet	261	238	9.7	
Total	\$ 1,553	\$ 1,405	10.5	
<u>9 Weeks</u>				
Department stores	\$ 2,301	\$ 2,070	11.2	11.7
Catalog/Internet	449	412	9.0	
Total	\$ 2,750	\$ 2,482	10.8	

Discontinued Operations – Eckerd drugstores comparable store sales decreased 1.8 percent for the five week March period, with pharmacy sales increasing 1.1 percent and front-end sales declining 8.6 percent. Total drugstore sales were flat for the period. For the nine weeks ended April 3, 2004, comparable store sales decreased 2.6 percent and total drugstore sales decreased 1.0 percent.

Sales Conference Call Recording (8:00 a.m. Eastern) 402-220-5662

Monthly Sales Plan 972-431-5500

Senior management will host an Analyst Meeting at the Company's Home Office in Plano, Texas on April 19th and 20th. The meeting will begin with a tour of our new freestanding store in Cedar Hill, Texas. Management presentations will begin at the Home Office at approximately 5:45 p.m. on April 19th and 9:45 a.m. on April 20, 2004 (times shown are EDT). Management presentations will be available via a real-time webcast that may be accessed via JCPenney's Investor Relations website (JCPenney.net) or on StreetEvents.com (for members) and FullDisclosure.com (for media and individual investors). Replays of the webcast will be available for up to one year after the event. For individuals without access to the webcast, the meeting will also be available through a live conference call. To access the conference call, please dial **973-409-9260** and reference the JCPenney Analyst Meeting Conference Call.

J. C. Penney Corporation, Inc., the wholly-owned operating subsidiary of J. C. Penney Company, Inc., (the "Company") is one of America's largest department store, catalog, and e-commerce retailers, employing approximately 150,000 associates. As of January 31, 2004, J. C. Penney Corporation, Inc. operated 1,020 JCPenney department stores throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, and 58 Renner department stores in Brazil. JCPenney Catalog, including e-commerce, is the nation's largest catalog merchant of general merchandise, and JCPenney.com is one of the largest apparel and home furnishings sites on the Internet. J. C. Penney Corporation, Inc. is a contributor to JCPenney Afterschool Fund, a charitable organization committed to providing children with high quality after school programs to help them reach their full potential.

This release may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements, which reflect the Company's current views of future events and financial performance, involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties that may cause the Company's actual results to be materially different from planned or expected results. Those risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, competition, consumer demand, seasonality, economic conditions, and government activity. Investors should take such risks into account when making investment decisions.