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/ OMB APPROVAL /  
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/-----/

+-----+ UNITED STATES  
| FORM 5 | SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
+-----+ Washington, D.C. 20549

[ ] Check box if  
no longer subject to Section 16.  
Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section 30(f) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

[ ] Form 3 Holdings Reported

[ ] Form 4 Transactions Reported

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person\*

Benton, William P.  
-----  
(Last) (First) (Middle)  
  
Parklane Towers West, Ste. 1610 3 Parklane Blvd.  
-----  
(Street)  
  
Dearborn, MI 48126  
-----  
(City) (State) (Zip)

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol Sonic Automotive, Inc. (SAH)

3. I.R.S. Identification Number of Reporting Person, if an entity (Voluntary)

4. Statement for Month/Year 12/00

5. If Amendment, Date of Original (Month/Year)

6. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)

[X] Director [ ] Officer [ ] 10% Owner [ ] Other  
(give title below) (specify below)

7. Individual or Joint/Group Reporting (check applicable line)

X Form Filed by One Reporting Person  
  Form Filed by More than One Reporting Person

Table I--Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

<TABLE>  
<CAPTION>

1. Title of Security 7. Nature (Instr. 3) of In- direct Bene- ficial Indirect	2. Trans- action Date (Month/ Day/ Year)	3. Trans- action Code (Instr. 8)	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)	5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at the end of Issuer's	6. Owner- ship Form: Direct (D) or
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ship			(A) or		Fiscal Year	(I)
4) (Instr. 4)	Amount	(D)	Price	(Instr. 3 and 4)	(Instr.	
<S>	<C>	<C>	<C>	<C>	<C>	<C>
<C>						

</TABLE>  
 \* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see instruction 4 (b) (v).

Table II--Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) Securities	2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)	5. Number of Derivative Acquired (A) or Disposed of (Instr. 3, 4, and 5)

				(A)
<S>	<C>	<C>	<C>	<C>
<C>				

Options to purchase	\$8.88	3/31/00	A	10,000
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</TABLE>

<TABLE>  
<CAPTION>

6. Date Exercisable and Expiration of In-Date direct Bene- ficial Owner- ship Date (Instr. 4) Exercisable	7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4) Title Amount or Number of Shares	8. Price of Derivative Securities (Instr. 5)	9. Number of Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Year (Instr. 4)	10. Ownership of Derivative Securities: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)
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<S> <C> <C> <C> <C> <C> <C>

9/30/00 3/31/10 Class A Common Stock 10,000 40,000 D

</TABLE>

Explanation of Responses:

/s/ W. P. Benton 1-18-01  
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\*\*Signature of Reporting Person Date

\*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space provided is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.