Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number. OMB APPROVAL /----/ / OMB Number: 3235-0362 / / Expires: October 31, 2001 / / Estimated average burden / hours per response..... 1.0 / /----/ +----+ UNITED STATES | FORM 5 | SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20549 +----+ [] Check box if no longer subject ANNUAL STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5

obligations may continue. See Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Instruction 1(b).

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 ______ (Last) (First) (Middle) 355 Martell Drive _____ (Street) Bloomfield Hills, MI ______ (City) (State) 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 12/01 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 2. Trans- 3. Trans- 4. Securities Acquired (A) 5. Amount of 6. Owner-7. Nature action action (Instr. 3) or Disposed of (D) Securities ship of In-Date Code (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) Beneficially Form: direct (Month/ (Instr. 8) Owned at the Direct Bene-Day/ end of (D) or ficial Issuer's Year) Indirect Owner-(A) or Fiscal Year (I) ship

4) (Instr. 4)

Amount (D)

Price

(Instr. 3 and 4)

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* If the form is filed by
4(b)(v) more than one reporting | | tion | || | curities Acquired, Dispos s, warrants, options, co | nvertible securities | | |
| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conver- sion or | 3. Trans- action | 4. Transac- tion Code | 5. Number of Deriv |
| Securities (and the security of the security o | Exercise | Date | | Acquired (A) or |
| | Price of | (Month/ | (Instr. 8) | Disposed of |
| (D) | Deriv- | Day/ | | (Instr. 3, 4, |
| and 5) | ative Security | Year) | | |
| | | | | |
| (D) | | | | (A) |
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| | | | | |
| Options to purchase | \$7.80 | 3/30/01 | A | 10,000 |
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| | Title and Amount of | 8. Price | 9. Number | 10. Owner- |
| 11. Na- cisable and | Underlying Securities | of | of Deriv- | ship |
of De-

Deriv- ative

(Instr. 3 and 4)

Expiration

of In-								
Date					ative	Secur-		rivative
direct	,							
(Month/Day	./				Secur-	ities		Secu-
Bene-					24	D		
Year) ficial					ity	Bene-		rity:
IICIAI					(Instr. 5)	ficially		Direct
Owner-					(111361. 3)	_		Dilect
ship						Owned		(D) or
Date (Instr. 4)	Expira-		Amount or			at End		Indi-
Exer- cisable	tion Date	Title	Number of Shares			of Year (Instr. 4)		rect (1) (Instr. 4)
<s> <c></c></s>		<c></c>	<c></c>	<c></c>	<c></c>	<c></c>	<c></c>	<c></c>
9/30/01	3/30/11	Class A common stock	10,000			20,000		D
		 -						

</TABLE>

Explanation of Responses:

/s/ W.P. Benton February 6, 2002

**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.