

PaperAge

FALL 2025

Focused on Paperboard

Clearwater Paper strengthens its position as a supplier of paperboard to North American converters



NuVo

NEXT GENERATION CUPSTOCK

35% Post-Consumer Recycled Fiber

Compostable Bio-PBS™ Barrier

FSC® Chain of Custody Certification

Premium White Shade

State-of-the-Art Print Detail

Mill Reliability

Rethinking sealing in pulp and paper operations

NuVo® paperboard evolves to meet the needs of generations to come.

NuVo® BioPBS cupstock is produced by Clearwater Paper
BioPBS® is made from renewable bio-based plants
and is manufactured by Mitsubishi Chemical

clearwaterpaper.com

mcpp-global.com

This hot cup contains 30% PCR fiber

“



”

4.0625" CENTER HOLE PLUG
(ACTUAL SIZE)

Reliability that speaks for itself.

We are a fourth-generation, family-owned company that's been at the forefront of innovation for more than 80 years. That's because we value strength, stability, and high-quality goods made in America – just like you do.

We manufacture high-density, molded wood plugs that help the paper industry reduce loss and keep on rolling. And at Souhegan, we guarantee a steady inventory of the products you need, whenever you need them.

For more information on standard plug sizes and custom options call us at **(603) 654-2311** or visit us online at **souheganwood.com**

Souhegan WOOD
PRODUCTS

contents

FALL 2025, VOLUME 141, NUMBER 3



FEATURES

22 Focused on Paperboard Packaging

After two major transactions in 2024, Clearwater Paper is now focused on strengthening its position as a premier independent supplier of paperboard packaging products to North American converters.

24 When Newer Isn't Better: Rethinking Sealing in Pulp and Paper Operations

Modern sealing technology has advanced, but performance hasn't always followed.

26 How to Efficiently Control Dust in Increasingly Soft Tissue

As tissue softness increases, challenges with dusting in tissue production grow. Excessive dust impairs production efficiency, affects product quality, and creates health and safety risks at the mill.

MILL SPOTLIGHT

18 Sappi North America – Somerset Mill

Sappi North America recently completed "Project Elevate" — the \$500 million conversion and expansion of Paper Machine No. 2 at its Somerset Mill located in Skowhegan, Maine.

DEPARTMENTS

4 Editor's Note

6 Industry News

28 Market Insight: Specialty Papers

Regulations shaping specialty papers market over next five years.

30 Of Interest

Paper and paper-based packaging industry votes to end its marketing program.

20 People

21 Calendar

SERVICES

29 Classified Ads

29 Index of Advertisers



Paper Meets LIVE! . . . in May

By John O'Brien, Managing Editor
jobrien@paperage.com

I had the pleasure of attending Paper Meets LIVE! 2025 at the Opal Sands Resort in Clearwater Beach, Florida in September. The annual paper industry event is hosted by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) and the National Paper Trade Association (NPTA).

If you're in the business of making paper, selling and/or buying paper, converting paper, importing, exporting, you name it, Paper Meets LIVE! is the place to be. And beyond the benefit of seeing and meeting people that you may only have a chance to see once a year, the environment during the convention fosters real-time business

deals being forged among colleagues throughout the paper industry supply chain.

Important Note: Paper Meets LIVE! 2026 will take place May 12-14. And I don't mind saying that the change from September to May is a great decision by AF&PA and NPTA. Since 2022, the event has been held in the fall in Clearwater Beach, and we've narrowly dodged a couple of hurricanes. Clearwater Beach in May is welcomed change.

I could go on and on about Paper Meets LIVE!, but as it's said, 'a picture is worth a thousand words', so here's a few pictures from this year's event.



(l-r) Paul Biesiadecki, Vice President, Sales, Paper & Packaging for Mativ, is presented with NPTA's Stanley O. Styles Industry Excellence Award by Ryan Elwart, Group President for Mativ, during the Luncheon.



Scribe, Bio Pappel's flagship brand in the bond paper market for printing, writing, and school products, had a comprehensive display set-up in the Opal's Ballroom Foyer.



The weather was absolutely beautiful for the Tuesday Evening Reception and everyone took advantage of the informal gathering.



With a threat of a late-day thunderstorm, Wednesday's Networking Happy Hour moved inside to the Opal's Ballroom Foyer, which overlooks the ocean through floor to ceiling windows.

EDITOR IN CHIEF	Jack O'Brien
PUBLISHER	Michael C. O'Brien
MANAGING EDITOR	John F. O'Brien, Jr.
LAYOUT & DESIGN	Betsy Gold Design

EDITORIAL AND SALES OFFICE
PO Box 904
Cohasset MA 02025
Phone: (781) 378-1253
email: mobrien@paperage.com
Web Site: www.paperage.com

Copyright ©2025 by O'Brien Publications, Inc.
All rights reserved. PaperAge (ISSN:0031-1081)
is published four times per year with those issues being:
Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter by O'Brien Publications, Inc.
PO Box 904, Cohasset, MA 02025.
Periodicals postage paid at North Reading, MA.

Canadian Mail distribution information:
Publication Mail Agreement #40112731
Ontrac International
P.O. Box 25058, London BRC.
Ontario, Canada N6C 6A8

**POSTMASTER: Please send change of addresses to:
PaperAge, PO Box 904, Cohasset, MA 02025**

Subscriptions: PaperAge is mailed without charge in the U.S. and Canada (upon written request) to qualified individuals in the pulp, paper, paperboard, and paper converting industries. To all others there is a subscription charge of \$40.00 in the U.S., \$48.00 in Canada, and \$60.00 in all other countries. Single copies may be purchased for \$10.00 each. All payments must be made in U.S. funds and checks must be drawn from a U.S. bank. Credit cards are accepted.

Reproduction of by any means of the whole or part of PaperAge, without written permission, is prohibited.



SERVICE 360 REEL SPOOL NONDESTRUCTIVE TESTING (NDT)

Reel spool nondestructive testing identifies non-visible defects that could result in critical failures. Our certified experts can perform the inspections with or without the sheet wound on the reel spool, ensuring minimal disruption and immediate identification of potential issues. On-site testing reduces costs and keeps reel spools in service.

info@kadant.com
fluidhandling.kadant.com

KĀDANT

NORTH AMERICA

Georgia-Pacific Announces \$800 Million Capital Investment in Alabama River Cellulose Mill

Georgia-Pacific in September announced a new capital project for the company's Alabama River Cellulose mill in Perdue Hill, Alabama. The \$800 million investment will modernize, expand and streamline the facility's production capabilities.

The project, scheduled to begin in the fourth quarter of 2025 and conclude in 2027, will enhance and expand essential manufacturing equipment. This is expected to augment the mill's operational efficiency and increase its production capacity by about 300 tons per day.

Close to one million tons of fluff and market pulps will be produced yearly at the mill. A state-of-the-art digester, new pulp dryer and a more efficient power boiler will be installed.



Modifications and upgrades will also be made to the brown stock washing and recausticizing systems, recovery boiler, evaporators and lime kiln.

Once the project is completed, the Alabama River Cellulose mill will be the

largest and one of the most technologically advanced softwood pulp mills in the U.S.

Softwood fluff and market pulps are used to make consumer goods such as baby diapers, adult incontinence and feminine hygiene products, facial tissue, kitchen towels, paper cups and plates and more. Demand for softwood pulp products is projected to grow by 3% annually over the next several years.

Georgia-Pacific is also invested in improving the plant's environmental performance. The planned improvements aim to reduce water usage, lower particulate emissions, make energy use more efficient, improve wastewater processing, capture more valuable byproducts and improve biomass recovery and utilization.

Sofidel Successfully Starts-Up Third Tissue Machine at Circleville Mill

Sofidel America has successfully started up a third paper machine, PM3, at its integrated paper mill in Circleville, Ohio. The milestone, achieved on September 4, further consolidates the Circleville mill's role as the company's largest and most important production hub worldwide, Sofidel said.

The new Valmet DCT 200 machine adds 70,000 tons of annual capacity, bringing Circleville's total output to more than 200,000 tons per year. With this expansion, Sofidel's global tissue production capacity increases to 1,983,000 tons per year.

The \$185 million investment, first announced in 2023, included both the construction of the new building and installation of the state-of-the-art machine. Once fully operational, the project will also create approximately 80 additional jobs.

In a written statement, Sofidel said, "The successful startup of our third paper machine in Circleville represents a significant step forward in Sofidel's growth strategy. This achievement reflects both the strength of our U.S. operations and the dedication of the teams who made it possible.



"With this expansion, Sofidel reaffirms its long-term commitment to serving the North American market with high-quality, sustainable tissue products while supporting local communities."

Pregis Opens New Converting Facility for Paper Mailers in Illinois

Pregis has opened a new 477,000-square-foot paper converting center in Elgin, Illinois, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 19. The facility will support over 500 manufacturing jobs and can produce more than 1 billion curbside recyclable paper packaging solutions annually.

"We are excited about driving forward sustainable initiatives and becoming a part of

the Elgin community. This expanded operation represents our commitment to operational excellence and environmental stewardship while creating significant employment opportunities," said Ryan Wolcott, President, Mailing Solutions, Pregis.

The zero-waste production complex, powered entirely by renewable energy through Renewable Energy Credits, will host multiple

production lines for the company's Protective Paper and Mailing Solutions offering.

The Elgin site will serve as the company's primary Midwest facility for curbside recyclable paper mailer production. This facility joins four other Pregis mailing facilities nationwide in Arlington, Texas; McDonough, Georgia; Bethel, Pennsylvania; and Reno, Nevada.



From Inventory to Innovation: Focused Solutions for Your Mill

JOHN HUTCHASON, MOTION

The pulp and paper industry is fast-paced, capital-intensive and heavily reliant on uptime. To stay competitive, facilities need partners that can deliver not just parts, but also expertise and strategic support. Motion's vital offerings to this supply chain include deep inventory, industry-specific specialists and a wide range of value-added services tailored to the unique needs of pulp and paper operations.

Robust inventory for critical demands

Downtime in pulp and paper facilities can cost thousands of dollars per minute, making quick access to replacement parts essential. Motion stocks a comprehensive inventory, including bearings, belts, motors, gearboxes and more, spread across 17 distribution centers, three market distribution centers and over 600 locations across North America. This ensures quick delivery and availability of high-demand items so mills promptly get what they need to keep equipment running and avoid costly disruptions.

Specialists with deep industry knowledge

What really sets Motion apart is its people—including its industry-specific specialists. Our pulp and paper specialists know this industry inside and out from years of experience. They understand the unique challenges mills face, from high-speed converting lines to harsh chemical environments. Whether it's troubleshooting equipment failure, assisting in root-cause analysis, or identifying upgrade opportunities, Motion's technical specialists provide focused, practical guidance. Their consultative approach helps customers extend equipment life, improve safety and reduce total cost of ownership.

Value-added services that drive efficiency

Beyond parts and expertise, Motion offers a wide range of value-added services designed to optimize plant performance. Predictive maintenance, vibration analysis and lubrication programs help prevent unplanned outages. Customized solutions, such as mill storeroom management and vendor-managed inventory, streamline supply chains and make



Among Motion's many offerings to paper mills are slitter parts, including motors, blades, anvils, bearings, hardware, solenoids, tubing, air fittings, cylinders, bellows, gauges, load tubes, guards, and select brands of cutting heads.

purchasing easier. And with automation and engineering support, Motion helps customers modernize legacy systems and improve energy efficiency. These are key steps toward meeting today's growing sustainability focus for the pulp and paper sector.

Your strategic partner

Motion is more than a distributor—we're a strategic partner to the pulp and paper market. With a strong inventory backbone, skilled specialists and value-added services that drive operational excellence, Motion helps mills stay competitive in a demanding environment. Our commitment to reliability, innovation and customer success continues to make us a trusted name in the industry.

John Hutchason is a Corporate Account Vice President at Motion, bringing 19 years of industry experience. He is passionate about helping customers optimize facility operations and encourages his corporate account team to success.



For more information, visit
[Motion.com/cms/industry/pulp-paper](https://www.motion.com/cms/industry/pulp-paper).

NORTH AMERICA

IP to Sell Global Cellulose Fibers Business for \$1.5 Billion; Close Two Containerboard Mills

International Paper has reached a definitive agreement with American Industrial Partners (AIP) to sell its Global Cellulose Fibers (GCF) business for \$1.5 billion. IP previously announced the decision to review strategic alternatives for its GCF business last fall, as part of the company's strategy to focus on sustainable packaging solutions.

The transaction is expected to close by the end of the year, subject to regulatory approvals.

"GCF is a strong business, and I'm pleased to see it transitioning to AIP, which is focused on investing in and growing industrial businesses," said IP Chief Executive Officer Andy Silvernail. "Over the past few months, GCF has done the hard work of aligning resources with its most strategic customers, implementing an 80/20 mindset, and creating a simplified and focused portfolio. These actions, combined

with its talented and committed team made it an attractive investment for AIP to enter the pulp market and have positioned GCF for long-term success under new ownership."



The GCF business creates high-quality pulp for a wide range of applications like towel and tissue products, diapers, feminine care, incontinence and other personal care products. In addition, its specialty pulp serves as a sustainable raw material used in construction materials, paints, coatings and more. GCF generated \$2.8 billion in revenue in 2024 and has 3,300 employees globally, with nine manufacturing facilities and eight regional offices.

Changes to Containerboard Operations

International Paper in September permanently closed the Savannah, Georgia containerboard mill, the Savannah, Georgia packaging facility, Riceboro containerboard mill and Riceboro Timber and Lumber. The combined closures will reduce IP's annual containerboard capacity by about 1 million tons.

These changes impacted approximately 1,100 hourly and salaried positions.

The Riceboro and Savannah mills were shut down in phases during September, as was the Savannah packaging facility.

Lastly, IP will invest \$250 million to convert the #16 machine at the Riverdale mill in Selma, Alabama, to produce containerboard. The Riverdale conversion is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2026.

Hood Container Announces \$118.9 Million Modernization Project at St. Francisville Paper Mill

Hood Container will invest \$118.9 million to modernize its paper mill in West Feliciana Parish in St. Francisville, Louisiana, allowing the company to significantly boost production capacity and quality to meet evolving market demands.

The project will center around upgrading Hood Container's primary paper machine, which will increase production capacity by 80,000 tons per year. With the manufacturing of more, higher-quality products, the company anticipates buying an additional 204,000 tons of wood chips and 22,000 tons of recycled boxes annually.

The investment will also include significant improvements to the facility's recovery boiler, which is essential in powering the mill.



HOOD CONTAINER CORPORATION™

Wayne Morgan, Senior Vice President at Hood Container, stated, "Hood Container is proud to continue growing our containerboard business with a new investment to our St. Francisville mill. The State of Louisiana has been a valued partner since we acquired the facility in 2015, and we look forward to building on that strong relationship in the years ahead."

The St. Francisville mill was first opened in the late 1950s by Crown Zellerbach and later operated under Tembec. Since taking ownership in 2015, Hood Container has invested more than \$160 million in the facility.

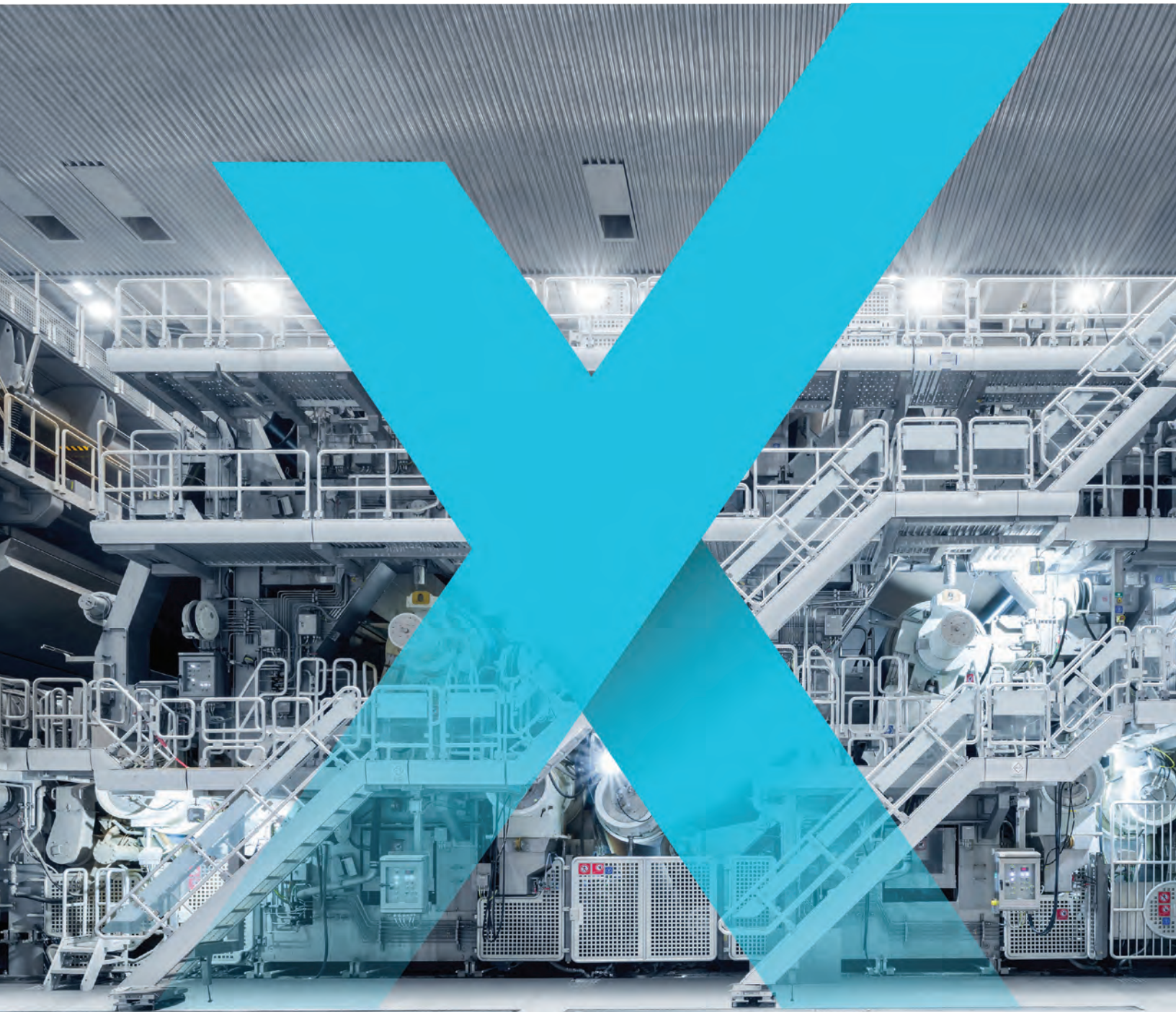
The first phase of the upgrade will occur during the third quarter of 2026, and the remaining equipment and additions will be fully installed during the May 2027 annual mill outage.

To secure the project, the State of Louisiana offered the company a competitive incentive package that includes an \$800,000 Modernization Tax Credit to be paid out over a five-year period. Hood Container also is expected to utilize the state's Industrial Tax Exemption Program.

Xcellence. All along the Line.

VOITH

XcellLine



www.voith.com/xcelline

NORTH AMERICA

Sappi North America Urges Caution after The Nature Conservancy Agreement with Brookfield Renewable

Sappi North America issued a statement saying that it is concerned with a Sept. 23 announcement from The Nature Conservancy regarding its agreement with Brookfield Renewable to acquire four hydroelectric facilities on the Kennebec River in Maine, including the Shawmut Dam.

“The Nature Conservancy has indicated that its priority is enhancing fish passage along the river, which could include the eventual removal of the Shawmut Dam. Sappi North America’s Somerset Mill in Skowhegan depends on the impoundment or pond created by the Shawmut Dam for its water intake and discharge operations.

“A removal would jeopardize the viability of the Somerset Mill and the thousands of Maine jobs connected to Sappi’s operations, including independent loggers, contractors, and landowners who work with and benefit from this work.

“In May 2025, Sappi completed a \$500 million transformation of its largest paper machine at Somerset, creating the most advanced machine of its kind in North



America. This investment positions the mill at the forefront of producing renewable, fiber-based packaging — critical alternatives to plastic — while underscoring Sappi’s long-term commitment to Maine manufacturing and American jobs,” the company stated.

Sean Wallace, Vice President of Research, Development, and Sustainability at Sappi North America, added, “For 50 years, the Somerset Mill has been a cornerstone of Maine’s manufacturing economy. The mill

demonstrates that strong environmental stewardship and strong communities can go hand in hand. We share the goal of protecting Maine’s rivers and believe there are solutions that will allow fisheries to thrive without putting thousands of good jobs at risk. We remain hopeful that we can work with The Nature Conservancy, our local communities, state and federal agencies and our legislative delegation to find a balanced path forward, including options that preserve the impoundment.”

CIB Loans \$660 Million Towards Irving Pulp & Paper's Saint John Mill Modernization

The Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB) has reached financial close on a \$660 million loan to Irving Pulp & Paper to support the large-scale modernization (Project NextGen) of the company’s pulp mill in west Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada.

Enabled by the CIB’s partnership, the modernization project consists of replacing 1970s era technology with current best-available solutions to improve productivity and maintain mill competitiveness within the sector. This includes a new recovery boiler, steam turbine and generator to produce up to 145 megawatts of renewable energy.



Excess energy generated at the mill will be exported to the provincial grid under a power

purchase agreement with NB Power, with approximately 50 megawatts being used to sustainably energize mill operations.

The modernization will make the mill energy self-sufficient, eliminate the combustion of heavy fuel oil as an energy source and reduce emissions per tonne of Kraft pulp by 50%, supporting the province’s energy transition.

Once complete, this project will also position the mill among the top 10 global producers of softwood Kraft pulp — boosting production output by over 70% — while reinforcing the forestry sector as a key driver of economic growth.

We Know Steam Schedule Your Audit Today

Deublin's capabilities in the design, supply, and installation of steam and condensate systems for paper machine dryer sections are growing more everyday. Deublin offers worldwide support for maximum energy savings, system performance, safety and more.

- Design & Installation
- Diagnostics & Audit
- Maintenance & Training
- Steam Joints & Siphon Systems
- Heat Transfer Fluid Unions
- Water Unions
- Turbulence Bars
- Steam & Condensate Systems
- Thermo-Compressors
- Separators
- Separator Skids
- Desuperheaters



Learn More at Deublin.com

2050 Norman Drive
Waukegan, IL 60085 USA
+1.847.689.8600



DEUBLIN
A HOERBIGER COMPANY

NORTH AMERICA

Kap Paper Idles Its Newsprint Mill in Kapuskasing, Ontario

Kap Paper on Sept. 30 began the idling of operations at its paper mill in Kapuskasing, Ontario, due to insufficient financial resources to keep the mill in operation.

The mill has the capacity to produce 220,000 metric tons per year of newsprint and directly employs about 420 people.

Although the company could not say whether or not the shutdown would be permanent, the mill's future is questionable.

"With deep regret, Kap Paper [on Sept. 30] announced it will begin an orderly idling of operations at its Kapuskasing facility," said Terry Skiffington, CEO of Kap Paper. "The decision follows months — and indeed years — of engagement with governments and partners and reflects the absence of near-term measures required to maintain the integrated forestry supply chain in Northeastern Ontario.

"This is a heartbreaking day for our people

and the community," Skiffington said. "We have done everything in our power to keep the mill operating. While we have had productive discussions with both levels of government, and mid to long term support could be available, it doesn't appear that immediate support is available at this time."

In a written statement, the company said, "At the urging of the Province, Kap Paper approached the Government of Canada for a longer-term solution through the Strategic Response Fund. While we have initial positive responses, the timing doesn't appear to be aligning for an immediate solution to keep the mill operational. Unfortunately, Kap Paper does not have the resources to continue operations and are forced to idle our operations."



About the Kapuskasing Mill

The Kapuskasing mill was formerly owned by Rayonier Advanced Materials (RYAM), which took ownership after RYAM's acquisition of Tembec in Nov. 2017. Four years later, in 2021, GreenFirst Forest Products took over the mill operations in Kapuskasing. In 2024, GreenFirst restructured, leading to the formation of the standalone company, Kap Paper.

SOUTH AMERICA

WEIG Group to Relocate Containerboard Machine from Germany to Paraguay

The WEIG Group announced that Yaguarete Papeles (Kartotec SA), a member of the Group, has acquired a modern paper machine for the production of liner for plasterboard and other paper grades.

Kartotec, located in Villeta, Paraguay, manufactures testliner, corrugated board and plasterboard.

The paper machine, designated "KM9", will come from Heintel Group's paper mill in Raubling, Germany. Heintel closed the mill at the end of 2024. The mill had the capacity to produce about 240,000 tonnes per year of containerboard on two paper machines.

According to WEIG, the dismantling of the acquired machine is underway and shipment to the Villeta paper mill is scheduled for mid-2026.



The goal of the paper machine project is to meet growing demand, particularly in Central and South America, especially in the

plasterboard market, WEIG Group said.

"The investment is part of a long-term growth strategy to strengthen the industrial performance of the WEIG Technical Liner business unit," the company said. "The plant was selected based on its technical suitability, regional market requirements, and security of supply. It does not replace existing production, but rather expands available capacity."

KM9 will use recycled paper as its primary feedstock.

Based in Mayen, Germany, WEIG is a family-owned business group in the international paper and cardboard industry with 1,900 employees across locations in Europe and South America.

EUROPE

Metsä Group's Carbon Capture Pilot Plant at Rauma Pulp Mill in Testing Phase

Metsä Group announced that a carbon capture pilot plant came online in June at its Rauma pulp mill in Finland, where the company is testing the capture of pulp mill flue gases in cooperation with Andritz, the supplier of the pilot plant.

Metsä Group explained that carbon capture is an existing technology, but it has not previously been used for pulp mill flue gases.

“During the autumn of 2025, various operating models will be tested concerning aspects such as energy consumption and the amount of carbon captured. The pilot period will also provide information about the need for flue gas treatment and the quality of the end product,” the company said.

Kaija Pehu-Lehtonen, SVP Business Development and the Director of Metsä Group's carbon capture project, added, “So far, the technology appears to be working well with

the pulp mill's flue gases.”

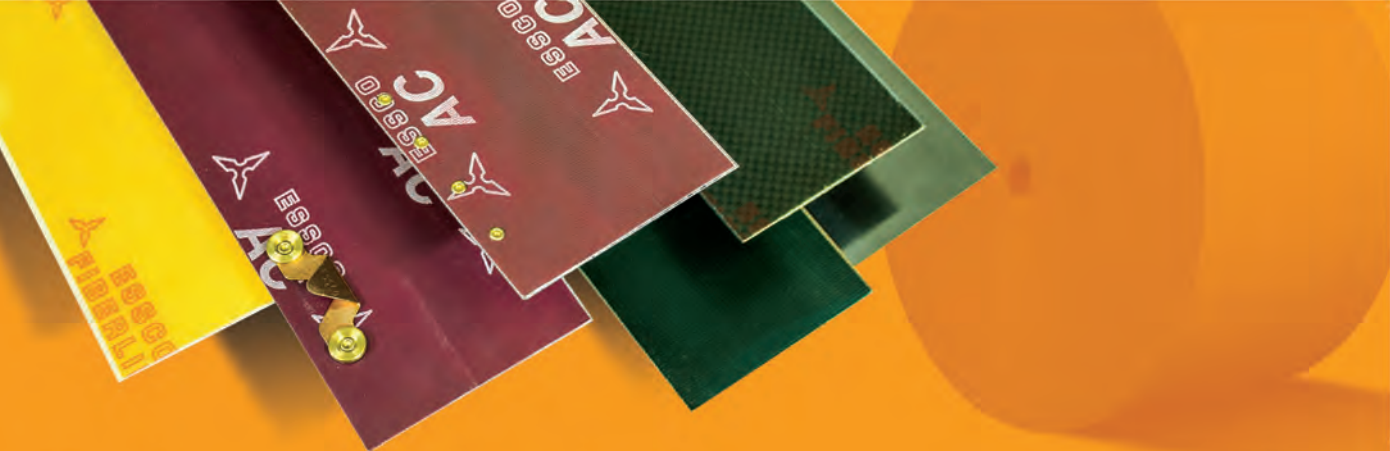
As part of the piloting, Metsä Group will also investigate possibilities for a larger-scale demo plant for carbon capture at the Rauma mill site. The annual capacity of a demo plant would be 30,000 to 100,000 tonnes of captured carbon dioxide. No decision has been made regarding the project or the demo plant's location. The larger-scale demo plant would have a capacity more than one hundred times that of the pilot plant, which can capture approximately one tonne of carbon dioxide per day.

According to Metsä Group, bio-based carbon dioxide is a virtually untapped pulp mill side stream. Carbon dioxide can be used as a raw material — for example, in the chemical and fuel industries — and it can serve as a replacement for fossil-based raw materials.

Carbon capture does not increase wood use at the pulp mill, nor does it undermine production efficiency.

“Capture-related investments are large, and the market is underdeveloped, so we're proceeding gradually. In addition, the value chains from raw material to finished products are often new and complex, requiring close cooperation between the participants and an insight into industrial operations,” Pehu-Lehtonen noted.

Through its development activities, Metsä Group wants to promote the emergence of markets. However, market development also depends on regulation at the EU and national level, as well as on investment support for the green transition. State aid for the green transition will play a key role in accelerating industrial investment.



Custom doctor solutions.
For better paper.

Essco's best-in-class doctor blades, doctoring systems and maintenance programs help some of the world's largest and fastest paper machines deliver consistent, trouble-free performance. Which means increased production, higher quality and greater profitability. **That's the Essco difference.**

ESSCO
INCORPORATED

PH: 920.494.3480
800.835.7134
email: sales@esscoincorporated.com
esscoincorporated.com

EUROPE

UPM Ending Coated Mechanical Paper Production at Kaukas Mill

UPM at the beginning of October finalized employee consultation talks at the company's Kaukas paper mill in Lappeenranta (South East Finland), and will permanently end paper production at the mill during Q4 2025.

The production of pulp, sawn timber and biofuels, along with R&D activities at the integrated Kaukas site will continue as before.

The reduction of personnel is 220.

In July, UPM first announced the plans to cease paper production at Kaukas Mill. The mill operates one paper machine, PM1, which has the capacity to produce 300,000 tonnes per year of coated mechanical paper.



UPM plans to shift its coated mechanical paper production in Finland to UPM Rauma mill.

"The consultations were conducted in a constructive spirit, focusing on the rationale behind the planned changes, their potential

impact, and the comprehensive support available to affected employees," said Matti Laaksonen, General Manager, Kaukas and Kymi mills. "As part of the process, we agreed to implement a from-job-to-job program, which has been UPM's established model for change support since 2006."

The Kaukas mill is an integrated facility that consists of the pulp mill, a mill producing magazine paper, a sawmill, a biorefinery producing wood-based diesel, and UPM's research center. The pulp mill has the capacity to produce 700,000 tonnes per year of soft-wood pulp on two production lines.

Grigeo Group Investing EUR 106 Million to Increase Tissue Production Capacity

Lithuania-based Grigeo Group announced an investment program of more than EUR 106 million for the expansion of its tissue paper business.

The bulk of the investment — over EUR 97 million — will be used to modernize and expand the Grigeo Tissue production plant in Grigiskes, Lithuania. The remaining EUR 9 million will be used to upgrade the production and infrastructure of Grigeo Tissue S.p. z o.o. a tissue paper mill in Poland.

This is the largest expansion project in the Group's history, doubling tissue production to 140,000 tonnes per year.

"The market potential in the Baltics, Scandinavia and Western Europe is growing," explained Tomas Jozonis, CEO of Grigeo Group. "The new paper machine (PM7) alone will produce an additional 70,000 tons of paper per year — a volume that currently requires the combined work of all three machines operated by our Group. This investment is a strategic step for us and opens a new chapter in Grigeo Group's growth story."

Jozonis noted that the new machine will be accompanied by all the modern infrastructure needed for its construction, including the building of two automatic paper



base conversion lines, a pulp warehouse, and a building for the machine itself that will have a total area of more than 20,000 square meters.

PM7 will have a paper web width of 5600 mm and a design speed of up to 2100 meters per minute, and is scheduled to be operational in the first half of 2028.

Billerud Initiates Cost Savings Program to Strengthen Competitiveness

Due to the weakened market conditions in Europe, which has resulted in a negative profit trend, Billerud has decided to launch a cost saving program targeting annualized savings of SEK 800 million. The planned cost saving program is expected to have a noticeable positive impact from the first quarter of 2026, and to reach full effect at the end of 2026.

The measures under the cost saving program will focus on reducing fixed costs through strict cost prioritization, streamlined ways of working and personnel reductions across all functions and locations in Billerud's Region Europe and Group functions. The plans involve a potential reduction of up to 650 positions. Local negotiations with the unions will begin shortly.

"In this challenging market situation for the European paper and packaging industry, we must maintain our focus and accelerate progress within items that we can control," said Ivar Vatne, Billerud's President and CEO. "With this program we are taking proactive measure to reduce our cost base even further and strengthen Billerud's long-term competitiveness and profitability."

EUROPE

VPK Packaging Belgium has Installed a New BHS Corrugator at Erembodegem Plant

VPK Packaging Belgium announced the successful installation and start-up of a new 2.80-meter BHS corrugator at the Erembodegem site in Belgium. The new corrugator replaces the previous 2.50-meter machine and was installed in exactly the same location, with minimal disruption to production.

VPK pointed out that a well-thought-out plan enabled the plant to continue producing boxes, even during the seven-week installation project.

“This investment is not only a technical milestone but also proof of what internal collaboration can achieve,” said Tony Reunes, Operations Director Corrugated Board BE




& NL. “Our choice for a 2.80-meter (wide) machine aligns with our ambition for our site in Erembodegem — growing from 100 to 170 million m2 of corrugated board.”

VPK noted that the new BHS corrugator enables the Erembodegem plant to produce board with higher quality through advanced glue temperature control, less waste as the result of a more efficient processes, greater reliability via the integrated zero-defect system, and faster delivery due to increased capacity.

VPK said that its next step at Erembodegem will be to activate the dormant volume on the rotary die-cutter at the plant. In addition, by switching to three shifts, the company aims to increase finishing capacity to 120 million m2 — an important intermediate step toward its goal of 170 million m2 for the Erembodegem site.

CUTTING-EDGE MACHINE VISION SOLUTIONS



**STOCK ACTIVITY
MEASUREMENT**



**FORMATION
MONITORING**



**WEB INSPECTION
& MONITORING**






**ADDITIONAL
TECHNOLOGIES**



**SAVE RESOURCES
WITH IBS TECHNOLOGIES**


www.ibs-ppg.com










INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS

Valmet to Deliver IntelliTissue 1600 Machine to PT Suparma in Indonesia

Valmet will deliver an IntelliTissue 1600 tissue machine to PT Suparma’s mill in Surabaya, Indonesia. The new installation will enable production of high-quality tissue products for the Asia Pacific market.

The new tissue line will add an additional 26,500 tons per year of tissue paper to PT Suparma’s current production capacity.

The delivery includes a complete tissue production line, including stock preparation



equipment. The new line will feature an IntelliTissue 1600 machine equipped with an IntelliJet V headbox, Crescent Former,

IntelliPress, IntelliYankee dryer, Exhaust Cap hood, and an IntelliReel section.

The scope of delivery also includes mechanical and electrical drives, Valmet DNA system with Machine Control System, Distributed Control System and Quality Control System, dust removal system, and auxiliary systems for the tissue line.

Start-up of the new tissue production line is planned for 2026.

Voith Begins Expansion Project for Roll Service Center in West Monroe

Voith on Sept. 10 broke ground on a multi-million-dollar project that will expand and modernize its roll service center in West Monroe, Louisiana.

The West Monroe facility first opened in 1991.

“Today we broke ground on a project that demonstrates our commitment to listening and responding to our customers’ needs for mechanical roll service and the roll cover business,” said David Buchanan, President FRS North America, Voith Paper. “This expansion means that our growing team in West Monroe, Louisiana will have the operational capacity to better serve paper producers throughout North America.”

In addition to expanding capacity, the investment into the facility will enhance logistical processes, supporting a faster and more seamless service experience for Voith customers. The size of the roll service center will increase by almost 50%, adding workspace as well as a dedicated training center to support the critical hands-on training of skilled trade experts in the industry.

The Voith facility offers a wide variety of roll services for customers who are in the papermaking industry. Services offered include operations and optimization of products; mechanical roll services such as rebuilds, grinding, balance and vibration analysis; roll coverings; roll and part replacements, as well



as spreader roll rebuilds and repairs.

The groundbreaking marks Voith Paper’s largest, most recent investment in North America. The project is expected to continue through the middle of 2026, and the Voith roll service center will remain fully operational throughout construction.

Bellmer Announces Acquisition of Sweden-Based Cellwood Machinery

Bellmer GmbH, an international supplier of paper and board machinery, announced the acquisition of Cellwood Machinery AB, a manufacturer of systems for wastepaper recycling and bioenergy pre-treatment based in Sweden.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

“This acquisition aligns perfectly with our vision to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the paper industry,” said Martin Kollmar, President of Bellmer. “We are excited to welcome Cellwood’s expertise and



commitment into our group.”

Cellwood’s product and brand portfolio includes Metrans, known for its conveying and handling solutions, the Grubbens Pulper, and the Algas Microfilter.

In addition, Cellwood has a state-of-the-art pilot plant located at the site of its headquarters in Nässjö, Sweden, which is available for customer trials and training.

Cellwood Machinery will also strengthen Bellmer’s international presence through its subsidiaries in Germany, Canada, and China, and through service and sales professionals in Vietnam and India.

The closing of the deal is expected by the end of October.



Case Study: Using Machine Vision for Accurate and Efficient Product Packaging

ROLAND COONEN, MOTION AUTOMATION INTELLIGENCE

Over the years, the variety of household towel and toilet paper products has grown exponentially. There are now single- and multi-layer options, quilted versions and family-sized rolls, among others. As a result, paper converting and packaging machines must be versatile enough to transition quickly—and more importantly, accurately—from one product type or brand to another.

Challenges: box formation and tape placement

In a household towel and toilet paper application, one of our customers recently faced two main issues in their packaging line. First, the customer needed an efficient way to verify that each box presented in the case packer was square and without damaged flaps or corners. Second, some boxes were either improperly taped or missing tape entirely. Down the supply chain, other customers reported that these boxes opened during transit or handling, causing product spills or other packaging damage.

Our machine vision solution: Motion Ai expertise

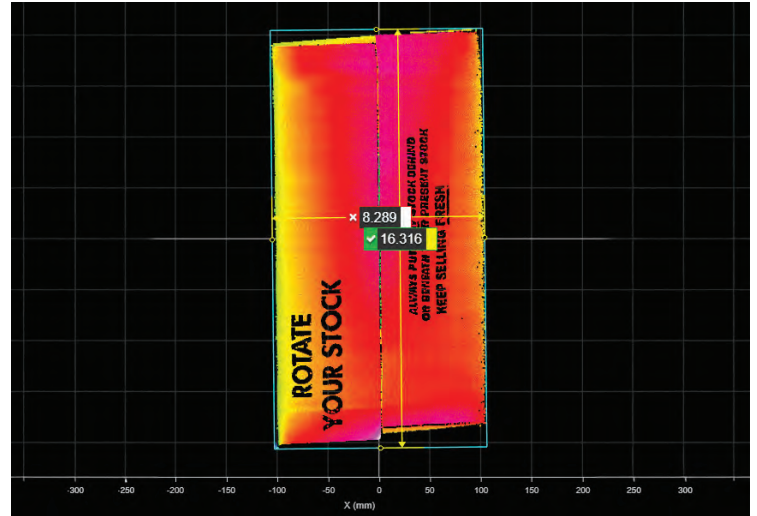
The Motion Automation Intelligence (Motion Ai) sales and engineering teams reviewed the application and engineered a cost-effective, accurate two-pronged solution to address our customers' issues.

1. Box verification using an LMI Gocator

To ensure that boxes were correctly formed and undamaged, we implemented the LMI 2370 Gocator Laser Line Profiler. This innovative tool quickly scans and verifies whether a box meets our predetermined criteria for squareness and damage, helping to ensure a properly sealed box. It lets the customer define or update quality thresholds for acceptable boxes. The Profiler also captures detailed records to help monitor production rates and track quality issues over time.

2. Tape detection with Banner sensors

To detect missing or misapplied tape, we used the Banner Q3X Series Laser Contrast Sensor. As boxes enter the sensor's field of view, it quickly checks for correct tape placement. This high-speed sensor can process up to 2,000 events per second and accurately detect the presence and placement across all box sizes. The sensor's compactness and low cost made it an ideal fit for this application.



This box was flagged in the production line as unacceptable by the LMI Gocator laser sensor. The flaps are out of alignment, and the box shape does not meet the symmetrical blue outline as standard. Such imperfect boxes can tip over or open prematurely.

Measured results

After both vision solutions were implemented and production data gathered, it was determined that the customer decreased downtime by up to 25%. The ROI for this case was less than a month.

Machine vision is the future—and the future is now!

We are seeing a growing need for advanced vision solutions throughout the paper manufacturing and packaging industries. The key to vision success is understanding the best fit for each application and the options available. Our Motion Ai team has the experience and capabilities to create customized solutions whether 3D, 2D, laser or sensors, with multiple manufacturers within our offerings. We can facilitate and manage projects from initial concept to completion and provide post-sales support to our customers in the field.

Roland Coonen is a Sales Manager with Motion Automation Intelligence. He has 35 years' experience in manufacturing automation and electrical controls engineering, with 13 in technical sales management. With most of his career spent in the paper converting and the food and dairy industries, Coonen's primary focus is leveraging automation to develop safer and more efficient engineered solutions for customers.



For more information, visit

Ai.Motion.com/industries/paper

Sappi Launches North America's Most Advanced Paper Machine, PM2, at Somerset Mill

The \$500 million machine rebuild project expands Sappi's ability to produce a full range of high-performance SBS paperboard grades, including folding carton, food service board, and cups.

Sappi North America at the end of July announced that it is delivering commercial product to customers following the completion of Project Elevate, the \$500 million conversion and expansion of Paper Machine No. 2 (PM2) at its Somerset Mill located in Skowhegan, Maine.

According to Sappi, qualification processes are being completed with a number of customers, and production will ramp up to full volumes through 2026.

The investment doubles PM2's production capacity and strengthens Sappi's position as a leader in sustainable packaging by transforming Somerset into one of the most advanced production sites for high-performance SBS (solid bleached sulfate) paperboard.

"This is a pivotal moment for Sappi North America," said Michael Haws, President and CEO of Sappi North America. "With PM2, we have delivered the largest rebuild in our company's history, doubling the machine's capacity and positioning Somerset as a leader in sustainably manufactured paperboard."

Haws noted that the successful completion of construction on Project Elevate is a testament to the exceptional coordination and dedication of the entire Sappi



As production continues to ramp up, PM2 is planned to deliver 520,000 short tons per year (approximately 470,000 metric tons) of SBS paperboard grades, including folding carton, food service board, and cups.

team and the hundreds of contractors who worked on Project Elevate.

"The true success of this project lies in our people. Their precision, focus, and unwavering commitment to safety enabled us to complete a complex transformation, all while keeping the mill fully operational. This investment goes beyond machinery; it's about laying the foundation for long-term innovation, sustainable growth, and lasting impact," Haws explained.

Valmet was the primary supplier for the extensive rebuild of PM2. Valmet's

scope of supply included a rebuild of the wet end with a new OptiPress Linear press section, modifications and extension of the dryer section, and a new finishing section.

In addition, the mill will benefit from Valmet Industrial Internet and Automation Solutions, including a new Quality Measurement System, web monitoring and inspection systems, and Valmet DNA process controls.

Tuomo Rämö, Project Manager for Valmet, said, "The sustainable conversion of PM 2 has transformed it into a modern

state-of-the-art board machine. This achievement is a testament to excellent collaboration and incredible teamwork. We are grateful to the entire Somerset team, our valuable partners, and all the Valmeteers involved for their hard work on a complex project.”

As production continues to ramp up, this strategic investment is planned to deliver 520,000 short tons (approximately 470,000 metric tons) of annual capacity and expands Sappi’s ability to produce a full range of high-performance SBS paperboard grades, including folding carton, food service board, and cups. This positions Sappi North America as a full-service SBS provider, enhancing its ability to support both domestic and

global packaging customers with advanced technology that deliver outstanding product quality and consistency.

“Product from the new machine is now commercially available, delivering the same high standards of quality and performance our customers expect, while expanding our range of applications,” said Kirk Ross, VP of Manufacturing, Sappi. “With increased capacity and a focus on improved service, we’re able to meet growing demand with greater speed, consistency, and responsiveness.”

Sappi North America began the PM2 conversion in 2022, following the successful rebuild of the Somerset mill’s PM1 in 2018. These upgrades demonstrate Sappi’s commitment to modernizing its operations

in ways that support both business growth and environmental responsibility.

About the Somerset Mill

The Somerset Mill is one of the most technically advanced paper mills in all North America, located on 2,500 acres of land in central Maine. The mill has three paper machines — PM 1, PM 2, and PM 3 — with the combined capacity to produce 1.25 million tons per year of paper, of which 920,000 tons being SBS paperboard capacity. The mill also has the capacity to produce 525,000 metric tons of bleached chemical pulp for its own consumption and as market pulp.

The Somerset Mill has a workforce of about 780 highly skilled employees. ■

Built for the HEAT Up to 239° F

- Replaces 250, 400, 1000 Watt Metal Halides
- Constant illuminance across all temperatures
- Patented Solid State LED Technology
- Long lifespan reduces maintenance costs
- Low total cost of ownership
- No active cooling

909-635-2301
www.vm5lighting.com
info@vm5lighting.com

PAPER

■ *Georgia-Pacific* announced that **Christian Fischer**, President and CEO, is retiring from the company at the end of October. Fischer joined Georgia-Pacific in 1989 and has held numerous leadership roles. He was named President and CEO in 2017.



Christian Fischer



Mark Luetters

Mark Luetters, currently Executive Vice President of Koch, Inc., with responsibility overseeing several Koch companies, including Georgia-Pacific, will continue in that role while serving as Georgia-Pacific's President and CEO. Luetters joined Koch in 1989 and Georgia-Pacific in 2006.

■ *Kimberly-Clark* has appointed **Stacey Vally Panayiotou** as Chief Human Resources Officer. She joins the company from Ball Corporation, most recently serving as Chief Human Resources Officer. Prior to Ball, Panayiotou served as EVP and Chief Human Resources Officer at Graphic Packaging International.



Stacey Vally Panayiotou

■ *Klingele Paper & Packaging Group* has appointed **Jürgen Lemke** as Chief Operating Officer for the Paper division. He succeeds **Robert Sieger**, who is leaving Klingele after eight years of service to pursue new professional challenges. Lemke will be responsible for the Group's global paper activities, including the paper mills in Weener (Germany), Nova Campina (Brazil), and Strasbourg (France).

■ *Kruger Products* recently appointed **Michael Urlick** as Senior Vice President, Business Development. Urlick joined Kruger from Clearwater Paper, where he most recently held the position of Senior Vice President & General Manager, Consumer Products Division.



Michael Urlick

■ *Novolex* has appointed **James "JT" Jones** as Chief Procurement Officer. Most recently, Jones served as Chief Supply Chain & Procurement Officer with Nova Chemicals. He has also held senior roles with Lubrizol, PPG, Celanese Corporation, and Accenture.

■ *Pixelle Specialty Solutions* in September named **Julie Schertell** as CEO of Pixelle. She succeeds **Ross Bushnell**, who has stepped down to pursue new opportunities. Most recently, Schertell served as President and CEO of Mativ Holdings, which was created from the merger of Schweitzer Mauduit International and Neenah Inc. Prior to the merger, Schertell was President and CEO of Neenah.



Julie Schertell

INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS

■ *Valmet* recently appointed **Jon Jested-Rask** as Executive Vice President, Tissue Business Area. He is also a member of Valmet's Executive Leadership Team. Jested-Rask brings over 20 years of international experience and joins



Jon Jested-Rask

Valmet from FLSmidth, where he served as Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations & Business Development. Prior to that, he held various leadership positions at Neles, Metso and Kemotron A/S.

IN REMEMBRANCE

■ **Ralph DeLetto**, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and co-owner of MIDLAND passed away on Sept. 29 surrounded by his family, following a long and courageous battle with cancer. "Ralph was an extraordinary leader and a trusted partner whose vision and integrity helped shape Midland into the organization it is today," said Mike Graves, President and CEO. "His contributions to our business and our people were immeasurable, and his legacy will continue to inspire us for many years to come."



Ralph DeLetto

■ **Richard Verney**, Chairman and CEO of *Monadnock Paper Mills*, passed away on Sept. 10 surrounded by family after a brave and



Richard Verney

private battle with cancer. He was 79. Mr. Verney began his career at Monadnock Paper Mills in 1969 as a management trainee and succeeded his father as CEO in 1978. Beyond his professional achievements, Richard generously gave his time and leadership to organizations that reflected his values. "If you are going to make your living in a small community, you owe it to give back." – Richard G. Verney.

NOVEMBER 25-26, 2025**Tissue World Ho Chi Minh City**

Informa
Equatorial Hotel
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
www.tissueworld.com/en/hochiminh.html

DECEMBER 9-10, 2025**PPC Folding Carton Boot Camp**

Paperboard Packaging Council
PPC World Headquarters
Springfield, Massachusetts, USA
paperbox.org/events

2026**JANUARY 20-22, 2026****2026 Paper Distribution Conference (PDC)**

NPTA (National Paper Trade Association)
Naples, Florida, USA
www.gonpta.com/PDC

FEBRUARY 26, 2026**Converters Expo South**

BNP Media Packaging Group
Charlotte Convention Center
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA
www.packagingstrategies.com/converters-expo-south

FEBRUARY 25-28, 2026**ASPI Spring 2026 Meeting**

Assoc. of the Suppliers to
the Paper Industry
Isla Bella Resort
Marathon, Florida, USA
www.aspinet.org

MARCH 10-12, 2026**Sustainability in Packaging US**

Smithers
Chicago, Illinois, USA
www.sustainability-in-packaging.com

MARCH 25-27, 2026**PPC Spring Outlook & Strategies Conference**

Paperboard Packaging Council
Omni Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky USA
paperbox.org/event

MARCH 31-APRIL 2, 2026**Paper & Tissue Show 2026**

Al Furat Fair Organizer
ADNEC Centre Abu Dhabi
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
paperoneshow.net

APRIL 13-15, 2026**AICC 2026 Spring Meeting**

The Independent Packaging Assoc.
Omni La Costa Resort Carlsbad
Carlsbad, California USA
www.aiccbox.org

APRIL 15-16, 2026**Converters Expo**

BNP Media Packaging Group
Lambeau Field
Green Bay, Wisconsin, USA
www.packagingstrategies.com/converters-expo

APRIL 26-29, 2026**TAPPICon 2026**

TAPPI
Columbus Convention Center
Columbus, Ohio, USA
www.tappicon.org

MAY 12-14, 2026**Paper Meets Live! 2026**

AF&PA and NPTA
Opal Sands Resort
Clearwater Beach, Florida, USA
www.afandpa.org



PaperAge

**Are you reading your
own copy of PaperAge?
Never miss an issue!**

Subscriptions are available
free of charge to qualified
individuals. To request a
free subscription,
please visit our website
www.paperage.com
and click on
'Subscription Services'.

Focused on Paperboard Packaging

After two major transactions in 2024, Clearwater Paper is now focused on strengthening its position as a premier independent supplier of paperboard packaging products to North American converters.

By John O'Brien, Managing Editor

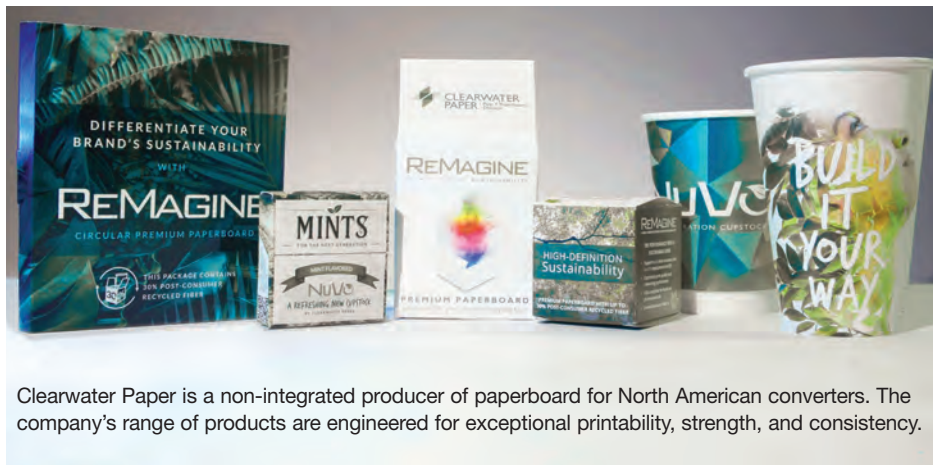
The transformation of Clearwater Paper from a producer of tissue paper and paperboard to purely paperboard jump started on Feb. 20, 2024 when Clearwater and Graphic Packaging jointly announced the signing of a definitive agreement for Graphic Packaging to sell its Augusta, Georgia, bleached paperboard mill to Clearwater Paper for approximately \$700 million.

The deal closed a few months later on May 1.

“The Augusta mill is a great fit with our strategy and improves our position as a premier, independent paperboard supplier to North American converters,” said Clearwater Paper’s president and CEO, Arsen Kitch. “I look forward to welcoming the Augusta team to Clearwater Paper as we work together to build a more scaled paperboard business to service our customers.”

Clearwater Paper at a Glance

- Mill facilities: Lewiston, Idaho; Cypress Bend, Arkansas; Augusta, Georgia.
- Annual capacity: ~1.4 million tons of SBS paperboard across 5 paper machines.
- Pulp integration: 90%+, about 1.4 million tons of pulp capacity.
- Headquarters: Spokane, Washington.
- Employees: 2,200



Clearwater Paper is a non-integrated producer of paperboard for North American converters. The company’s range of products are engineered for exceptional printability, strength, and consistency.

In hindsight, “a more scaled paperboard business” seemed to be a bit of foreshadowing about the degree of focus Clearwater Paper intended to place on its paperboard business.

Just over a month and a half after purchasing the Augusta mill, Clearwater Paper on July 22, 2024 announced a definitive agreement to sell its tissue business to Sofidel for \$1.06 billion in cash.

“This is the next big step in transforming Clearwater into a premier independent paperboard packaging supplier in North America,” Kitch stated at the closing of the sale on Nov. 1.

“We’ll use the proceeds from the sale to pay down debt and strengthen our balance sheet. We will be well positioned to scale and diversify our paperboard business to create long-term value for our shareholders,” he added.

Key Initiates in 2025

During Clearwater’s first quarter 2025

earnings call on April 29, Kitch provided an update on the company’s key strategic initiatives moving forward.

“To remain a preferred supplier to our customers, we’re investing in product development efforts to broaden our portfolio. These efforts are split into three categories.

“The first category is compostable food service products, particularly plates. We have BPI certification and expect to be in the market by year end.

“The second category is lightweight folding carton products that don’t sacrifice print quality and strength. We’re looking at various options to deliver against this, including paper machine upgrades and using mechanical pulp in our products. We believe that we will have a solution ready in 2026.

“The third category is alternative poly-free barrier technologies. We currently have products in the market that meet this need, but they’re costly to produce, which limits broader applications. We’re

continuing to work on additional barrier technologies that can be scaled up in the market at the right cost structure.

“In addition to these product development efforts, which are largely based on our existing SBS (Solid Bleached Sulfate) capacity, we’re exploring the potential to expand into additional paperboard substrates. These substrates make up approximately 50% of the paperboard market outside of SBS,” Kitch explained.

Next Steps

As for the second half of 2025 and beyond, Kitch discussed next steps and potential investments during the company’s second quarter earnings call in July.

“We’re focused on expanding our product offering to better serve our converter customers. Today, we are the third largest producer of paperboard in North America, representing approximately 14% of a 10 million ton market.

“We are focused on SBS, which makes up approximately half of the total paperboard market. We are looking at opportunities to expand into CUK (Coated Unbleached Kraft) and CRB (Coated Recycled Board). We believe that today, independent converters are underserved in these substrates by the large integrated players. We have an opening to participate and win share in these parts of the market due to our lack of channel conflict and our history of prioritizing independent converters,” Kitch pointed out.

Potential Investments

In addition, Kitch disclosed opportunities in swinging production between certain grades of paperboard depending on market demand.

“Let me get a bit more specific on the work that we’re doing. We’re nearing completion of market and



Clearwater Paper has the capacity to produce about 1.4 million tons per year of SBS paperboard.

engineering studies on the potential entry into CUK. I expect for us to make a decision regarding this potential investment by year-end. At this stage, we’re focused on creating CUK capability on one of our existing SBS machines and not expanding our overall capacity,” Kitch noted.

“This would enable us to swing production between high-quality SBS and CUK on an existing machine based on market demand. This capability would also allow us to better serve

our customers’ needs, optimize our network and improve utilization across all our assets. While capital estimates have not been finalized, we expect this investment would be in the \$50 million range and take around 18 months to complete.

“In addition to adding CUK capabilities to an existing asset, we’re also considering additional options to broaden our product offering, including entry into CRB. This would likely require an acquisition, either of existing CRB capacity or of a good candidate for conversion. In addition to our focus on these additional substrates, we’re continuing to make progress on developing compostable and lightweight products,” he explained.

“We received a BPI compostable certification at our Lewiston and Cypress Bend mills that cover most of our folding carton and food service grades. In addition, we expect to have a lightweight offering in the market by 2026.

“We remain optimistic on the long-term prospects of paperboard packaging and our position as a premier supplier of these products to North American converters,” Kitch concluded. ■



Clearwater Paper’s ReImagine® is a next-generation SBS folding carton featuring 30% post-consumer recycled fiber and is FDA-compliant for food contact.

When Newer Isn't Better: Rethinking Sealing in Pulp and Paper Operations

Modern sealing technology has advanced, but performance hasn't always followed.

By Peter Chilton, SealRyt Corp.



Peter Chilton

Across the pulp and paper industry, plants continue to face chronic leakage, premature seal wear, and maintenance cycles that don't reflect the technological promise of today's seals. Despite tremendous progress in materials science and precision machining, seal life in many paper mills has not improved — and in some cases, it has declined.

From the perspective of a sealing manufacturer, this disconnect isn't simply about the products. It's about the way they're applied — and the systems they're asked to perform in.

Paper mills are often running on infrastructure that predates many of their current processes. Applying the latest mechanical seal to a forty-year-old stock pump is a bit like installing racing suspension on a log truck — it looks good on paper but rarely delivers lasting results.

The Legacy Challenge of Mill Equipment

Few industries push rotating equipment harder than pulp and paper. Pulp stock, white water, black liquor, and abrasive slurries all take their toll. Yet many mills are still operating pumps and agitators installed when rotary dial phones were the norm.

Over decades of operation, foundations have shifted, baseplates have loosened, and piping loads have increased. Bearings wear. Shaft runout grows. Misalignment and vibration become permanent features of daily operation. Under those conditions, even a finely machined mechanical seal can't perform as intended.

Mechanical instability is the enemy of any seal — regardless of how advanced its materials or design may be. Yet the industry response often remains the same: replace the seal with

another of the same type and hope for a better outcome.

The Disappearing Hands-On Knowledge

Compounding the challenge is the loss of mill-level expertise. The maintenance veterans and pump specialists who could sense imbalance by ear or feel are retiring. In their absence, decision-making increasingly falls to generalists or service contractors who lack a deep understanding of the mill's equipment history.

Without that institutional knowledge, the default becomes simple replacement rather than root-cause analysis. The newest seal on the shelf seems like the safest choice — but that choice often overlooks whether the pump or process conditions are actually compatible with it.

When the Sales Model Sets the Standard

Modern procurement practices add another layer of complexity. Under contract-based supply models, the incentive is speed and standardization — quick replacement, minimal downtime, predictable pricing. What gets lost in that equation is the nuance of application-specific engineering.

In many mills, this leads to a reflex: a mechanical seal fails, so another mechanical seal is ordered. It's efficient in the short term but shortsighted in the long term. The industry has quietly accepted this cycle of repeat failures as normal operating procedure.

More Options Than One

It's time to broaden the view. Mechanical seals are exceptional pieces of engineering, but they

are not the only path to reliable sealing.

Other solutions — high-performance packing, hybrid configurations, stabilized stuffing box designs, and internal bearing arrangements — are sometimes better matched to the realities of pulp and paper processing. These alternatives thrive where perfect alignment and ideal flush conditions don't exist. They handle fibrous slurries, tolerate shaft movement, and can reduce water use by controlling flush flow more effectively than a mechanical seal running at its limits. What these methods offer is adaptability. In mills where consistency of process and equipment condition can vary by the hour, flexibility often equals reliability.

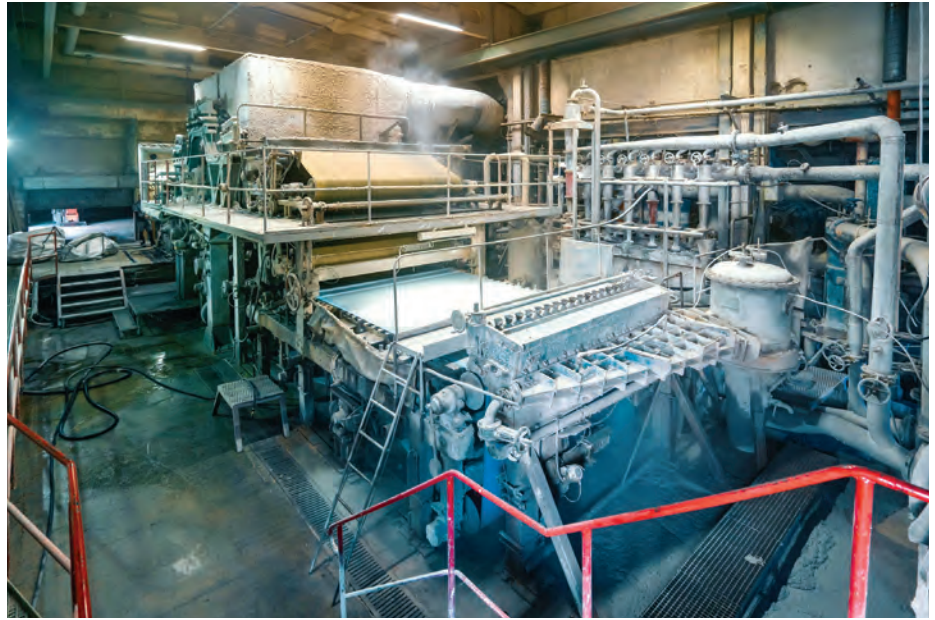
Stabilize First, Then Optimize

Before debating the best sealing product, mills should start with a different question: Is the pump stable enough to seal effectively at all?

That means verifying that the base is rigid, the alignment correct, and the bearings in good condition. A stabilized system is the foundation of sealing success. Skipping this step and focusing solely on seal replacement is like changing the tires on a car with a bent axle — new parts won't solve a structural issue.



Proper setup and attention can reduce sealing failures in a horizontal pulpers.



Work first at making sure the mechanical conditions are sound before determining the seal product the application needs.

Once mechanical conditions are sound, then it makes sense to evaluate the sealing strategy holistically. Factors like temperature, pressure, fiber content, consistency, and operating cycles should guide the choice — not habit or convention.

Sometimes the right answer is a premium mechanical seal. Other times it's a properly supported, well-packed stuffing box that's easier to maintain and more forgiving of real-world conditions.

Toward a Smarter Mill Culture

The pulp and paper industry has always been a blend of tradition and innovation. The challenge now is to ensure that innovation serves reliability, not just modernization.

True reliability doesn't come from tighter tolerances or higher price tags — it comes from understanding the application. The next frontier in sealing isn't another generation of seal faces or coatings; it's the return of thoughtful, condition-based decision making.

By focusing first on system stability and process context, mills can reduce unplanned downtime, extend seal and sleeve life, and save significant water



Paper mills are often running on infrastructure that predates many of their current processes, and energy.

Reliability isn't about choosing sides between mechanical seals and packing. It's about using the right technology for the right application — and knowing the difference. ■

Peter Chilton is the marketing manager at SealRyt Corporation, a manufacturer of braided packing and sealing products for demanding industrial applications. For more information, visit sealryt.com.

How to Efficiently Control Dust in Increasingly Soft Tissue

As tissue softness increases, challenges with dusting in tissue production grow. Excessive dust impairs production efficiency, affects product quality, and creates health and safety risks at the mill. Effective dust control balances softness with operational performance.

By Lucyna Pawlowska, Principal Specialist, Application Excellence at Kemira



“Dust control plays a key role in ensuring production efficiency and maintaining high product quality, helping manufacturers strike the right balance between softness and operational performance.”

— Lucyna Pawlowska

Effective dust control has become a critical success factor for today’s tissue manufacturers. As the industry pushes to deliver superior softness that consumers demand, issues related to dusting in the tissue production process have increased. Dusting creates multiple challenges: it compromises product quality and reduces both paper machine efficiency and converting performance. Moreover, airborne dust poses significant workplace health concerns for mill personnel and increases fire risks at the mill due to dust buildup in the machine and on surfaces.

Dust control plays a key role in ensuring production efficiency and maintaining high product quality, helping manufacturers strike the right balance between softness and operational performance. Kemira’s game-changing advances in dust control combine chemistry expertise with an innovative measurement and analysis method, helping mills mitigate dust and optimize their processes.

Transforming Tissue Dust Measurement

The Kemira KemView™, a proprietary Sheet Structure and Dust Analyzer, has transformed traditional dust and lint measurement techniques by going beyond what can be observed with the naked eye.

Typically, manufacturers rely on visual observations and collecting dust from machine

and equipment surfaces only after substantial production runtime. KemView enables analysis directly on the tissue sheet surface. The measurement tool quantifies and classifies dust and lint particles — fibers, fines, starch, and ash — by size and provides precise and actionable data for process improvements.

This method provides a fast and reliable analysis of the dust content, allowing for better dust control. This insight is key to troubleshooting sheet quality and production issues, optimizing refining or making chemical adjustments.

Understanding the Root Causes of Tissue Dusting

The industry’s pursuit of enhanced softness has led many tissue producers to substantially increase the use of short hardwood fibers, particularly eucalyptus, in their production. While these shorter fibers help create the softness consumers prefer, they are also inherently more prone to generating dust during production.

Most tissue dust is created during the creping process, and manufacturing choices made to enhance softness often contribute to dust generation. For example, for ultra-soft tissue grades, producers often reduce sheet moisture to extremely low levels during creping, which dramatically increases dusting. Similarly, manufacturers who utilize multilayer headboxes and apply eucalyptus

at the outer Yankee layer expose these short fibers directly to the forces of the creping blade, which intensifies the problem.

The increasing use of recycled fiber also increases dusting due to the weaker fiber quality. Additionally, mechanical refining, often used to develop tissue strength, leads to excessive fines formation that further increases dusting issues.

The Most Effective Solution to Tissue Dust Control

Success lies in the sweet spot: producing tissue that is both soft and strong while minimizing dusting throughout production and converting. With advanced chemistry expertise and the unique insights provided by KemView, Kemira has helped tissue producers achieve this balance. The key is understanding each mill's unique challenges and developing a targeted approach that suits their process.

The most effective approach to reduce dust formation and enhance tissue sheet quality combines the use of dry strength resins with reduced fiber refining. Reduced fiber refining decreases fines generation, which directly impacts dust levels, while dry strength resins compensate for the strength loss. Both Kemira FennoRez™ GPAM-based strength resins (glyoxalated polyacrylamides) and cationic, anionic, and amphoteric FennoBond™ polyacrylamides deliver proven results in dust reduction, each targeting specific tissue grades,



The most effective strategy for reducing tissue dust formation and enhancing sheet quality combines dry strength resins with reduced fiber refining. This approach helps maintain both softness and strength.

different furnish types, and end-product properties.

This dust mitigation approach enables tissue manufacturers to maintain or even increase softness while meeting their dry strength targets. Dry strength resins also bring additional benefits through improved operational efficiency and runnability, e.g., improved fiber retention and drainage and reduced stickies and pitch formation and deposition.

Case Studies: Proven Results in Dust Reduction

Case 1: Premium Bath Tissue – 82% Reduction in Tissue Dust. A manufacturer of at-home bath tissue struggled with excessive dust generation due to high fines content in hardwood pulp and using hardwood fiber in the Yankee layer of the 2-layer headbox. Kemira helped achieve an 82% reduction in tissue dust by strategically reducing refining and applying FennoBond dry strength additive. The solution delivered a 5% enhancement in softness as measured by a human panel handfeel test, while maintaining dry tensile strength at the target level.

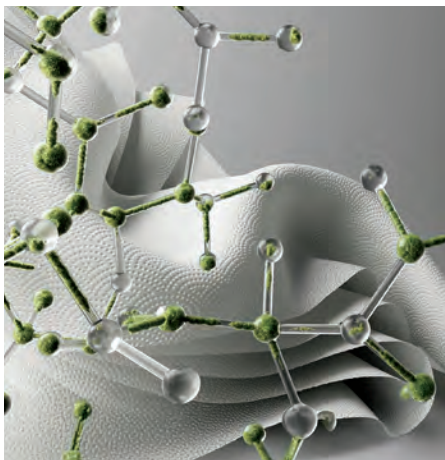
Case 2: Brown Napkin – 76% Reduction in Tissue Dust. For a brown napkin producer, dusting caused problems

during converting. Initially, reduction in refining delivered a 60% dust reduction, and by applying FennoRez GPAM resin in low fiber refining conditions, dust levels decreased by 76%. This solution significantly improved sheet dry tensile strength, which enabled reduction in basis weight and crepe ratio. At the same time, drainage and fiber retention improved, leading to increases in machine speed and production rate.

Case 3: Premium Bath Tissue – 55% Reduction in Tissue Dust. A premium bath tissue manufacturer faced excessive dusting due to creping at a very low moisture combined with high levels of virgin hardwood fiber in the Yankee layer. A trial with FennoBond dry strength resins reduced dust in the parent rolls by 55%, while allowing the mill to increase hardwood fiber content by 7% and to improve handfeel softness.

Conclusion

These successes demonstrate the power of analyzing dust composition and applying tailored chemistry solutions. The dust challenge can be turned into an advantage, creating opportunities to improve production efficiency and product quality, while also improving the safety of the working conditions. ■



Regulations Shaping Specialty Papers Market Over Next Five Years

The market for specialty papers is continually changing due to demand for sustainable packaging solutions, evolving environmental regulations, new papermaking technologies, and new materials for paper and coatings. The Future of Specialty Papers to 2030, a new report from Smithers, details these trends as well as the latest developments in biobased coatings and alternative fibers, e-commerce and more.

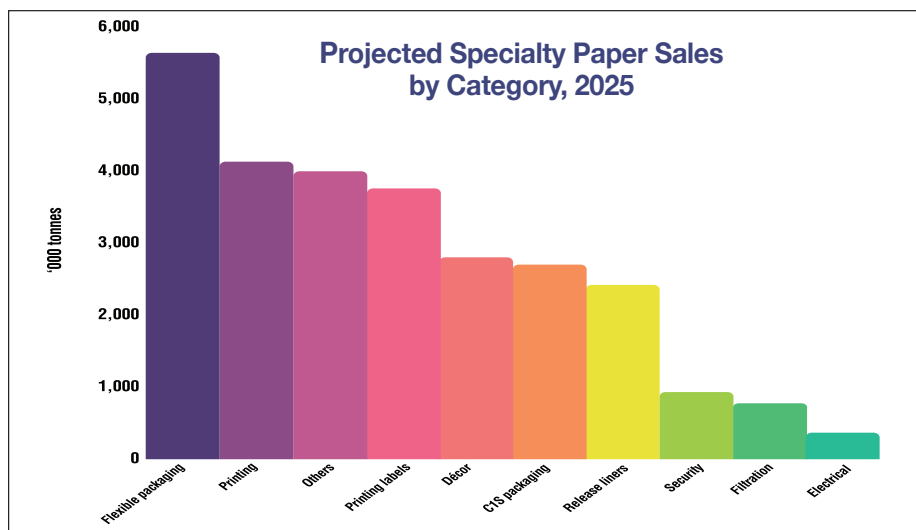
According to the new research, the global specialty papers market is predicted to be 28.2 million tonnes in 2025 and projected to grow to 31.3 million tonnes by 2030. This represents a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.1% for this five-year period. The largest categories of specialty papers are flexible packaging, printing papers, and printing labels, representing 49% of the 2025 market tonnage.

The Impact of Regulations

Sustainable packaging structures and the governing policies that support them are key drivers in changing the kinds of products that are made, how they are designed, which raw materials are utilized, and their disposition at the end of their lifecycle.

Non-recyclable film structures used in flexible packaging are being displaced by new barrier coated paper structures, which are recyclable. Also included is the requirement for recycled content in the package design. The objective is to reduce packaging waste that goes into landfills. Packaging companies that do not comply with the new regulations will pay a fee that supports the recycling infrastructure.

In the EU, a new regulation called the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) has been enacted to reduce



packaging waste and promote recyclable alternatives. Revised in 2025, the new legislation replaced the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD). The PPWR imposes strict rules on packaging design, recycling, and waste reduction.

The legislation intends to transition all packaging to recyclable versions by 2030 in a cost-effective manner while reducing the use of virgin materials. When the producers of packaging start seeing the bottom-line impact of these new regulations, they will be forced to comply.

In the US, the regulations are not nearly as unified as the EU. Each individual state could enact their own EPR regulations if they so choose, driving different requirements and outcomes.

Over the next five years, flexible packaging will see a gradual shift away from petroleum-based films to paper-based structures for selected package types. The driving force for this transition is the end-of-life scenario for the package, and the regulations that address the requirements for the package to be recyclable, compostable, or both. Extended producer responsibility (EPR)

is now in effect or being adopted on a gradual basis in the continents of Europe, Africa, Oceania, and North America.

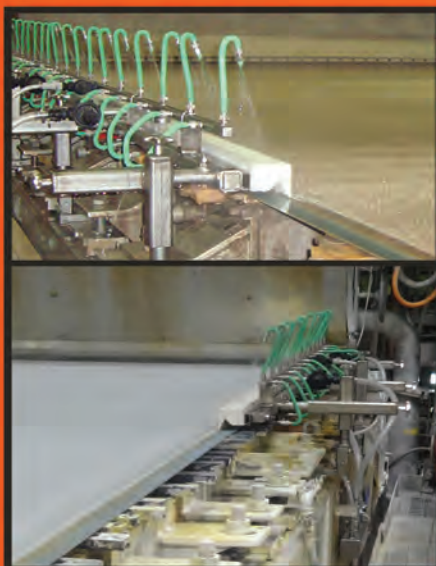
New Technologies

The latest technologies that impact specialty papers include new “Smart” controllers for advanced control algorithms. These are ideal for start-ups and shutdowns, in which steady-state control has not been established. Process optimization is also achievable with this methodology.

Artificial intelligence is making its capabilities known in areas such as packaging design, meeting administration, drafting of documents including interoffice emails, reports, even Board level presentations. The advancements in digital printing continue, with higher speeds, wider web widths, and higher print resolution. These advancements are helping to drive the cost per piece downward, making it far more competitive. The utilization of digital printing of labels and flexible packaging continues to trend upward. Curtain coating is being utilized to a greater degree to apply barrier coatings to papers, as it offers many competitive advantages. ■

Hydro-Flo™ Deckle Systems

#1 Non-Contacting Edge Control System™



**Eliminating
Breaks & Waves
Since 1976
with Outstanding
Success!**

**NO Wire Contact
Low maintenance
Easy adjustment
Improved Profiles
Excellent sheet transition
Patented**



psisales@papermachine.com

1(989)695-2646

Papermachine.com

index of advertisers

COMPANY	PAGE	WEBSITE
Deublin	11	www.deublin.com
Edwin X. Graf	29	headbox@aol.com
Essco	13	esscoincorporated.com
IBS	15	www.ibs-ppg.com
IFPTA	31	www.ifpta.org
Kadant	5	kadant.com
Motion	7	Motion.com/cms/industry/pulp-paper
Motion	17	Ai.Motion.com/industries/paper
Papermachine Service Ind.	29	papermachine.com
Souhegan Wood	2	souheganwood.com
Valmet	32	www.valmet.com
VM5 Lighting	19	vm5lighting.com/H2L
Voith	9	voith.com

HAVE HEADBOX ISSUES? Not getting answers?

Edwin X. Graf, A.P.M., LLC

- 30+ years experience with major builders of both Hydraulic and Roll Headboxes
- Negotiated Rates

Cell: (920) 915-1845

email: Headbox@aol.com

REACH THOUSANDS OF READERS

Place an economical classified ad and reach thousands of paper industry personnel.

We will set up your ad free of charge.

Contact Mike O'Brien: 781-378-1253
or email: mobrien@paperage.com

PaperAge

Paper and Paper-Based Packaging Industry Votes to End Its Marketing Program

The paper and paper-based packaging industry's national research and promotion program, administered by the Paper and Packaging Board (P+PB), will not continue following the results of the July continuance referendum vote.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the results where 74% of manufacturers and importers voting, who represented 90% of the volume of paper and paper-based packaging that voted in the referendum, were not in favor of continuing the program.

For the referendum to pass, the number of voting companies and the voting tons they represent must be over 50% in favor of continuing the program. To participate in the referendum, manufacturers and importers had to manufacture/import 100,000 short tons or more in 2024. P+PB is in the process of shutting down the program and the organization.

"While I am very disappointed by the results, I am proud of all the progress we have made as an industry speaking with one voice and the positive improvements in industry reputation and preference for its products," said Mary Anne Hansan, president of P+PB. "We are grateful to the companies and their employees who supported the program with their talent and time for more than 11 years."

Steve Henry, President of Domtar and Chairman of the P+PB Board, reflected on the power of the campaign and what P+PB achieved.

"The paper and packaging industry collaborated together to increase preference for and demand for its products



P+PB was founded in 2014 after the industry came together to create a national consumer marketing program to increase demand and preference for its paper and paper-based packaging products.

through this consumer advertising campaign," Henry said. "The P+PB Board is very proud of what the organization accomplished and the powerful legacy it leaves for the future."

Campaign Highlights

P+PB was founded in 2014 after the industry came together to create a national consumer marketing program to increase demand and preference for its paper and paper-based packaging products. Since its inception, P+PB has measurably provided value and increased ROI for the industry as detailed in its recent Campaign Impact Report, including:

- Increasing consumers' beliefs that paper and packaging are innovative, that the industry is trustworthy.
 - Increasing consumer's views that paper is increasingly part of their consideration when it comes to making sustainable choices.
 - Returned an almost 14:1 ROI for the industry based on the 2024 Econometric Report from an independent agricultural economist at Cornell University.
- The campaign had numerous successes including its first TV ad called Letters to Dad about a young boy sending paper airplanes to his father overseas, the escapades of the dynamic and animated duo of brand ambassadors Casey and Page and the wit and sass of comedian Retta telling her neighbors and grocery shoppers to be a Papertarian by choosing, using and recycling paper-based products and how it is a smart choice for the environment. ■

collaborate



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- **REGISTRATION DISCOUNTS**
Enjoy reduced registration fees to attend IFPTA seminars and conferences.
- **MEMBERS ONLY SECTION**
Exclusive access to Member Directory and other content on the IFPTA website.
- **UNPARALLELED NETWORKING**
Connect with industry leaders around the world and make lasting connections.

CONNECTIONS THAT MATTER

The International Forest Products Transport Association was founded on the core principal of connecting forest products logistics professionals in meaningful ways.

That remains our focus to this day.

No other industry association connects with the leaders in your market. The people involved in the transport, handling, warehousing, and distribution of forest products.

Join today and add your name to the list of industry leaders that proudly call themselves IFPTA Members.

Visit www.ifpta.org today for information on how to join.



Field Services

Trust is earned every day. Onsite and remotely.



At Valmet, our dedicated Field Services team is here to support you with expert guidance and prompt assistance. Whether you need help with equipment maintenance, troubleshooting, or technical advice, our team of experienced professionals is just a call or email away.

Learn more at valmet.com/vfs



Scan to
view contact
information

