

Summary

Over the Wire

MANUFACTURERS

Domtar Corp. has acquired Iconex Paper from Atlas Holdings. Iconex converts thermal paper parent rolls into point-of-sale (POS) receipt rolls, serving customers in industries such as food service, retail, and financial services from its five North American locations in AZ, KS, TN, VA, and Mexico.

Iberboard, a Spanish cartonboard producer that filed for insolvency at the end of July, is being liquidated. No investor could be found.

Irving Tissue plans a US$600 million expansion at its Macon, GA, tissue mill. The project includes a third ThruAir Dry paper making machine, additional converting lines, and a new fully automated warehouse.

Kruger Inc. will invest US$23.75 million to implement a groundbreaking carbon capture and reuse project at its Wayagamack Mill in Trois-Rivières, Quebec. The project is being done in partnership with Mantel Capture Inc., a North American start-up founded by MIT engineers and scientists.

Metsä Board, a part of Metsä Group, is continuing significant investment in its Simpele folding boxboard mill to enhance product quality and production efficiency, while reducing the carbon footprint of its operations and products.

Mondi:

- has completed a EUR90 million (more than US$92 million) investment upgrade of its Mszczonów plant near Warsaw, which doubled its capacity, making it the largest corrugated solutions plant in Poland and one of the biggest in Europe.
- has started up its new extrusion line at Mondi Coating Štěti, Czech Republic. The extrusion line is part of a wider investment that includes a new production building with state-of-the-art machinery, including coating and slitting capabilities.

Saica Group has acquired Schumacher Packaging plants in Poland, to include two state-of-the-art corrugated board plants in Bydgoszcz and Wroclaw, two paper mills in Grudziadz and Myszków, and three service centers.

Sappi Limited has been ranked 7th globally and is one of only four South African firms recognized on the 2024 list of World's Top Companies for Women by *Forbes* Magazine and Statista.

Sofidel has finalized the acquisition of the tissue division of Clearwater Paper Corporation. The acquisition includes four production plants—Shelby, NC; Lewiston, ID; Las Vegas, NV; and Elwood, IL—and integration of about 1,700 employees, which increases Sofidel's production capacity by 25 percent.

Stora Enso has divested the real estate of its Sunila site in Kotka, Finland, to AALTO Development Oy, a Finnish, privately-owned property development company. Stora Enso permanently closed pulp production and lignin extraction at the site in 2023. Stora Enso will remain in Sunila as a tenant to AALTO Development, and the Lignode battery material pilot plant will continue operations at the site.

SUPPLIERS

Ahlstrom has joined the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), a coalition dedicated to driving sustainability efforts worldwide. Ahlstrom will work alongside more than 225 companies to address pressing environmental challenges.

EU Commission Delays EUDR Implementation

Following a vote on November 14th, 2024, the European Union has delayed implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). EU deforestation obligations will be postponed one year so that companies can comply with the law that ensures products sold in the EU are not sourced from deforested land.

In response to concerns raised by EU member states, non-EU countries, traders, and operators that they would not be able to fully comply with the rules if applied at the end of 2024, the Commission proposed postponing the application date of the deforestation regulation by one year. Plenary agreed in October, 2024, to deal with the proposal under the urgency procedure Rule 170(6). In the vote, it agreed to this postponement as well as other amendments with 371 votes to 240 and 30 abstentions.

Large operators and traders would need to respect the obligations stemming from this regulation as of December 30, 2025, whereas micro- and small enterprises would have until June 30, 2026. This additional time would help operators around the world to implement the rules smoothly from the start without undermining the objectives of the law.

Parliament also adopted other amendments proposed by the political groups, including the creation of a new category of countries posing "no risk" on deforestation in addition to the existing three categories of "low," "standard," and "high" risk. Countries classified as "no risk," defined as countries with stable or increasing forest area development, would face significantly less stringent requirements as there is a negligible or non-existent risk of deforestation. The Commission will need to finalize a country benchmarking system by June 30, 2025.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 420 million hectares of forest—an area larger than the EU—were lost to deforestation between 1990 and 2020. EU consumption represents around 10 percent of global deforestation. Palm oil and soy account for more than two-thirds of this; wood accounts for 8.6 percent.

Adopted by Parliament in April, 2023, the EUDR aims to fight climate change and biodiversity loss by preventing the deforestation related to EU consumption of products from cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soya, wood, rubber, charcoal, and printed paper.

BW Papersystems, part of Barry-Wehmiller, has supplied a twin box slitter to Green Bay Packaging in Lebanon, OH.

Kemira will close its manufacturing site in Vancouver, Canada, and consolidate some of its pulp and paper chemical production in North America.

Runtech Systems has delivered a RunEco Vacuum System to Silverton Pulp & Paper Pvt Ltd. PM5, Uttar Pradesh, India. Delivery includes three EP600 Turbo Blowers with EcoDrop Water Separators. Also, EcoFlow Dewatering Measurement Systems will be delivered to PM4 and PM5.

Toscotec:

- will supply a new AHEAD tissue line (PM1) to Algerian tissue producer WAFA Group for its Ain Oussara facility, south of Algiers. The project is planned for 2026.
- has completed its second rebuild project at Ranheim Paper & Board in Norway. PM5, which has been in operation since 1960, is now efficiently producing greyboard and coreboard with basis weights ranging from 220 to 500 gsm.

Valmet:

- has started up an Advantage DCT 200 TS tissue machine at Kruger Products' Sherbrooke Tissue Plant in Quebec, Canada.
- will supply a complete papermaking line, stock prep to reel and winders, with services and a comprehensive automation solution package to a major customer in Asia-Pacific. The line will produce uncoated woodfree grades; startup is set for 2026.
- will deliver a Valmet Exergy Pre-evaporator to the Mercer Rosenthal mill in Germany. The solution increases the mill's energy efficiency and brings savings in the feedwater treatment.

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PEOPLE

Cascades Inc. has appointed **Jean-David Tardif**, formerly president and COO of the Tissue group, to the post of executive vice-president, Packaging. Cascades has also appointed **Jérôme Porlier** executive vice-president, Tissue. Lastly, **Emmanuelle Migneault** has been named vice-president, Excellence. Her mandate will be to support management teams in prioritizing and implementing value-creating opportunities.

The Forest Resources Association (FRA) has appointed **Tim O'Hara** as its president. With more than 30 years of expertise in forestry policy, sustainable management, and strategic industry leadership, O'Hara will work to advance FRA's mission, advocating nationwide for the needs of the wood supply chain.

Georgia-Pacific has named **Hudson Pope** senior vice president of operations, with responsibility for all manufacturing segments. **Jeff Koeppel**, current senior vice president of operations, will retire in the first quarter of 2025.

The Paperboard Packaging Council (PPC) has elected **Stephen R. Scherger**, executive vice president and CFO of Graphic Packaging International, as its new board chair. PPC says that Scherger's extensive leadership background will help him lead the organization during a period of industry evolution and growth.

Progroup has appointed **Christian Dietershagen** the new head of operations, Paper. He will be responsible for the operational management and strategic development of the Paper division at the Landau, Germany-based family business.

UPM named **Mika Kekki** executive vice president of UPM Specialty Papers. He will continue to be a member of UPM's Group Executive Team.