

Summary

Over the Wire

MANUFACTURERS

Cascades has invested more than US$5.3 million at its Granby, Quebec, tissue plant to increase the capacity of two strategic production lines and enhance product quality.

Hood Container will invest US$118.9 million to modernize its paper mill in St. Francisville, LA, allowing the company to significantly boost production capacity and quality.

International Paper will make a series of strategic changes to strengthen its North American operations and better serve customers. As part of this initiative, the company will:

- Exit the molded fiber business and convert its Reno, NV, facility to support its packaging business.
- Close its packaging facility in Marion, OH.
- Close its recycling facility in Wichita, KS.
- Sell its containerboard mill in Xalapa, Mexico and its recycling plants in Xalapa and Apodaca, Mexico to Acabados de Papeles Santinados y Absorbentes (APSA).

Koehler Paper is building a state-of-the-art training center: the "Koehler Paper Campus," slated to start classes in September 2025. The new training center will be used to train paper technologist apprentices and machine and system operator apprentices, as well as dual-study program students getting a bachelor's degree in Sustainable Science and Technology.

Kruger plans US$700 million modernization projects for its Corner Brook pulp and paper mill in Newfoundland, Canada, which produces newsprint from thermomechanical pulp.

K.T.G. (USA) Inc., a subsidiary of Kruger Products, will invest about US$35 million in a new converting line for bathroom tissue and paper towels at its site in Memphis, TN.

The Legacy Paper Group, a subsidiary of BMI Group US, plans to restart PM8 at its Port Huron, MI facility, bringing 30,000 tons of annual production capacity back online after a four-year shutdown.

Nine Dragons Paper has successfully started up a pulp mill supplied by Andritz at its new integrated pulp and paper production plant in Hubei Jianli, China. The new state-of-the-art mill includes world-leading process technology and production equipment.

Norske Skog Skogn will enter the European market for book paper during Q2 of 2026. The new product, branded NOR Book, will be offered in standard qualities pertaining to bulkiness, brightness, and shade.

OptiGroup, a leading European distribution group, has acquired CreaPak Oy, a Finnish packaging distributor specializing in solutions for the food and building industries.

Packaging Corporation of America has entered into a definitive agreement to purchase the containerboard business of Greif, Inc. for US$1.8 billion in cash (see full story on page 36).

Sofidel has acquired the assets of Royal Interco, LLC, following the Asset Purchase Agreement based on a "stalking horse" bid announced last April. The acquisition adds four new facilities to Sofidel's North American operations.

The ST Group has acquired a paper mill in Barnwell County, SC, from Cascades Inc.

Smurfit Westrock Donates to NC State's Corporate Fundraising Effort

Industry leader Smurfit Westrock has made a generous gift to the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University to jump-start the college's modernization plan. The university hopes that the donation will serve as a model to other pulp, paper, tissue, and packaging companies interested in recruiting top-level paper science and engineering students.

"The College of Natural Resources has one of the strongest relationships with industry in the country, and our partnership with Smurfit Westrock is a prime example," said Dean Myron Floyd in a statement from the university. "This generous gift, the latest in a long history of support, reflects Smurfit Westrock's commitment to our students' success. We hope others in the industry will look to their example."

C. Allen Sanders (Paper Science and Engineering '85), executive director of the College of Natural Resources' Pulp and Paper Advisory Board, said the improvements that Smurfit Westrock's gift will make possible are natural next steps in this long-term partnership. "The paper science and engineering program celebrated its 70th anniversary last year, and Smurfit Westrock has been part of the program since the early years," said Sanders, who is a former Smurfit Westrock employee. "When we developed the program, we also formed a support organization, [now called] the Pulp and Paper Advisory Board, with companies that could help get us going and offer student scholarships. Smurfit was one of those."

Today, Smurfit Westrock is one of nearly 45 companies that comprise the advisory board, which awards approximately US$400,000 in scholarships annually. The company also hires approximately 10 percent of the paper science and engineering program's graduates annually and assists the university, faculty, and students.

In its statement, NC State noted that Smurfit Westrock's generous support jump-starts a multimillion-dollar plan to modernize the "capabilities, appeal, and offerings of the paper science and engineering program."

The ultimate goal is to boost the school's ability to recruit the best and brightest students and faculty to its program—"providing the pulp, paper and packaging manufacturing industry with the employees they need for success in a rapidly changing future." Contact Allen Sanders at casande7@ncsu.edu.

The Barnwell mill's tissue machine has an annual capacity of 30,000 tons; the mill also houses a 40,000 tpy recycled fiber deinking mill, enabling production of both virgin and recycled tissue.

UPM has renamed its UPM Raflatac business to UPM Adhesive Materials. The name change supports the business area's strategy to accelerate its growth beyond label materials into graphics solutions and specialty tapes.

SUPPLIERS

Kadant has completed the acquisition of Babbini S.p.A. and G.P.S. Engineering S.r.l., two Italy-based companies specializing in industrial dewatering and engineered power transmission solutions. Both companies will become part of Kadant's Industrial Processing segment.

Solenis and NCH Corporation have entered into a definitive agreement to merge the NCH business with Solenis. Under the terms of the agreement, Solenis will acquire 100 percent of NCH stock, creating a more diversified, customer-centric provider of water and hygiene solutions.

SUN Automation Group will supply a Kolbus BX Motion system to Corrugated Partners LLC in Arlington, TX.



Toscotec will supply an AHEAD 2.2 tissue line to the multi-Latin company GrandBay Group at its production base in Pereira, Colombia.

Valmet:

- will deliver an IntelliTissue 1600 machine (TM 5) to Fabryka Papieru i Tektury Beskidy Sp. z o.o. in Wadowice, Poland.
- will deliver key pulp mill technology to Shandong Sun Paper's new Yandian pulp mill in the Shandong province in China, which will produce 600,000 metric tpy of pulp and is scheduled to start up during Q4 2026.
- has received an order from Saica Group to supply a biomass boiler and flue gas cleaning system for its plant in El Burgo de Ebro, Zaragoza, Spain. Completion is scheduled for Saica the end of 2026.

Voith has launched an innovative recycling concept for press felts in collaboration with its partner Aquafil. The newly developed Infinity +Green press felts have been specially developed for recycling, with particular attention to the homogeneity of the product.

PEOPLE

The Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI), the leading trade association representing the UK's paper-based industries, has appointed **Alex Veitch** as its next chief executive.

Green Bay Packaging Executive Vice President (EVP) **Bryan Hollenbach** has retired as of August 31; **Matt Szymanski**, formerly vice president of Mill Operations, has been promoted to EVP, succeeding Hollenbach.

Kemira's has named **Ulrika Dunker** executive vice president, People & Culture, and a member of the Group Leadership team. She will start in her new role at the beginning of 2026.

Kruger Products has appointed **Michael Urlick** senior vice president, Business Development. He will work closely with leaders across all business units to drive strategic initiatives, identify new business opportunities, and support long-term planning.

Metsä Group's new President and CEO **Jussi Vanhanen** has assumed his new role; Vanhanen succeeds Ilkka Hämälä, who is retiring after a distinguished career.

Valmet has appointed **Jon Jested-Rask** executive VP, Tissue Business Area. He will report to President and CEO Thomas Hinnerskov and is a member of Valmet's Executive Leadership Team.

Progroup AG welcomed **Vinzenz Heindl** to its board of directors as chief sales officer as of August 1, 2025.