

NEW BRUNSWICK mill in Miramichi shuttered

UPM-Kymmene, the world's biggest paper manufacturer, is permanently closing the Miramichi paper mill in N.B. as part of an initiative to cut newsprint and magazine capacity as well as yearly costs. Citing the high Canadian dollar as a major factor in the decision, UPM said closing the mill is the only viable option. Miramichi, has a yearly capacity of 450,000 tonnes of magazine grade paper, and has been idled since August. About 540 people are expected to lose their jobs.



reports 8 Canadian mill closures, reopens collective agreements with CEP

AbitibiBowater is shuttering eight struggling Canadian paper mills, either permanently or indefinitely, the company announced in December. The Communication, Energy and Paperworkers union estimates that at least 1,000 workers will be affected. Among the mills closing permanently are; Belgo, in Shawinigan, Que., Dalhousie in N.B. and Fort William in Thunder Bay, Ont., while Donnacona in Que. and Mackenzie in B.C. will both be idled indefinitely. AbitibiBowater says the closings will reduce capacity annually by nearly one hundred tonnes, and cited the strong dollar, high fuel prices and a slow U.S. economy as some contributing factors. Following a meeting in Montreal in mid-December, the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union announced it would reopen collective agreements with AbitibiBowater to try and solve the company's problems.

The CEP said it believes there are options which don't include cuts to benefits and wages, and listed early retirements and changes to outdated work practices as two examples, according to the *Fort Frances Times* newspaper. About 35 AbitibiBowater CEP locals from 17 pulp and paper mills and dozens of paperworkers attended the two-day meeting.

According to a Conference Board of Canada report, Canada's paper products industry stands to lose about \$400 million this year.



PAPER Trails by NANCY CLARK Carbon neutral paper?

IF YOU'VE BEEN reading these pages regularly, no doubt you have heard of carbon neutral paper. But what the heck is it? Is it just marketing spin? The latest example of green washing?

Here are a few facts. Last June, *Rolling Stone* magazine announced that it would switch its printing paper to Catalyst Paper, a "manufactured carbon neutral paper" from B.C.-based Catalyst Paper. The word "manufactured" refers to the fact that Catalyst is only accounting for the greenhouse gas emissions normally

produced during the making of the paper—not the emissions associated with "sourcing and transporting raw materials to the mill, transporting paper to customers or printing finished products," according to the company's website (catalystpaper.com). Fair enough—Catalyst cannot force its suppliers or clients to clean house themselves.

An operation becomes carbon neutral by reducing its in-house emissions and/or by buying carbon offsets. Catalyst has done both. Its website states: "At the

end of 2006, Catalyst's greenhouse gas emissions were down 70% compared with the 1990 Kyoto baseline year." Catalyst has done this through switching to renewable carbon neutral fuels, reducing energy consumption and improving equipment efficiency. The remaining emissions are accounted for by buying carbon offsets from EcoNeutral ERA, which plants trees in southwest B.C.

Similarly, U.S.-based Neenah Paper and Mohawk Fine Papers have come out with carbon neutral brands of their own by buying carbon offsets in the form of renewable energy certificates.

There are critics of these carbon neutral initiatives. Many believe the buying and selling of carbon offsets is a shell game. It lets companies wash themselves green—without forcing them to do

❖ the hard work of reducing emissions in-house. Others point out that Catalyst Cooled may be manufactured carbon neutral, but it doesn't have any recycled content. So how can it possibly be "green" paper? Still others question the practice of reducing power bought from the grid or natural gas companies by burning and using it to fuel in-house wood waste products or "biomass." They point out it's not about reducing a company's consumption of energy bought from outside sources, but about reducing its overall consumption.

This last objection, of course, depends on what would have happened to the biomass otherwise. Would it have simply been incinerated and thus end up spewing emissions out into the air anyway? If that is the case, then using the biomass as fuel does reduce emissions over all.

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That's how Montreal-based Cascades Fine Paper Group has been able to reduce emissions by 50% from its St. Jerome, Que., mill. In this instance, the company does not use biomass but biogas from a landfill site 13 kilometres away. Partnering with the local gas company Gas Métro and landfill managers Intersan Inc., Cascades has been able to harness the methane gas produced by the landfill that would have normally been vented into the air. The three companies collaborated in the building of a pipeline from the landfill to the mill. The system has been operating since 2005 and biogas now accounts for 75% of the thermal energy needed to run St. Jerome's papermaking machines. But, Cascades makes no claims that its paper is manufactured carbon neutral.

So is carbon neutral just a whole lot of green washing? Well, that's up to you and your customers to decide. ☺

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In other Cascades news, operations at the Scierie Lemay mill in Lac-Saint-Jean, Que., were curtailed in late November indefinitely due to the softwood lumber market and profitability concerns. More than 80 employees were affected by the shutdown. Cascades also announced that it's in talks to sell some assets of Scierie Lemay to Produits Forestier Arbec s.e.n.c. www.cascades.com

APPLETON COATED spices up its website

Appleton Coated, manufacturers of Utopia paper, has revamped its website to be more interactive, and to better aid customers in choosing the right paper. Some of the new features include PDF attachments for specs, educational promotions, information on FSC certification, and an environmental calculator that analyzes environmental savings. To check it out, visit www.appletoncoated.com



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