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Domestic Recycled Paper Capacity Increases - Updated

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More than a year ago, China announced a ban on imports of a number of recyclables including mixed paper, which provides a large percentage of the recyclables collected in curbside recycling programs. The ban went into effect earlier this year. As a result, many local recycling programs were faced with limited markets and collapsing prices for many of their recyclables. However, in response to the availability of these raw materials, new North American capacity for consuming domestically recovered fiber is being announced. The following is a list of 18 announced increases in the capacity of North American paper mills to use recyclable paper as a raw material. It reflects one facility added to the list originally published by NERC in November 2018.

The list includes new paper mills along with existing mills or machines that are closed or are still operating but are being converted to produce different end products (e.g. from newsprint to packaging). Old corrugated containers (OCC) is the primary recycled fiber for most of this new capacity. Due in part to the rise of e-commerce, OCC is now commonly collected in curbside programs. Residential mixed paper (RMP) capacity will expand significantly and be consumed by at least six of these facilities. However, mills currently listed as just using OCC could potentially add RMP to their mix. More importantly, the price for mixed paper tracks that of OCC. Increased capacity for OCC should increase the price paid for mixed paper, therefore increasing its value.

The list also includes two mills that will be using recycled feedstock other than OCC and RMP. One is a facility designed to produce paper pulp and plastic pellets using beverage cartons and aseptic packages as its primary feedstock. The other is a mill designed to use food contaminated paper from commercial sources.

The mills are listed in rough order of their projected opening. Much of the new capacity will not be operational for two to three years. Sources include a list of new capacity provided by Dennis Colley, CEO of the Fibre Box Association, in his presentation at the Fall 2018 NERC Conference, articles in Resource Recycling, Paperstock Reports, Recycling Today, Waste 360 and Waste Dive along with company press releases, and local or national newspaper articles.

Each facility is listed by name, location, whether a new mill or an existing mill that is changing its end products from printed paper to packaging, projected final capacity in either tons per year (TPY), metric tonnes per year (MTPY) or tons per day (TPD), depending on the source, raw material feedstock and projected opening. Data is often incomplete because the individual companies determine what information they will release. Data and product descriptions are not changed from the original sources. This list will be updated as new capacity is announced or new information received.

Domestic Recycled Paper Capacity Increases

Midwest Paper Group

Combined Locks, Wisconsin
Conversion of coated paper to packaging
350,000 TPY containerboard
OCC
OCC pulping machine began July 2018

Packaging Corporation of America

Wallula, Washington
Conversion of fine paper to linerboard
400,000 TPY
OCC
Last quarter 2018

Packaging Corporation of America

DeRidder, Louisiana
Conversion of newsprint to linerboard and corrugated medium
150,000 TPY
OCC
2018

Hood Container

St. Francisville, Louisiana
“New recycling plant”
120,000 TPY
OCC
2018

International Paper

Riverdale, Alabama
Conversion to linerboard and containerboard
450,000 TPY
OCC
Second quarter 2019

Grupo Gondi
Monterey, Mexico
New containerboard
441,000 TPY
OCC
2019

Copamex
Anahuac, Mexico
Convert existing graphic paper to recycled containerboard
220,000 TPY
OCC, RMP
“early” 2019

Bio Pappel/McKinley Paper Co
Port Angeles, Washington
Closed graphic paper mill
250,000 TPY containerboard
OCC
September 2019

Pratt Industries
Wapakoneta, Ohio
New
360,000 MPTY cardboard
OCC, RMP, double-lined kraft
Last Quarter 2019

Nine Dragons
Biron, Wisconsin
Convert existing machine to produce corrugated medium and linerboard, build new recycled pulp capacity
2090 TPD pulp: 1320 TPD ship to China, 770 TPD onsite conversion to containerboard
OCC, RMP
Last quarter 2019/First quarter 2020

Nine Dragons
Rumford, Maine
New recycled pulp facility at existing mill
1320 TPD pulp (ship to China)
OCC, RMP
Last quarter 2019/First quarter 2020

Green Bay Packaging

Green Bay, Wisconsin

New mill replacing smaller existing mill

685,000 TPY Containerboard

OCC, RMP

Spring 2021

Cascades

Hanover, Virginia

Temporarily operate closed recycled newsprint mill (27 months) then convert to linerboard and corrugated medium

400,000 MTPY Paperboard

OCC, RMP

2021

Nine Dragons

Fairmont, West Virginia

Existing mill produces recycled content bleached kraft pulp mill for packaging and tissue products

Existing mill makes 220,000 MTPY

Existing mill uses SOP, newsprint, other grades

No date given for potential changes

Shanying

Ballard County, Kentucky

Closed coated paper mill probably to be converted to kraft pulp and packaging

No capacity data given

OCC, RMP?

No date given for reopening

Port Townsend Paper

Port Townsend, Washington

Existing mill that makes 325,000 tons per year of kraft linerboard, corrugated medium, kraft converting paper and kraft pulp

Expanding OCC capacity from 400 to 750 TPD

End 2019?

Mills not using OCC or RMP but using other grades of recycled paper

Ecomelida

Orangeburg County, South Carolina

New

Process food and beverage cartons including aseptic packages and paper mill pulp byproducts into 72,000 MTPY plastic pellets and 36,000 MTPY paper pulp for export to China

Fourth quarter 2018

Georgia Pacific Juno Technology

Toledo, Oregon

New

300 TPD containerboard

Commercial waste from restaurants, airports, sports arenas, schools, etc.

1st quarter 2020

This list was prepared by [Chaz Miller](#), Chair, NERC-NEWMOA Regional Recycling Markets Committee, 301-346-6507.