Fiber consumers to increase recycled appetite

Posted on March 5, 2019
by Colin Staub

A Pacific Northwest paper mill will significantly increase its OCC consumption, and a 100 percent recycled fiber end user is building a new manufacturing facility for paper packaging products.

The latest announcements, from Port Townsend Paper Co. and Pratt Industries, add to the trend of U.S. manufacturers increasing recovered fiber consumption capacity. These developments have been closely watched by recycling stakeholders across the country, as municipal programs and MRFs struggle to find markets for certain recycled fiber grades.

Ramping up OCC intake

A longtime paper mill in Washington state will nearly double its OCC consumption. Port Townsend Paper will complete an $11 million capacity expansion, bringing in new equipment and making some mechanical changes, the Port Townsend Leader newspaper reported last week. Pratt, which uses 100 percent recycled fiber in its manufacturing process, is developing the new facility in Bonney Lake, Wash.

The plant will be sited in a currently unfinished building in a business complex called the Botetourt Center at Greenfield, according to a local economic development coalition. The building currently totals 100,000 square feet and will be expanded to meet Pratt's needs.

The facility will create 50 jobs and is Pratt's second manufacturing site in Virginia. Additional details, including facility capacity and completion date, have not been released. Company spokesman Michael Ciferri declined to comment.

Pratt plans new converting operation

Meanwhile, across the country, Pratt Industries announced it will build a 160,000-square-foot manufacturing facility consuming recycled paper to create packaging and shipping materials.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's office announced the new facility in a release last week. Pratt, which uses 100 percent recycled fiber in its manufacturing process, is developing the new facility in Bonney Lake, Wash.

The facility will create 50 jobs and is Pratt's second manufacturing site in Virginia. Additional details, including facility capacity and completion date, have not been released. Company spokesman Michael Ciferri declined to comment.

Pratt is involved in all stages of paper recycling: The company's recycling subsidiary, Pratt Recycling, collects recyclables and sorts them at 16 facilities in eight states. Additionally, the company consumes recycled paper at its mills in Conyers, Ga., New York City, Shreveport, La. and Vaparaiso, Ind.

Company reps produce recycled materials that go into Pratt's converting and manufacturing operations, such as the new development in Virginia facility.

Pratt is also currently constructing a fifth mill, located in Wapakoneta, Ohio. That plant will consume mixed paper, OCC and double-lined kraft paper.

Capacity up ticks

The two latest announcements join a handful of recycled paper consumers planning capacity increases. Recent developments include the following:

- McKnight Paper in Port Angeles, Wash., is reopening a shuttered newsprint facility to produce containersboard from recycled feedstock.
- Nine Dragons will add recycled pulp production lines at two virgin fiber mills it purchased last year, in Brunswick, Maine.
- Nine Dragons separately purchased a recycled paper mill in Fairmont, W.Va. and has described plans to ramp up recycled fiber production.
- Green Bay Packaging is building a new 100 percent recycled paper mill, consuming OCC and mixed paper. The facility has a projected production capacity of 685,000 tons per year and will replace the company's existing 240,000-ton-per-year operation.
- Cascades announced an idled Virginia newsprint mill and plans to convert the facility to produce containersboard. The mill will be primarily OCC but will also utilize some mixed paper, company officials have said.

Additional confirmed and potential recycled feedstock capacity expansions were noted in a report issued last fall by the Northwest Recycling Council (NRCB). Last year, Resource Recycling published a map showing Chinese investments in U.S. mills consuming recovered fiber.

Photo credit: Cristina Muraca/Shutterstock
In addition to our e-newsletters, Resource Recycling Inc. will occasionally send emails related to the specific recycling industry sectors you've selected.

You are encouraged to review our privacy policy.