

PPI Pulp & Paper Week

PAPER, PACKAGING AND FIBER MARKET NEWS AND PRICES FOR NORTH AMERICA

US kraft linerboard export pricing may finally be rising to certain export markets -- for first time in two years

US unbleached kraft linerboard export prices appeared to be increasing or on the verge of rising for what would be the first time in two years, Fastmarkets RISI's *PPI Pulp & Paper Week* learned this week.

The increase or increases were already occurring even as the market was in a uniquely odd position dictated by a spreading coronavirus globally. Industry contacts told of short-term increased corrugated demand because of the virus yet they also believed in the mid-term that the US and global economy would be negatively impacted in terms of overall consumer demand.

The increase this week that appeared most clear »» continued on page 7

US NBSK, SBSK grades flat to up \$20 in 'crazy' month as virus spreads; fluff rise continues on strong demand

North American pulp market participants negotiated March prices in a growingly chaotic environment after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared coronavirus (Covid-19) a global pandemic and US stocks markets plummeted, leading analysts to predict a recession is on the horizon.

Preliminary effective list prices for two key grades of bleached softwood kraft (BSK) were flat to up as much as \$20/tonne as producers struggled to implement the second half of their announced \$40/tonne price increases that went into effect in February. Buyers attempted to push back the hikes and some said the move was essentially »» continued on page 4

Brown recycled pulp shipping consistently to China as demand, pricing rise in the first quarter, to \$300-350 CIF

Brown recycled pulp to China is moving consistently in a range of \$300-350/tonne CIF at Chinese main ports, dependent on quality, and will continue to export steadily as Chinese mills need fiber for their paper and board mills, as well as their paper and recycled pulp lines in Southeast Asia, contacts told Fastmarkets RISI's *PPI Pulp & Paper Week*. Pricing for brown recycled pulp is up about \$20/tonne in first quarter 2020 compared with yearend 2019.

With a potential ban on recovered paper imports into China at the end of this year, and a continual drop in import licenses »» continued on page 10

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Packaging

LA actress tells her 26.5 million followers to push Amazon for 'plastic-free, minimal' packaging

Actress Blake Lively jumped to the side of paper in her own fight against plastics. Her "plastic-free" packaging Instagram message posted on Mar. 7 reached 26.5 million people, *Marie Claire* online claimed. Lively shared a post from the account @stayplasticfree explaining step-by-step how users can change their shipping preferences with Amazon to "plastic-free" and "minimal" packaging.

Lively recommended the following:

- Open your Amazon account
- Go to 'help/customer service'
- Go to the 'contact us'
- Use their 'chat' option
- On chat, request to make all future orders plastic-free with minimal packaging and where absolutely necessary only use degradable packaging materials like paper.
- This information will be saved to your account for all future orders!
- It will take you 5 minutes on the chat to make all your future Amazon orders plastic free!

Lively's message was posted as various global paper packaging companies today brand for being able to provide sustainable packaging. Amazon mostly uses corrugated for packaging products that are sent to customers.

Leaders with US companies such as WestRock and Graphic

Packaging expect to gain business in paper packaging at the expense of plastic this year.

This week, one industry contact told of following Lively's advise and calling on Amazon to send plastic-free and minimal packaging to his house.

Lively, 32, raised in Los Angeles by Hollywood movie industry-employed parents, was touched by the environmental devastation from the 4.9-million-barrel BP oil spill when she was in New Orleans in 2011 shooting the *Green Lantern* movie, one report claimed. Plastic is made from natural gas and crude oil.

Lively's three most popular movies based on domestic box office revenue were *Green Lantern*, *The Town*, and *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*.

• The **US business manufacturing** headline index fell from 50.9% in January to 50.1% in February, according to results from the **Institute for Supply Management** Manufacturing Business survey.

--by grudder@fastmarkets.com

Corporate strategy

Verso pres Weinhold leaves after four months in position; CEO's responsibility increased

Verso announced on Mar. 10 that pres Michael Weinhold resigned, effective immediately, and a day later, the company said its board of directors elected CEO Adam St. John as president and that the board also elected Aaron Haas, a company insider, as Sr

VP for sales and marketing. Both moves are effective immediately, according to the company.

"On behalf of our sr leadership team, I am extremely pleased to have Aaron lead our sales and marketing organization," said St. John, in a release.

"Aaron has a proven exceptional ability to lead various teams within Verso and has extensive paper industry knowledge and sales and marketing experience," St. John said. "We expect a smooth transition for our employees and customers, as Aaron is already deeply engaged with our sales and marketing and sr leadership teams and is very familiar with many of our customers from prior roles."

Haas' leadership experience at Verso and its predecessor companies includes Dir of Product Management; VP, Marketing Services; VP, Commercial Print; VP, Marketing; and most recently VP, Supply Chain Management, Verso said.

Industry contacts appeared surprised by Weinhold's exit.

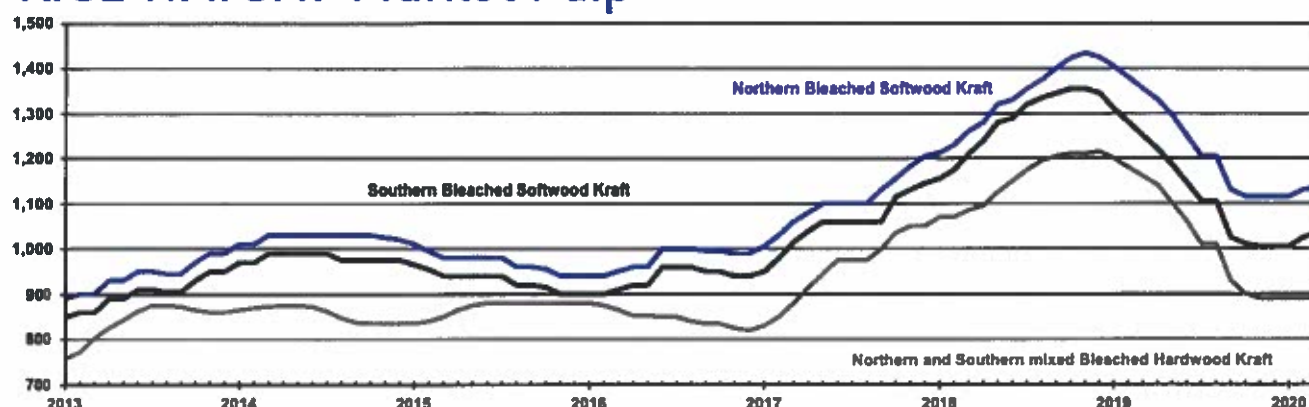
Weinhold was named pres of Verso on Nov. 14, 2019.

"Weinhold has been part of Verso's sr leadership team since the company's inception in 2006, has held multiple senior leadership roles in sales, and most recently served as Verso's president of graphic and specialty papers," Verso stated on Nov. 14.

Prior to joining Verso where he has worked for 14 years, Weinhold held management positions at International Paper (IP)

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PRICE WATCH: Market Pulp



Effective list price before regular volume and customer discounts. US\$/metric tonne unless otherwise noted.

	Current months				Year-to-year	
	Mar. 2020 Preliminary ¹	Feb. 2020	Jan. 2020	Q1 2020	Mar. 2019	% chg.
US (DELIVERED IN EAST)						
Bleached softwood kraft						
Northern (Canadian)	1,130 - 1,140	1,130	1,115	1,127	1,355	-16.2
Southern (US)	1,025 - 1,045	1,025	1,005	1,022	1,250	-17.2
Bleached hardwood kraft						
Northern and southern mixed (Canadian/US) ²	890	890	890	890	1,160	-23.3
Eucalyptus	890	890	890	890	1,160	-23.3
Specialty grades						
Unbleached softwood kraft (Canadian/US)	1,065 - 1,075	1,065	1,045	1,060	1,285	-16.7
Fluff (US southern kraft, untreated softwood rolls)	1,120 - 1,140	1,120	1,105	1,118	1,310	-13.7
Deinked (US air-dried and wet-lap, 100% post-consumer for printing/writing)	760 - 770	760	760	762	905	-15.5
Spot Markets³						
Northern Bleached Softwood Kraft	610 - 650	610 - 650	610 - 640	628	760	-17.1
Southern Bleached Softwood Kraft	540 - 580	535 - 575	520 - 560	552	650	-13.8
Northern and Southern Bleached Hardwood Kraft	480 - 520	480 - 520	480 - 520	500	690	-27.5
EUROPE (CIF)						
	Pending¹					
Bleached softwood kraft						
Northern (Canadian/Nordic)	840	840	820	833	1,070	-21.5
Southern (US)	800	800	780	793	1,030	-22.3
Bleached hardwood kraft						
Northern mixed (Canadian/US)	640	640	640	640	910	-29.7
Southern mixed (US)	630	630	630	630	900	-30.0
Specialty Grades						
Fluff (US southern kraft, untreated softwood rolls)	1,120 - 1,140	1,120	1,105	1,118	1,310	-13.7
ASIA (CIF)						
	Pending¹					
JAPAN						
Bleached softwood kraft						
Northern (Canadian)	660	660	660	660	785	-15.9
Southern (US)	570 - 600	570 - 600	570 - 600	585	745	-21.5
Bleached hardwood kraft						
Northern and southern mixed (Canadian/US)	500 - 510	500 - 510	500 - 510	505	710	-28.9
KOREA						
Northern bleached softwood kraft	710	710	690	703	865	-17.9
	Preliminary¹					
CHINA						
Northern bleached softwood kraft - net ⁴	575	575	565	572	710	-19.0

SPECIFICATIONS

All prices are best estimates of list prices before regular volume and contract discounts and are composite prices as opposed to median or average prices. Actual transaction prices may vary. US prices include normal freight allowance for delivery to consuming paper mills. Export prices are CIF main European ports. Normal terms include a 1.5% discount for cash payment or 60 days. Prices may not reflect some existing contract discounts off list prices still in effect: in North America, typically 36-44%; in Europe, 22-30%; in Japan, 3-9%; in Korea, 13-16%; in China, 0% (from Canadian and European producers). BHK pricing varies according to species used for the pulp.

DISCLAIMER

While the information contained in this index has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, Fastmarkets RISI does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy and completeness of the information.

NOTES

1. Preliminary and final prices: US - Mid-month PPW effective list prices shown are preliminary prices. End-of-month final prices published in PPW and World Pulp Monthly supersede these preliminary prices. Full details at: www.risi.com/PulpPriceChanges. Europe - Originally published in PPI Europe. Pending indicates prices are not available at the time of publication. Final prices are published in the next Price Watch issue. The exception is European fluff price assessments, which follow the same publishing schedule as US pulp price assessments and are formally tied to the US fluff price assessment. Asia - Final prices are reported at the end of the month. 2. Effective January 2016, NBHK and SBHK were merged into a single assessment. See www.risi.com/PulpPriceChanges for details. 3. Spot prices are mid-point weighted averages for biweekly orders up to the publication date. Prices are net delivered with 0% discounts. 4. As of January 2020, NBSK net China reflects the last price assessment for NBSK from North America/Scandinavia CIF China (imports) as published in PPI Asia. As of mid-Mar 2020, Canadian NBSK was trading at \$XXX/tonne while Nordic NBSK was trading at \$XXX/tonne. r = revised

Market pulp prices holding

» continued from page 1

off the table on concerns about volume. However, producer contacts reported pockets where prices edged up, and a surprisingly resilient Chinese export market helped taper off talks of price erosion.

"This is crazy. I've never seen anything like this," said a contact at a major BSK producer, who reported prices were flat to up \$10/tonne despite uncertainty about a US recession.

"From our customers, nobody screamed about it (but some) tried to argue that China is falling apart so US prices should. But a collapse in China didn't happen. For March, so long as China continues to buy, we're heading into less supply. Unless that engine collapses and ... spot prices go down instead of up, then we'd be exposed. I'm cautiously optimistic that the market is balanced or maybe prices rise a little more for March," the BSK producer contact said.

Benchmark northern bleached softwood kraft (NBSK) preliminary March effective list prices ranged from flat to up \$10/tonne, bringing the list to \$1,130-1,140/tonne, according to Fastmarkets RISI's *PPI Pulp & Paper Week* polling. Southern bleached softwood kraft (SBSK) had a broader range of \$1,025-1,045/tonne, flat to up \$20.

North American buyer contacts seemed perplexed that any

prices would rise given the growing economic fall-out of coronavirus, which has quickly spread across the United States and prompted widespread cancellations of public events, schools, industry conferences, business travel, and sports leagues – and an ever-growing impact on Americans' daily lives.

At least 1,872 people in the US reportedly tested positive for coronavirus and 41 patients with the virus had died through midday Friday on Mar. 13. But many believe the actual cases are grossly understated due to limited testing, and some Wall Street analysts said this week a recession was inevitable.

"Coronavirus' impact should be straight forward. I figure pulp will be tanking and prices will plummet," said a North American buyer contact. "We bought less (this month) and our producers asked what's going on, are you going to buy? It seems weird to me to hear anything other than buying is down and prices are down. Economically that's not the way you think of things."

Spot prices flat to up. One way buyers often test market conditions is through US spot markets. In past cycles, US consumers would reduce contract volumes to the minimum required tonnage, pull cheaper tonnes from spot markets, and use the leverage to press contract suppliers on their prices. In *P&PW* polling through Mar. 13, spot prices mostly held up and NBSK was unchanged

at \$610-650 net delivered to the US East and Midwest.

US SBSK, riding momentum since China began accepting exemptions on 5% import tariffs on US pulp, may have seen available supplies decline as spot prices rose again, bringing the latest non-contract prices to \$540-580 net delivered. That narrowed the gap between SBSK and NBSK to average \$70/tonne, the lowest in over a year.

SBSK producer: 'We're oversold.' Some producers in the US South continue favoring the Chinese export market because demand has held up throughout the coronavirus saga, and freight costs are lower than delivering to US consumers.

"US spot? We're not looking for it because we're oversold. China is a natural market because of freight. It's gone up. That will continue," said a contact at an SBSK producer. "Our biggest challenge is making sure to produce to budget and getting containers. Vessels are ghosted and you have trouble getting shipments. I feel funny saying it's an optimistic market. I don't see that with stock markets (and) talk of a recession. I think over the next few months, we're going to see an economic contraction. How long will it last, I don't know."

Resolute, Rayonier add March fluff hikes. Pricing momentum in SBSK has emboldened fluff producers, most of which can swing between baled SBSK and rolled fluff depending on supply and demand, to continue pushing for higher prices. After International Paper (IP) announced to customers that it

PIX - pulp indexes – March 10, 2020

NBSK – US Net Change (Jan 2016 = 100.00) February 2020: 109.42 (+2.07)

would increase US and European prices on fluff pulp \$40/tonne, effective Mar. 1, two competitors added their own March hikes.

Industry contacts told *P&PW* that Resolute Forest Products had announced a \$40 increase, its second monthly hike echoing IP's move, while Rayonier informed customers worldwide its price would rise \$20/tonne on Mar. 1. In China, IP had also announced a \$20 fluff hike on March business.

Preliminary March fluff effective list prices ranged from flat to up \$20, according to *P&PW* polling, bringing levels to \$1,120-1,140/tonne. The latest rise comes after February list prices increased \$15, bringing the rise over two months to \$25. Fluff prices tend to increase and decrease slower than paper grade BSK due to an array of long-term contract structures. Also, some of the world's biggest fluff consumers are at large, publicly traded consumer products firms who tend to resist any price increase.

China fluff bounces \$20.

Nonetheless, tighter supply and demand fundamentals in Asian markets encouraged producers to keep pushing up prices in North America and Europe. According to one contact in the Asian fluff market, IP has taken a more draconian approach to implementing its announced \$20/tonne hike this month.

"IP is very tight – considering many maintenance shutdowns ahead and they are taking a take-it or leave-it position for March," said the Asian contact. "They are even cutting volumes, and telling customers they will only wait until the 20th of the month, not month-end."

COVERAGE NOTE: Proposed changes to NA export pulp and deinked pulp assessments – Consultation

Fastmarkets RISI is proposing to discontinue assessments of pulp delivered to Japan and South Korea, as well as deinked pulp delivered in the US East with effect from October 2020.

Specifically, the following price series would be discontinued in *PPI Pulp & Paper Week*, the Fastmarkets RISI portal, and mobile app, as well as all data feeds:

- Northern Bleached Softwood Kraft, from Canada, CIF Japan (Price ID 488)
- Southern Bleached Softwood Kraft, from US, CIF Japan (Price ID 489)
- Northern and Southern Mixed Bleached Hardwood Kraft, from Canadian/US, CIF Japan (Price ID 490)
- Northern Bleached Softwood Kraft, from Canada, CIF South Korea (533)
- Deinked pulp (US air-dried and wet-lap), US East (Price ID 172)

Export volumes to Japan and South Korea are no longer as significant as they were when these assessments were launched, and the number of producers exporting to the region has dwindled. Liquidity in deinked pulp is very low. As a result, Fastmarkets RISI can no longer maintain robust assessments for these prices.

Fastmarkets RISI is inviting feedback on this proposal up until Apr. 10, 2020. To submit comments, please email pricing.risi@fastmarkets.com, mentioning "NA pulp assessments" in the subject line of the email.

For more information on Fastmarkets RISI's methodology for global pulp markets, please see [here](#).

For other Fastmarkets RISI coverage notes please see [here](#).

Export fluff prices to China increased \$20/tonne this month to \$580-600 net CIF in February, market participants told *P&PW*. That's up vs a broader range of \$540-600 net CIF, according to *P&PW* data. Meantime, benchmark NBSK from Canada is mostly flat at \$580-590 net CIF, while bleached eucalyptus kraft (BEK) is at \$450-460 net CIF.

BCTMP premium vs BEK.

In a continued surprise, export bleached chemi-thermomechanical (BCTMP) prices to China ranged from \$480-500 net CIF, producer

and buyer sources said. The grade historically sold at lower prices than BEK, but lower supply and strong board mill demand buoyed prices.

"Every four or five years that happens, the price gets higher than eucalyptus. It can happen, this does happen where it has a premium," said a contact at a BCTMP producer. "Hardwood guys are keeping their prices too low and are oversupplied. BCTMP's biggest end use is packaging."

--by bryan.smith@fastmarkets.com

Newsprint

Ponderay partnership changes gears, with Resolute no longer running daily mill operation

Ponderay Newsprint Co., a partnership involving Resolute Forest Products and four US newspaper publishers, is making corporate changes in which Resolute will no longer take the lead on operations and marketing.

"As part of its managing partner role, Resolute centralized a lot of functions of Ponderay. Recently, they decided that they were no longer interested in having this managing position role," Ponderay Newsprint pres Myron Johnson told Fastmarkets RISI's *PPI Pulp & Paper Week*.

"We then had to establish ourselves separately. ... everything is here at the mill now and separate from the ownership. We had to engage some consulting people during the transition to assist us, but we have now the same staff that we had before," Johnson added.

The company recently created a committee formed by the newspaper publishers that own 60% of Ponderay to manage daily operations, such as sales and marketing activities at the one-machine 245,000 tonnes/yr newsprint mill in Usk, eastern Washington, which is about 50 miles north of Spokane.

The four newspaper publishers with the 60% share of Ponderay are Gannett, McClatchy News, Copley Press, and MediaNews. Resolute owns the remaining 40% of Ponderay.

Before October 2019, Resolute was Ponderay's managing partner and selling agent, managing the company's sales system including marketing, orders, logistics, and customer service.

New customers? Various partnerships for running US newsprint mills were established 30 to 40 years ago by producers and US daily newspapers, including with the likes of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. The partnership that created Ponderay was done in the mid-1980s. The partnership's focus was for the paper made at the mill to be sold and supplied to publishers, according to Johnson.

Johnson explained that the newspaper publishing partners took a volume of paper produced by the mill proportionate to their ownership stake while the other 40% was sold by Resolute to other customers.

"Now with this transition, our sales and marketing director Carole Winchester is responsible for selling those 40%. Some of the customers are the same as when Resolute was managing sales, but we are also pursuing other customers," Johnson said.

Johnson stated that the "current softness" in the global newsprint market is challenging.

"We're working hard ... to establish our presence in the market. Rumors from customers saying that we are gone are the biggest challenge for us," Johnson noted.

He added that the export markets are also slow, demand-wise, which makes things even harder for North American newsprint

producers. Of Ponderay's sales, about 5-10% is exported.

One of four machines in USA. Ponderay's machine is one of four newsprint paper machines still running in the USA, in a market where once-strong annual North American newsprint demand started a slow incremental plummet in 2001. Customers have continued to exit from daily print newspapers to mobile devices including social media for news and information.

Along with Usk, the other three US newsprint mills are Resolute's 245,000 tonnes/yr PM at its Grenada, MS, mill; Inland Empire Paper's 130,000 tonnes/yr PM at its Millwood, WA, mill; and Norpac's 100,000 tonnes/yr of capacity at its Longview, WA, mill.

Switching to other papers? Johnson said that Ponderay is studying the possibility of making different types of papers other than newsprint.

"We know the newsprint market will continue to decline," Johnson said. "We're looking for other opportunities with the equipment we have available at this mill. It's a good facility, well-maintained, it's competitive, and we're proud of that."

New brand identity. As part of the corporate changes, Ponderay has launched a new website and redesigned the company's logo.

The new logo is an evolution of their previous logo, which prominently featured an Osprey bird, and "honors the history, high level of customer service and trustworthiness Ponderay prides itself on," according to a company press release.

"While our name remains the same, our logo, brand identity and website have changed significantly to better represent who Ponderay Newsprint Company is and what we bring to market for our clients," said the company's sales and marketing dir Winchester.

• **Paper Excellence** on Mar. 11 restarted paper machine No. 5 at its Port Alberni mill in British Columbia, three weeks after the company reported a technology malware hacking attack that blocked connection between sales and manufacturing systems at its paper mills in British Columbia. Last week, the company said that the Crofton and the Port Alberni mills in BC were operating with one paper machine at each facility. PE plans to start a paper machine at Powell River in BC by the end of next week.

--by rmercante@fastmarkets.com

Tissue

KP Tissue mills running 'full,' expediting orders to try to keep up with virus' fast-demand rise

The growing coronavirus outbreak has caused a panic-buying run on tissue products especially bathroom tissue in many US stores over the last several weeks. US tissue paper producers are trying to keep up with the unexpected rise in demand, contacts said this week.

Business Insider reported that Walmart was receiving plenty of bathroom tissue product but the product was being taken and purchased off the shelf as soon as it was available, a Walmart

official said. For many out-of-stock toilet paper varieties Amazon's website stated, *Business Insider* reported on Mar. 13, that "We don't know when or if this item will be back in stock."

In a call with analysts on Mar. 12, KP Tissue and KPLP CEO Dino Bianco said Kruger mills were running at full capacity in the US and Canada, and in some cases Kruger "expedited" orders for customers. He saw a "lag" in responding to the unexpected demand uptick yet claimed there was not a supply shortage in terms of the amount of tissue product available that is needed to meet demand. He expected ongoing good demand for consumer/retail products, especially toilet paper, citing potential "self quarantines" at homes for those with the virus, while a drop in demand for Away-from-Home (AfH) products.

Bianco said that the "longer this goes on" will have a "negative impact" on AfH business mainly supplied to offices, restaurants, schools, and hospitals.

Bianco said he did not expect this demand increase to lead to a price increase for customers.

KP Tissue plans an early 2021 startup of a C\$575 million through-air-dried tissue paper machine and three converting lines in Sherbrooke, QC. The first of the three converting lines is to start operating probably in July in Sherbrooke that is connected to the machine project, Bianco told analysts. He expects output from the Sherbrooke machine next year to be sold half in the USA and half in Canada, and with more than a majority of the end product from the new TAD being towel paper.

KP Tissue's full-year 2019 adjusted EBITDA was C\$145 million, which was 22.6% higher than the adjusted EBITDA in 2018. Sales were up 4.6% to C\$1.43 billion. The company also reported a 7.7% increase in sales in the USA and a 4.6% increase in Canada, where the majority of KP Tissue's business is located.

The improved earnings resulted from higher end-product prices, mix of products sold, and lower fiber cost, especially for market pulp.

--by grudder@fastmarkets.com

US export kraft liner may rise

» continued from page 1

was, at as much as Euro 20, to southern Europe (Italy and Spain), even as Italy by the end of this week shut virtually down because of the spreading virus. Contacts also claimed some higher prices in both Mexico, and South/Central America, but it was unclear if the higher pricing represented a majority of the open market. Further, in fiber-hungry China, contacts expected US kraft linerboard producers to raise prices in April. The increases discussed by industry players were for \$10 or \$20 for US kraft linerboard.

The first export US kraft linerboard increases in two years, according to Fastmarkets RISI's *PPI Pulp & Paper Week*, which will publish US domestic and export containerboard prices on Mar. 20, occur after prices plummeted since October 2018. Overall, US kraft linerboard on the 175-g grade CIF dropped

Top US kraft linerboard country destinations

(Year-to-date through Jan. 2020.)

	000 tonnes	% chg. YTD
1 Mexico	77	3.7%
2 China	63	103.7
3 Guatemala	29	14.3
4 Italy	25	3.8
5 Canada	24	6.5
6 Costa Rica	19	-8.4
7 Ecuador	16	35.6
8 Turkey	14	191.2
9 Spain	12	42.8
10 Chile	10	-20.4%

YTD: year-to-date.

Source: US trade statistics.

by Euro 235/tonne to southern Europe. The US's 175-g to China on a CIF basis dropped \$250/tonne. And 42-lb kraft linerboard to Mexico declined \$90/tonne, and 42-lb to South and Central America dropped by \$130/ton.

Contacts this week reported benefits to corrugated demand and thus linerboard prices from what industry contacts see as a momentarily demand spurt for certain consumer products such as bathroom tissue due to the Covid-19 coronavirus. They said corrugated plants did not want to be caught short on supply.

"The corrugators are still running, even in Italy," said one US exporter on Mar. 11, referring

to Italy, where 10,000 cases of the virus were reported through Mar. 11.

By Mar. 13, it was unclear if corrugators were still running in Italy.

Contacts believed this so-called short-term demand benefit could meet up with what they expected to be an economic downturn or possible

recession by mid-year or sooner. If the virus cases continued to grow, they envisioned businesses being adversely affected and potentially shutting for a short-term, and thus causing a corresponding demand decline.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus a pandemic on Mar. 11 and President Trump declared a national emergency in the USA on Mar. 13. It's the first pandemic in more than a decade.

Trump on Mar. 11 first told the nation that the US would suspend most travel from Europe, excluding the UK and Ireland, for one month, would defer tax payments due next month

for some affected by the virus, and would offer low-interest loans for small businesses.

At the same time, by Mar. 12, all major professional sporting events, Broadway plays, and schools were shut down. Most businesses had office employees working at home, in most cases for a month. Both the cities of San Francisco and Oakland banned for two weeks events that include at least 1,000 people, fearing that the massing of people together could lead to increased virus cases. Store shelves were mostly or completely empty where there had been toilet paper, hand soap, and sanitizer (see story p. 7).

For the corrugated industry, the AICC on Mar. 12 said it would cancel its spring meeting in Carlsbad, CA on Apr. 1-3.

AICC chmn Jay Carman, the pres of StandFast Packaging Group, said that it was the first time in AICC history that a national meeting was canceled.

'Extraordinary times.' "I believe we can agree that these are extraordinary times," Carman said.

"That's going to really hurt a lot of business," said a US distributor, referring to the overall impact.

"Overall, it will mean less boxes," the contact claimed.

"The coronavirus effect will affect worldwide demand," a global trader added early this week.

China. In China, US shipments totaled 62,656 tonnes in January, up a whopping 104%

US kraft linerboard export shipments by region

(Year-to-date figures in metric tonnes through Jan. 2020.)

Through Jan. 2020

	2020 (000 tonnes)	% chg yr ago
Latin America ¹	187	6.5
Mexico	77	3.7
China	63	103.7
Europe	62	26.5
Asia ²	48	0.7
Canada	24	6.5
Other	17	16.9
TOTAL	400	17.8%

1. Includes Mexico. 2. Excludes China

Source: American Forest & Paper Association, US Bureau of Census.

from 30,760 tonnes in January 2019. Chinese containerboard mills have been running at low capacity due to a lack of fiber and Chinese corrugators increased their imports from the USA. US and China officials in mid-January also signed a "phase-one" trade agreement, which was to eliminate a second round of tariffs on US imports, including kraft linerboard.

Even with the increase in January shipments, US traders told of difficulties shipping to China, citing a lack of containers and blank sailings where shippers cancel trips because of not carrying what they consider to be enough cargo.

"It's a logistical challenge," one trader said. "Getting space on a vessel is very difficult."

Contacts expected that US producers would raise kraft linerboard prices more broadly in April. There was one report that some buyers in China already were paying a higher price for US kraft linerboard, at \$10/tonne or \$20/tonne.

"It does look like the market is quite tight and ready," a trader said. "(The buyers) will have to make the adjustment on the price."

Already, companies in China were seeking an exemption from the Chinese government so they could import kraft linerboard without a second tariff being added. The exemption became available following the "phase-one" agreement.

Mexico/Americas. US kraft linerboard was increasing somewhat in Mexico this

COVERAGE NOTE: Proposed launch of new open market assessments for US kraft papers

Fastmarkets RISI is considering to launch new net price assessments for unbleached and bleached kraft paper prices for the US/North American marketplace, eventually replacing the current market assessments.

The new price assessments would be based on open market net transaction levels, after specific customer discounts. Our North American pricing team has been researching this change for the kraft paper prices since last year. We're interested in comments from the market about this potential change. Please send your comments to pricing.risi@fastmarkets.com by March 31st, 2020, mentioning "US Kraft Paper" in the subject-line of the email.

After considering comments, Fastmarkets RISI expects to announce if the new prices will be launched at the start of May, with the new levels first published in *PPI Pulp & Paper Week*, Fastmarkets RISI online portal and mobile app on May 22. They would run alongside the existing price series until the end of 2020. From 2021, the existing price series would be discontinued, leaving only the new net series.

For more information on Fastmarkets RISI's methodology for North American packaging paper and board, including the new assessments, please see [here](#).

For other Fastmarkets RISI coverage notes please see [here](#).

month, contacts told *P&PW*. Boxmakers in Mexico told of better-than-expected demand in the first quarter.

"I see customers in Mexico with no increase and others with \$10-15 (increases)," one industry contact said. "In Central and South America, I have seen \$10-20 increases. Demand in Ecuador is strong. The rest (of Latin America) is steady."

The year started strong for US kraft linerboard exports, which totaled 400,000 tonnes in January. This increase occurred after kraft linerboard exports in 2019 declined 11.2% and 503,000 tonnes in 2019. The January shipments were up by 17.8% on a year-over-year basis, according to figures from the American Forest & Paper Association

(AF&PA) and US government. The export shipment increase also occurred as US containerboard mills operated at 95% of capacity in January, a much higher rate than what the mills ran at throughout most of last year.

US shipments were up 6.5% to its top regional export market, Latin America, where about two-thirds of total exports were shipped year, and they also more than doubled to China (compared with shipments to those two countries in January 2019).

The tonnes shipped to Latin American countries, including Mexico, totaled 187,000 tons. Shipments to Mexico, the largest single-country market for US kraft linerboard exports, were up 3.7% in January at 76,882 tonnes.

Top markets for US exports in terms of tonnes shipped included China, as well as Europe, where shipments were up 26.5% to 62,000 tonnes; Turkey, where shipments were up 191% to 13,589 tonnes following tariffs that had been in place on US imports early in 2019; Spain, where shipments were up 42.8%; and Ecuador, the largest banana-growing country in the world, where US shipments were up 35.6% to 16,290 tonnes.

Also, while small in volume overall, the US shipped 3,328 tonnes of kraft linerboard to Brazil in January, after shipping just 102 tonnes to Brazil in January 2019, shipped doubled the tonnes from last year in January at 4,017 tonnes to India, where contacts have claimed China has gained some board for its corrugators, and 2,600 tonnes to Taiwan, up from only about a 1,000 tonnes in January 2019.

Domestic drop one-fourth of export plummet. For 2019, total US kraft linerboard shipments were 3.84 million tonnes, down from 4.343 million tonnes in 2018. On the pricing front, US kraft linerboard was down by 23.5% on average in 2019 compared with the 2018 global average, according to the government and AF&PA statistics. US kraft linerboard in the US domestic market declined one-fourth the amount of export linerboard, based on January prices. Kraft linerboard was down 5.2% in January 2020 on the domestic market, compared with the January 2019 level, according to the P&PW survey. Of total US kraft linerboard production, about one-fourth is exported.

- The **AICC** board canceled its meeting in Carlsbad because of "AICC's concern for the health of its members, attendees, and partners; the declaration of coronavirus as a pandemic by the (WHO); and the recommendation by California's Gov. Gavin Newsom on restricting any "gatherings" in the state to less than 250 people. "Early next week, all meeting attendees and sponsors will receive more information from AICC about the cancellation policy which will include credit or refund options. If you have any other questions, please contact Cindy Huber or Laura Mihalick at 703.836.2422," the AICC said. "In the meantime, if you were registered for the meeting, please cancel your hotel and travel arrangements directly with the Omni La Costa Resort (1-800-854-5000) and your airline.

- **Bay Cities** appointed Sahar Mehrabzadeh to a newly-created position of Exec VP of sales for North America. Mehrabzadeh joined Bay Cities in 2006 as the company's first marketing mgr. By 2013, she became the Dir of Sales for Point of Purchase Displays, where she opened multiple new national accounts, the company said.

- **Copamex** announced that its paper mill in Monterrey obtained certification under the FSSC 22000 food safety standard for its **specialty food packaging papers**. At the Monterrey mill, Copamex produces specialty and industrial papers as well as containerboard, with total mill capacity of more than 176,000 tons/yr.

--by grudder@fastmarkets.com

Recycled brown pulp pricing up

»» continued from page 1

issued to Chinese mills, brown recycled pulp is one avenue taken to avoid this demand cutoff.

Some US exporters have secured orders, setting up business that "is continuing to grow in the US," a contact that has been shipping brown recycled pulp steadily said. From the US, brown recycled pulp ships mostly to major ports in China today.

"The three big boys are all involved with this product," a US exporter said, referring to China's three largest containerboard producers, Nine Dragons Paper Holdings, Lee & Man Paper Manufacturing, and Shanying International.

Additionally, a 20% tariff on US recycled pulp has been lifted for those who, starting this month, applied for exemptions that are valid for one year, incentivizing Chinese buyers to import material from the US.

As China faces a supply shortage of recovered paper due to cut-off collections as the country faced the coronavirus, and mills slowed down and shut down, demand and pricing for US recovered paper has spiked up as a result in first quarter 2020. With limited import quotas in-hand, some buyers in China turned to recycled pulp again in March, according to contacts.

China's demand for US recycled pulp has increased from 1,628 tonnes in 2018 to 165,655 tonnes in 2019, said Fastmarkets RISI Sr Economist Hannah Zhao. With planned capacities to start up this year and next, Chinese recycled pulp imports from the

US only will grow. More than 10 projects have been announced globally, adding between 6-7 million tonnes of brown recycled pulp capacity into 2021.

"They're not limited on what they can import for pulp, and they need fiber to run their mills," a contact said of Chinese buyers. "Mills that don't get permits have to depend on domestic (in China) OCC (old corrugated containers) and collections are significantly down. They can't buy DSOCC (double-sorted OCC) from the US because they don't have licenses but they can buy pulp."

Quality counts, of course. As with all recovered paper grades, brown recycled pulp faces quality concerns and is even made in varying furnish mixes of recovered paper, according to contacts. A wide range of pricing was cited this week for March exports, with most

contacts reporting around \$310/tonne CIF at Chinese main ports, and as high as \$350/tonne CIF.

"As you can see, the price spread is big depending on qualities and mills," a trader said.

Brown recycled pulp is made of mostly OCC with some mixed paper in some cases, although some producers claim they are attempting to use just OCC or DSOCC. The more OCC in the furnish mix, the higher the pricing, while more mixed paper means less pricing, contacts said.

Contacts said paper mills in China require and test samples "before they buy and they make sure your quality meets the samples that pass their testing," an exporter said.

"There isn't an exact formula on the percentage of OCC versus (mixed paper)," the contact added.

In the USA, ND Paper's Fairmont, WV, mill shipped recycled brown pulp to Nine Dragons mills in China in first quarter 2019. ND has said it eventually plans to also make recycled pulp at its Biron, WI, and Rumford, ME, mills. It was expected that the latter two mills would be producing recycled pulp by the end of 2019; yet, that has yet to happen and ND has said those plans were delayed into 2021, sources said. The Biron mill started making recycled corrugating medium last summer and began testing recycled linerboard production in December. The company expects to be making recycled linerboard in the first quarter of 2020. ND Paper is an affiliate of the second largest containerboard producer by capacity in the world, China's Nine Dragons Paper

In China, Shandong Sun Paper in May started trial production on a new 400,000 tonnes/yr

US recovered paper exports January 2020

(tonnes)

Grade	January 2020		% chg. month ago	Jan.-Dec. 2019		% chg. year ago
	\$	Tonnes		\$	Tonnes	
Corrugated	\$87,472,049	717,089	8.5%	\$1,404,448,496	9,657,607	-15.0%
Mixed	26,765,725	200,291	9.4	369,616,294	2,436,510	-7.9
Pulp	18,273,968	68,895	-9.8	245,960,490	1,058,191	-5.7
substitutes						
News	33,464,149	188,315	34.0	422,631,104	2,250,688	-22.1
Deinking high grades	16,936,887	79,813	13.4	255,518,175	1,063,863	2.7
Total	\$182,912,778	1,254,403	10.9%	\$2,698,174,559	16,466,859	-13.6%
Major Destinations						
Jan. 2020	News	Deinking	Pulp	Corrugated	Mixed	Total
			Substitutes			
China/Hong Kong	98,634	0	81	278,393	13,367	390,475
India	4,091	10,030	32,911	102,786	98,035	247,853
Mexico	8,416	49,068	15,170	8,512	9,588	90,754
South Korea	22,020	1,163	510	40,689	12,126	76,508
Canada	9,820	5,562	5,997	28,795	23,605	73,779
Thailand	17,311	0	0	12,372	7,780	37,463
Indonesia	9,052	1,286	0	22,834	2,383	35,555
Taiwan	7,389	197	0	67,117	3,602	78,305
Italy	377	1,906	1,212	528	451	4,474
Vietnam	2,358	330	0	85,889	3,086	91,663
Total	179,468	69,542	55,881	647,915	174,023	1,126,829

n.a.=not available. Source: US Dept of Commerce, Bureau of Census.

recycled pulp line at its mill in Xepon, Savannakhet province, Laos, according to Fastmarkets *PPI Asia*. The output will be shipped to the company's plant in Zoucheng, in China's eastern province of Shandong, as furnish for its 1.6 million tonnes/yr of recycled containerboard capacity mill.

In Malaysia, Nine Dragons Paper and Lee & Man Paper, with a combined recycled pulp capacity of 820,000 tonnes/yr, are mainly importing US OCC to feed their new mills there that are producing recycled pulp, *PPI Asia* reported on Feb. 7.

Nine Dragons has spent an estimated about a half billion dollars in the USA for setting up recycled pulp, virgin pulp, and containerboard capacity. The recycled and virgin pulp capacity is aimed for transport to China.

This week, Lee & Man said it was ready to start up a 400,000 tonnes/yr recycled pulp line in Sepang, Malaysia. The wet lap recycled pulp from this line will be sent to Lee & Man board mills in China, *PPI Asia* reported. The pulp will be made with US and European OCC. Further, Lee & Man is working on projects in Myanmar and Vietnam, in what would be its second recycled containerboard machine in Vietnam. That PM is to be in H u Giang in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam.

In addition, multinational companies are spreading out in Southeast Asia for containerboard and converting connections for making their end products bound for China, one industry contact said this week.

"Vietnam, Philippines, India, Taiwan and a lot more. There's a

lot of activity on converting and paper manufacturing in these countries now," the contact said.

Added a US trader: "China mills buy recycled pulp because they can't import enough waste paper to feed their paper machines due to China regulations."

While some US players see recycled pulp as another option, others warn that exemption isn't guaranteed.

"It's also possible that China will put restrictions on recycled pulp import," the trader said.

- The Southeast Recycling Conference (SERC), set for Mar. 15-18, 2020, in Destin, FL, has been canceled as well as the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) Conference, planned for Apr. 25-30, 2020, in Las Vegas, and several other industry events due to coronavirus concerns. SERC 2021 will be held on Mar. 14-17, 2021, at the Rosen Centre in Orlando, FL. There were no further details on ISRI's Conference.

--by mworkman@fastmarkets.com

Thermal paper

Thermal paper prices flat in USA despite global hike

Thermal paper prices have not changed in the US market so far this year despite an 8-10% global increase announced by major players at the end of January, Fastmarkets RISI's *PPI Pulp & Paper Week* contacts reported.

Current list prices for 48-g thermal POS (point-of-sale) paper in the USA are about 10% lower than a year ago.

South Korea's Hansol Paper, Germany's Koehler Paper, and Spain-based Lecta separately announced price increases for all new orders of thermal paper at the end of January and beginning of February, attributing the adjustments to rising logistic and raw material costs. In the USA, Appvion has not announced a price increase on thermal paper. Appvion is to be owned by Domtar, in a deal expected to close in the second quarter.

In thermal paper, the US market dynamic is somewhat different than when compared with global players, contacts noted.

"Those major global suppliers' target is regions where prices are lower, and they have already implemented price increases in those places, but not in the USA, (where) prices are already higher than other regions," a producer commented.

"At least the price increase announced by Hansol, Koehler and Lecta helped to stop the price erosion on thermal POS paper in North America. Our order entry is strong and price is going up in all markets other than the US," another supplier noted.

Prices for thermal POS paper in the North American market declined in the first and third quarters of 2019 mainly due to oversupply, according to *PPI P&PW* contacts.

"There was rumor of price increase after Hansol announced the price hike [at the end of January], so the competition jumped over it, but they soon rescinded their price increase," a buyer stated.

Demand and supply. Sources reported seasonal lower but good demand for thermal POS paper in the first quarter of the year. But the coronavirus has added some instability to supply, including limited chemicals availability in China, and limited space in containers and ships.

"There are container issues in Asia, and Europe may be impacted too. We see more people panicking and trying to ship paper to the USA," a contact said.

"There is no shortage of chemicals, but supply is lower than usual as Chinese suppliers stopped for a longer period during the Lunar Year holidays. There are no longer cheap spot deals for chemicals. So, those Chinese producers that could buy chemicals for low price and sell paper for low price cannot do it now. We see lot less imported finished rolls in the USA at this moment," a player explained.

Domtar-Appvion deal impact. The recent deal announced by Domtar involving the acquisition of Appvion's thermal POS business has not disrupted the market.

One contact claimed Domtar must learn more about the converting piece of the POS business. Domtar, the largest North American uncoated freesheet paper producer in North America, made base paper for Appvion coaters.

As part of the agreement, Domtar will acquire the coater and related thermal POS equipment at Appvion's West Carrollton, OH, facility as well as licensing for all corresponding intellectual property. The thermal tag, label and entertainment business

is not included in the deal and remains with Appvion.

One source suggested that Domtar's decision to buy Appvion's thermal POS business was a defensive move.

"Appvion could have closed that facility as it is not very profitable for them, and, if that happened, Domtar would have a lot of paper left at their Marlboro (SC) mill, about 140,000 tons," the contact said.

- Sources reported stable prices for **SCK release liner label** and **carbonless** paper in the first quarter of this year. "Demand [for release liner label] is steady. Like a freight train, it continues but no great movements up or down," a source said.

- **Pixelle** launched a new lightweight roll release liner paper to support both film and paper label facestocks for high-speed automated labeling applications. "Based on growing industry demand for sustainable release liner base paper options, we developed our new Aspect 2.1mil with performance to meet the highest standards of pressure-sensitive converters," said Pixelle VP of specialty paper sales Bob van Helden. Aspect release liners are manufactured on the A4 paper machine at the Androscoggin mill in Jay, ME.

- The North American **label market** is to grow by 2.3%/yr in 2020-2022, while the global label market is expected to increase by 3.7%/yr during the same period, according to **Alexander Watson Associates (AWA)**.

- Natural mineral water supplier **Vellamo** partnered with label

stock producer **UPM Raflatac** to use UPM's Forest Film TM, a wood-based polypropylene plastic label material, on Vellamo's bottled water.

--by rmercante@fastmarkets.com

Specialty paper

Paper Source acquires 30 shut Papyrus stores

Paper Source said it would acquire 30 of Schurman Retail Group's 254 Papyrus specialty paper and gift products locations in North America that it began to close down following bankruptcy in late January. Terms were not disclosed during the company's announcement on Mar. 2.

Chicago-based Paper Source, a lifestyle brand and gift retailer, said it will grow its footprint to more than 165 stores in early 2020, and expanding in key markets such as New York City.

Papyrus employed 1,100 people in the USA, and operated 178 stores in the US and 76 in Canada under the Papyrus and Paper Destiny brands, according to press reports.

Tennessee-based Schurman will still own about 300 stores that operate under its other brands American Greetings, Niquea.D, and Carlton Card. They sell products including greeting cards, gift wrap, gift bags, stationery, note cards, journals, and custom printed stationery, invitations, and announcements.

Schurman blamed the bankruptcy on the general downturn in the retail industry as well as its

"unique financial struggles," the *New York Post* reported, including higher product costs and costs of renovating or closing several older stores it acquired in 2009, according to court records.

The greeting card market has also been impacted by technology, including texts.

Papyrus traces its roots to 1950, when Marcel and Margrit Schurman founded a greeting-card and stationery company using imported European paper. The first Papyrus store opened in Berkeley, CA, in 1973.

In a 2009 deal, Schurman sold its wholesale business and the Papyrus brand to American Greetings, and acquired the greeting-card giant's retail business in the US and Canada, the *Post* added.

Paper Source was founded in 1983 and sells about 10 million cards annually.

--by jmclaren@fastmarkets.com

Verso president resigns

»» continued from page 2

including as the general mgr of coated papers for six years. He also was a sales dir at Champion International before joining IP. IP acquired Champion in 2000. Weinhold started in the industry in 1994.

Fastmarkets RISI's *PPI Pulp & Paper Week* contacts said they were expecting to see Weinhold staying at Verso for longer.

Verso's announcement of Weinhold's resignation seems to have surprised the market as much

as former pres/CEO Christopher DiSantis' resignation did in April 2019. DiSantis was replaced by interim CEO Les Lederer from April to November, when St. John took over the position.

"When DiSantis abruptly resigned, some thought Verso would appoint Weinhold to replace him," an industry contact said. "Some had speculated he was going to move over to Pixelle with the pending sale (of Verso's specialty paper mills to Pixelle), before Pixelle announced Tim Hess as their new leader."

Market players speculated this week on if Weinhold's resignation resulted from a recent change in the board of directors. Three new Verso board members were elected or appointed in late January following a dispute involving Verso and its largest shareholder, Atlas Holdings and Blue Wolf Capital.

The new board includes nominees from both Verso, and Atlas and Blue Wolf, which challenged Verso about its \$400 million sale of two mills to Pixelle and also tried to acquire Verso. The Atlas/Blue Wolf nominees are Sean Erwin and Jeffrey Kirt, and former Weyerhaeuser executive Marvin Cooper also was appointed. The Verso nominees are Randy Nebel, Adam St. John, Robert Beckler, and Nancy Taylor.

Atlas/Blue Wolf are private equity firms that own Finch Paper and Twin Rivers Paper.

--by rmercante@fastmarkets.com

News briefs

Due to the coronavirus outbreak and potential economic impact from it, the **US Federal Reserve**

cut the benchmark US interest rate by 0.5 percentage point on Mar. 3... **Georgia-Pacific (GP)** and **KBX Logistics** said they are using so-called "smart software" to plan truck routes, "minimizing the miles spent driving with an empty trailer," the companies said. GP and KBX are both owned by **Koch Industries**. GP and KBX said they cut 4 million "unnecessary" non-revenue miles for its 2,300 contracted drivers. GP said it "saved" 418,000 gallons of fuel between 2018 and 2019," by reducing engine idling at GP facilities, the company said... **Walmart** reported this week that it plans to add 500 drivers to its fleet. In addition, the **American Trucking Associations (ATA)** "praised the introduction of the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act - legislation that would address the trucking industry's critical need to expand access to safe commercial parking," media reports said this week. "Truck drivers perform a valuable service to our economy - moving more than 70% of our nation's goods - and having opportunities to safely rest is an important part of that," said ATA pres/CEO Chris Spear. The Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act, introduced by Reps. Mike Bost, R-IL, and Angie Craig, D-MN, will make \$755 million available to states to finance projects aimed at increasing the number of parking spaces for commercial truck drivers... **TC Transcontinental Packaging** said it formed a strategic partnership with Italy's **T.M.E.** coffee packaging equipment manufacturer that is aimed at helping the coffee business supply chain from crop to cup, the companies said. T.M.E. makes single-dose, modified atmosphere, and vacuum packaging lines. "The collaboration between the two

allows to dynamically address coffee roasters' needs for the wholesale and retail markets from club size packages to single-serve solutions," the companies said, in their release. "We are poised to deliver impactful solutions that will drive efficiency in roaster's organizations and help developing new products, allowing them to remain ahead of the curve," said TC Transcontinental Packaging Sr VP of Marketing and Strategy Rebecca Casey, in a release. T.M.E. makes "highly customized, flexible, and efficient equipment solutions" and TC Transcontinental Packaging offers "high-performing films, bags, and sustainable structures," the companies said. "We want the market to know that we are committed to creating advanced equipment that is inventive, flexible, and built to satisfy production needs," said T.M.E Packaging pres/CEO Claudia Merli... **Mac Papers** announced the sale this week of the company to private equity firm **Monomoy Capital Partners**. Mac Papers was created in 1965 by Frank and Tom McGehee, sons of the founder of the **Jacksonville Paper Company**. Mac Papers is headquartered in Jacksonville, FL, and operates branch locations and retail stores throughout the Southeastern USA. Mac Papers' COO Rick Mitchell will become pres/COO of the company. The rest of Mac Papers' management team continue in their roles, including CFO Greg Gay, Exec VP of paper Craig Boortz, VP of packaging Chris McCabe, VP and regional mgr Carter Whiddon, VP of purchasing Steve Collins, VP of Mac National Jeff Harris, MPEC operation leader Scott Sipkovsky, and business development lead for wide-format business Ash Weekley... **American Litho** added a custom coating system to its

HP T240 HD digital press suite, "greatly increasing the speed and design flexibility offered for all clients," the company said. The new coater is the only one of its kind in the world, according to Harris & Bruno International installation engineer Tyler Grostic. Harris & Bruno International mad the coating system. "This is a fully custom, high-speed system that handles a broad range of specialty coatings, including UV and aqueous coatings," Grostic said. "It works in duplex, applying coatings to both sides of the press sheet, and is compatible with an incredible array of paper stocks."

Monadnock Paper Mills hired Tali Nelson as a Sr Sales Representative for the company's new 100% PCW line Astrolite PC 100 Velvet C2S as well as renewable alternatives to plastic and styrene within Envi Portfolio. Prior to joining Monadnock, Nelson was a sales executive with **Mondi Group - Fiber Industrial Packaging Division** and before that she held sales positions at **Packaging Corp. of America, International Paper, Finch Paper, and GPA Specialty Substrates**. Nelson will represent Monadnock with a focus on the US Midwest.

People

Domtar has named Kurt Mehlberg mill mgr of its Nekoosa paper mill in Wisconsin. With more than 26 years of experience in the industry Mehlberg joins Nekoosa from Domtar's Rothschild mill in Wisconsin where he has been paper and converting leader since 2015.

Supplier

HP Indigo announced its new-generation, B2 commercial printing solution, the HP Indigo 100K Digital Press. "As the commercial industry moves to demanding higher quality and versatile printing, the HP Indigo and PageWide Web Press solutions enable PSPs to easily move from offset to digital," said HP general mgr and global head of graphic solutions Santi Morera.

PPI Pulp & Paper Week

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