

# Pulp truth

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## Contracts that Reopened in December

If the re-opener date for your local contract is not listed here, please contact Pulp Truth editor Lynne Baker at [lbaker@usw.org](mailto:lbaker@usw.org) to have your contract listed. (The re-opener date is not the expiration date.)

Rock-Tenn, Dallas, TX, 12/02/09  
International Paper, Magnolia, MS, 12/02/09  
Graphic Packaging, Cincinnati, OH, 12/02/09  
Rose City Paper Box, Portland, OR, 12/02/09  
Duro Bag Mfg. Corp., Phoenix, AZ, 12/02/09  
Metropolitan Rigid, New York, NY, 12/02/09  
Ivy Hill Packaging, Terre Haute, IN, 12/02/09  
Sonoco Products, Memphis, TN, 12/03/09  
Temple-Inland, Rome, GA, 12/03/09  
Temple-Inland, Dallas, TX, 12/03/09  
International Paper, Grand Prairie, TX, 12/03/09

Temple-Inland/Gateway Sheets, St. Louis, MO, 12/03/09  
International Paper, Cleveland, TN, 12/03/09  
Plymouth Packaging, Plymouth, MI, 12/03/09  
Boise Inc., DeRidder, LA, 12/16/09  
General Fibre, New Hyde Park, NY, 12/30/09  
Hollingsworth & Vose, West Groton, MA, 12/30/09  
International Paper, Springhill, LA, 12/30/09  
International Paper, Omaha, NE, 12/30/09  
P.C.A., Newark, OH, 12/30/09  
Smurfit-Stone Cont., Hanover Park, IL, 12/30/09  
Badger Packaging Corporation, West Bend, WI, 12/30/09  
Commencement Bay, McMillan, WA, 12/30/09  
Newark Group, Atlanta, TX, 12/31/09  
Catalyst, Snowflake, AZ, 12/31/09

## Contracts that Reopened in November

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Newman & Company, Philadelphia, PA, 11/01/2009  
Green Bay Packaging, Hunt Valley, MD, 11/01/2009  
Metro Container, Norwood, OH, 11/01/2009

Corenso North America, Wisconsin Rapids, WI, 11/01/2009  
Roaring Spring Blank Book, Roaring Spring, PA, 11/06/2009  
National Envelope, Westfield, MA, 11/09/2009  
Tetra-Pak, Sikeston, MO, 11/10/2009  
International Paper, Port Hueneme, CA, 11/16/2009  
Flambeau River Papers, Park Falls, WI, 11/20/2009  
Smurfit-Stone Container, Richmond, VA, 11/26/2009

## U.S. International Trade Commission Decides to Investigate Coated Paper Unfair Trade Case

The USW, Appleton Coated LLC, NewPage Corporation and Sappi Fine Paper North America successfully convinced the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) to proceed with a full investigation of certain coated paper imports from China and Indonesia. In a unanimous vote at the beginning of November, the ITC determined the imports materially harmed the U.S. coated paper industry enough to warrant a complete investigation.

The USW and the paper companies filed unfair trade

cases on Sept. 23 with the U.S. Department of Commerce and the ITC alleging that certain coated paper from China and Indonesia had been dumped and subsidized resulting in injury to the domestic industry and its workers.

The ITC's ruling came after the U.S. Department of Commerce decided Oct. 13 to investigate the trade case.

The case concerns coated paper used in high-quality writ-

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# U.S. International Trade Commission Decides to Investigate Coated Paper Unfair Trade Case

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ing, printing and other graphic applications and includes the paper used in printing catalogs and magazines.

The petitions filed by the USW and the companies estimate that total imports of covered coated paper skyrocketed by nearly 40 percent during the first six months of 2009 compared with the same period last year. In comparison, domestic shipments of the covered paper declined by about 38 percent in the same period. During this time frame, China and Indonesia doubled their share of the U.S. market and are believed to account for nearly 30 percent of the U.S. market.

## **Tipping Point**

Thirty percent is the tipping point to losing the rest of the coated paper market to China and Indonesia, said USW International Vice President Jon Geenen. He said it is extremely important to win this trade case because of the impact it would have on other paper trade cases filed in the future.

Among other items, the petitions allege the Chinese government gives various subsidies to its paper producers in violation of trade laws, such as, low interest loans, tax subsidies, input subsidies, land, grants and export tax subsidies. Similarly, the petitions allege that Indonesian paper companies are benefiting from timber provided from government-owned land at below-market prices, a ban on log exports, government loans, debt forgiveness, and tax incentives for certain encouraged businesses.

Sometime this month, the Commerce Department will make a preliminary determination if an anti-subsidy tariff will be imposed on Chinese and Indonesian imports. It will issue a preliminary determination on dumping of these imports in March 2010. Provisional relief occurs with the Commerce Department preliminary determinations that require exporters to post bonds in lieu of tariffs, pending final investigation and orders. The anti-dumping and anti-subsidy cases are expected to take a year to complete.

# Regulators Undermine Protections Against Illegal Logging

The USW and Sierra Club are working jointly to ensure that pulp and paper do not get exempted from a major part of the enforcement rules implementing 2008 reforms to the Lacey Act. The reformed Act requires importers of plant and plant products, including wood and paper, to declare the country and plant species of origin for these products so that the import and sale of illegally-sourced wood products in the U.S. can be identified and stopped.

The U.S. Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service has drafted a declaration rule to exclude a number of important wood products, wood pulp, paper and articles made of paper from the phase-in schedule for enforcement of the reformed Act's declaration requirement. The USW and the Sierra Club stated their concerns in joint comments to the Federal Register on Nov. 2.

Illegal logging makes it impossible for our companies to compete against imports, increases deforestation and global warming pollution, harms communities worldwide, degrades drinking water supplies and breeds corruption and crime. Illegal timber syndicates are responsible for murdering and exploiting citizens in Honduras, Mexico, Brazil and other nations.

## **Impact on US Jobs**

Illegal loggers do not pay fees to their government or pay

the market price for the trees they cut, so they are able to sell their wood cheaper than legitimate timber companies. Paper producers in countries where illegal logging is a large part of the timber supply can make their products more cheaply. Imports from these nations have caused numerous US paper mills to shut down or reduce production, leading to the loss of thousands of USW members' jobs, especially those in the coated paper sector. This loss of jobs has negatively impacted communities where the shut and curtailed mills are located.

Illegal logging leads to deforestation and impacts global warming. Currently, 30 percent of the global warming pollution released into the atmosphere each year is a result of deforestation. Scientists estimate that one-quarter of the reductions in carbon dioxide emissions necessary to stabilize the atmosphere can be achieved simply by preserving the world's forests and managing land use sustainably.

The USW and the Sierra Club will continue to push for strong enforcement of the Lacey Act that includes declaration of wood, wood product, pulp and paper imports. To see the USW and Sierra Club Federal Register comments go to [http://assets.usw.org/Releases/Misc/lacey-act\\_usw-sc-docket-comments\\_110209.pdf](http://assets.usw.org/Releases/Misc/lacey-act_usw-sc-docket-comments_110209.pdf)

# USW Supports Trade Law to Increase US Exports

It is hard for our mills and converters to export their products when other countries set up trade barriers. To break these barriers down and help create new jobs, U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) have introduced the "Trade Enforcement Priorities Act of 2009" (S.1982).

Our union supports this legislation because it strengthens

a trade law provision known as "Super 301" and would require identification of priority trade barriers that hinder job creation and economic growth in the U.S. As an enforcement mechanism, the legislation would make sure foreign governments are living up to their trade agreements and not placing barriers that inhibit U.S. goods (like pulp and paper) being shipped into their markets.

# Three-Month Dispute at Sappi's Dutch Mills Ends

Strike action and international solidarity prompted the end of a three-month dispute at Sappi's Nijmegen and Maastricht mills in The Netherlands.

At Nijmegen, workers staged a 24-hour strike on Nov. 26. It was their first industrial action ever. One day later, workers at the Maastricht mill went on strike for 24 hours. It was the first strike in 35 years at Maastricht.

Since Sappi did not respond to the unions' demands, workers at Nijmegen began a 38-hour strike on Dec. 1. The situation deteriorated rapidly at the mill with management reportedly issuing threats and intimidation. On Dec. 3, local managers shut the mill, sent the few workers inside home and said no wages would be paid—an unprecedented and harsh action that is uncommon in The Netherlands.

That same day, 75 percent of the Maastricht workers took a second 24-hour strike action. Sappi contacted the Dutch unions that evening and earnest bargaining began. The Maastricht strike ended Friday morning, Dec. 4, and Sappi European management instructed Nijmegen mill managers to reopen the mill once the workers accepted the negotiated compromise. By Saturday, Dec. 5 workers at both mills had accepted the new agreement.

The dispute had centered on time off for workers with long service careers and a wage increase. The new agreement allows senior workers entitled to days of paid leave to retain them until at least July 1, 2014. New workers hired after Jan. 1, 2010 will not be entitled to the paid leave when they become eligible for it. Workers will receive a 1.2 percent wage increase backdated to July 1, 2009.

## Unite Launches Joint Health and Safety Campaign with Employers' Organization

The USW's sister union in the UK, Unite, launched a joint health and safety campaign Nov. 3 with UK paper industry employers, the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI), in response to a serious number of accidents in recent years.

Over the past two years there have been several work-related deaths and numerous serious accidents in paper mills, corrugating plants and recycling operations.

"We are very concerned about the number of serious incidents that have rocked the paper manufacturing industry," said Tony Burke, Unite assistant general secretary, to *Print Week*. "A lot of corners were being cut and people were under pressure to create more tonnage."

To prevent future incidents from happening, Unite and CPI are launching a "Say No" and "Say Yes" campaign.

The two groups are calling on the paper industry to "Say No" to unsafe work, which means not taking risks, not doing dangerous work, not cutting corners and not putting production ahead of safety.

They're also calling on the industry to "Say Yes" to acting on health and safety complaints and queries, working together on risk assessments and safe systems of work, reporting

### International Solidarity

The European unions' disputes have not gone unnoticed. USW International Vice President Jon Geenen and Workers Uniting sent letters in mid-October to Sappi's CEO for the European division, Berry Wiersum, in support of the Dutch workers' contract demands. USW members and union workers around the world sent letters of support and complaints to management.

USW members at Sappi's pulp and coated paper mill in Cloquet, Minn., are also experiencing difficulty negotiating with the company. In mid-November the members voted down the company's offer by 82 percent. The local has been without a new contract since May 1. Sappi's offer did not contain retroactive wages to May 1 and it fell short in meeting pension offsets. The company has ignored the USW's request to assist the company in finding lower-cost health care.

Elsewhere in Europe, Sappi will close its Kangas mill in Finland by Dec. 31, and this will affect up to 150 employees.

Workers at Sappi's Finnish Kirkiemi mill, who are members of Paperiliitto, went on strike Nov. 18-23 over serious safety issues. Since the company laid off 63 workers earlier this year the remaining work force has had to take on more work, impacting occupational safety. A Sappi spokesperson claimed, of course, that the cutbacks have not affected mill efficiency and that safety performance has improved. Nonetheless, the strike caused the company to sit down with the union and analyze the situation.

near misses, conducting joint accident and incident investigations, undergoing joint health and safety training, and recognizing that good health and safety is good for business.

The campaign will initially last for a year and involve a series of leaflets and posters to remind employees not to carry out unsafe tasks or take risks and to report health and safety problems. It will also educate members about health and safety matters and legislation. Unite and CPI staff will talk to health and safety officers at manufacturing sites.

CPI director general Martin Oldman told *Print Week* there was a need for greater worker involvement.

"This is what the campaign seeks to achieve. Our partnership agreement with Unite has again demonstrated its value in the purpose and resolve that this initiative represents," he said.

### Paper Survey

In conjunction with Workers Uniting, Unite is conducting a health and safety survey in UK paper mills and corrugating plants. The information obtained will be used to address health and safety issues in the UK, and will be shared and compared with the information received from the USW's mill health and safety survey.

# Increased Communication Turns Around Finch Paper LLC Labor Relations

Eight years ago Finch Paper in Glens Falls, N.Y., (formerly Finch Pruyn) fought the former PACE in a six-month strike. Today, negotiations went so smoothly that the contract was settled two months before its expiration date.

## What happened?

Finch President and Chief Executive Joseph Raccuia, who took over the company last February, decided to have regular communication with the seven union locals at the mill instead of waiting to discuss issues at the bargaining table. The increased communication led to quick and congenial labor talks.

“This is the first Finch proposal to be accepted on the first vote since 1988,” said Local 155 President David Russell to the *Glens Falls Post-Star*. “It feels good to have the company and the unions moving forward together.”

The four-year agreement from Oct. 15, 2009 through Oct. 15, 2013 covers about 400 workers who are represented by USW locals 18 and 155.

The first year pay increase of 25 cents an hour and \$600 signing bonus went into effect Nov. 2. Wages will increase 3 percent the second year, 2% the third year and 2% the fourth year.

Workers' share of the health insurance premium cost dropped from 35% to 20% in the first year. Depending on which plan they are in, this could save them \$6,000 to \$8,000 over the term of the agreement.

None of the 44 wood yard employees will be laid off;

instead they will be red circled at the current rate. Earlier this year, Finch eliminated almost 60 full-time hourly positions and temporarily laid off workers last November.

The training rate for wood yard employees will be the top rate of the job the worker is training on. These provisions also protect the pulping operation for the term of the agreement.

The local negotiated a closed shop. The 110 non-union employees must join the union within 60 days of ratification or be terminated.

## Seniority Restored

All the seniority lost during the 2001 strike will be returned to the workers. As a result, some members regained enough time to qualify for retiree health care two to three years earlier than they would have under the old contract.

In the fourth year of the agreement, four family holidays will be returned at time-and-a-half for hours worked on the holiday. Disability pay will increase from \$360 to \$400. Life insurance will increase from \$48,500 to \$50,000.

Both sides negotiated provisions to allow the company “greater flexibility to adapt its operations for improved long-term competitiveness,” and they created two committees consisting of union workers and management to guide discussions on production and safety issues.

Contracts for the other five locals are due in 2011. Finch Paper, which employs a total of 750, makes uncoated printing papers for use in marketing materials, book publishing and general business purposes.

# Evergreen Packaging Workers Overwhelmingly Approve Master Labor Agreement

United Steelworkers union (USW) members at five Evergreen Packaging sites overwhelmingly approved Nov. 13 a five-year master labor agreement covering about 1,600 workers that features above-industry-standard wage increases and benefits.

The master labor agreement covers plants and mills located in Canton, NC, Waynesville, NC, Athens, Ga., Clinton, Iowa, and Olmsted Falls, Ohio. Each location bargained over local issues and has the same contract expiration as the master labor agreement: May 13, 2014.

Wages will increase 3.0 percent the first year, 2 percent the second year, 2 percent the third year, 2 percent the fourth year and 2.5 percent the fifth year for a total of 11.5 percent over the contract term. The first year raise is retroactive to May 13, 2009.

Wage adjustments were done for classifications at each mill and increased the base wage. The percentage wage increase for each year is then added on top of that. For example, at the Clinton converting facility workers received a 43-cent per hour wage adjustment equivalent to 3 percent; the first-year 3 percent wage increase was added on to that so that workers there ended up receiving a 6 percent wage increase the first year.

## Retiree Health Care Addresses

Under the agreement, Evergreen will deposit \$200 into a flexible spending account (FSA) for each employee that can be used for health care expenses like copays for doctor visits and prescription drugs. If workers get preventive screenings like mammograms and cholesterol checks, an additional \$120 will be deposited.

Workers who retire and turn age 65 during this contract term will have health care reimbursement accounts. Each January 1 Evergreen will give the retirees \$2,000 to be used for the retiree and his/her spouse to purchase a Medicare wraparound plan. A company called Extend Health will help the retirees choose the best plan for their needs.

Employees who reach age 62, achieve 10 years of service and retire during the life of the agreement will stay in the company health care plans at an 80/20 premium split until they reach age 65.

Workers who retire pre-age 62 during the life of the agreement will stay in the company health plans at a 50/50 premium split.

Evergreen will provide for future retiree medical care by creating a retiree medical subset in existing 401k accounts

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# Evergreen Packaging Workers Overwhelmingly Approve Master Labor Agreement

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for the purpose of depositing lump sum contributions. A 401k account will be created for this purpose only for employees who do not have an account.

The amount of money the company contributes depends on one's age as of Jan. 1, 2010. Workers who turn age 45 during the contract term will receive a \$750 contribution on their 45th birthday and each January thereafter. Those ages 45-49 will receive \$1,000 each Jan. 1; ages 50-53 receive \$2,000 each Jan. 1; and ages 54-56 will receive \$3,500 each Jan. 1.

## Successorship Clause Gained

A joint insurance committee composed of four union and four company representatives will be formed to run the Canton location's health clinic and see how the health care

plans are being administered, monitor costs and develop recommendations to maintain costs and improve the quality of care. An advisory board, consisting of one USW-appointed representative from each location, will meet quarterly to review costs, utilize biometric screenings at each location and recommend ways for improved health care at a reasonable cost.

An important successorship clause was obtained that will ensure Evergreen workers' jobs and union contract are preserved in case the company is sold. Both parties also agreed to principles for conduct in union organizing campaigns that enable workers to freely choose representation without a negative campaign being waged.

Evergreen Packaging workers produce milk and juice cartons.

# CAT Team Training Helps Local Prepare for Talks

By Mark Cook

President /Business Representative, Local 1861-U, Dubuque, Iowa

On October 4 and 5 John "Randy" Johnson was in Dubuque, Iowa, to set up Communications and Action Teams (CAT) for our amalgamates at the union hall.

Our local represents shops at Flexsteel Industries, Georgia-Pacific, Advanced Urethane Technologies and the security department at Mystique Casino, all in Dubuque. Skip McGill, president of Local 105 from Davenport, Iowa, also brought some of his members to get involved. Skip represents members from the Alcoa plant in Davenport.

The meetings were well attended both days with our Staff Rep. Jerry Kearns also there. Refreshments and breakfast items were provided by Local 1861-U and the lunches were provided by Local 105. One member even baked brownies and brought in some fresh homemade salsa.

Randy did an excellent job at motivating the teams to come up with goals, strategies, themes, slogans and other avenues of communication skills needed to have a successful CAT team. These meetings were very important with the expiration of the Georgia-Pacific contract on October 31, 2009.

## CAT Team in Action

The GP CAT team has already handed out the CAT team information letter and membership survey; stickers have been printed and they are planning on putting up signs in the windshields of the vehicles facing the plant offices. Their slogan is "Banding Together for a Better Future."

The negotiating team from USW Local 1861-U is Staff Rep. Jerry Kearns, President Mark Cook, Committee Chair Cris Bakey, Rick Dean and Dennis Pregler. The company is bringing in Joe Theissen from Atlanta, General Manager Craig Musselman (formerly Sheboygan, Wisconsin), Plant Manager Ed Ford (former manager of GP's Cincinnati, Ohio plant) and someone from the HR department.

We also have Advanced Urethane's contract up on May 22, 2010 and Mystique Casino's contract up on January 15, 2011. By setting up their own CAT teams, this will help strengthen the locals' communication base for upcoming meetings and bargaining sessions.

We would like to thank the International and particularly Randy Johnson for all the help in getting these teams up and running.

## What's Happening in Your Local?

*Pulp Truth* covers news across the entire pulp and paper industry. Please help the newsletter improve its coverage by sending in a write-up about the issues, mobilization activities and contract negotiations involving your local. You can email these stories to *Pulp Truth* editor Lynne Baker at lbaker@usw.org or you can mail them to Lynne Baker, USW, 3340 Perimeter Hill Drive, Nashville, TN 37211.

## How to Get *Pulp Truth*

If you would like to get your own copy of *Pulp Truth*, please email Joyce Russotto, administrative assistant for International Vice President Jon Geenen, at jrussotto@usw.org and give her your home email address.

# OSHA Cites Sappi Mill for 19 Alleged Safety Violations

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) cited Sappi for 19 alleged violations of workplace safety standards at the company's Somerset mill in Skowhegan, Maine. The paper manufacturer faces proposed fines totaling \$136,000.

William Coffin, OSHA's area director for Maine, said the fines reflect the seriousness of the conditions found and the recurring nature of several hazards found during a previous inspection of Sappi's Westbrook mill.

The repeat conditions found at Somerset included unguarded, open-sided floors and platforms; unguarded in-running nip points on paper machines; defective guarding for a saw; uncovered revolving shaft couplings; and an

unguarded conveyor drum. OSHA issued five repeat citations for these violations.

The inspection at the Somerset mill also identified fall hazards; unguarded floor and wall openings; work areas not kept in a sanitary and orderly condition; unsecured materials in storage racks; inadequate work space around electric equipment; ineffectively closed electrical panel openings; a jagged railing; and additional instances of unguarded moving machine parts. OSHA issued 14 serious citations for these conditions. OSHA issues serious citations when death or serious physical harm is likely to result from hazards about which the employer knew or should have known.

## Georgia-Pacific Lays Off Workers at Green Bay, Wauna Mills

Georgia-Pacific (GP) announced suddenly Dec. 1 that it was shutting down the secondary fiber plant, paper machine No. 8 and the north wall tissue-converting lines on or around Dec. 7 at its Day Street mill in Green Bay, Wisc. It will also indefinitely curtail two retail towel-converting lines.

This action will result in the layoff of 158 employees, 146 of them who are USW members. The Day Street mill employs 600 people and about 550 of them are represented by Locals 327 and 213. The layoffs will hit workers with even 20 years of seniority.

Workers will continue to receive pay and benefits for 60 days from the date of the notice because of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. Due to the union contracts, the workers have recall rights for up to two years.

GP is only going to offer 21 severance packages, said Local 213 President Dennis Delie. He said several people who are going to lose their health insurance will not be able to pay for their life-saving medicines. (*Pulp Truth* will feature a story in the next edition about the hardships facing USW members because of the layoffs.)

Delie said that even though Day Street is an older mill, it has always been highly productive and profitable. Most of GP's investment in local operations has been at the Broadway mill which services the commercial market.

GP is taking out Day Street equipment because it is reducing the size of tissue rolls and the old equipment can-

not handle that configuration.

### Wauna Layoffs

In mid-November GP announced it was laying off 15 workers from the labor pool at the company's Wauna, Ore., mill for an extended period. The labor pool is a group of workers who fill vacancies as needed in a variety of jobs at the mill.

Local 1097 issued a statement after the announcement, which said union leaders had met with company executives to offer alternatives that would allow the mill to curtail production without laying people off.

"The union's officials offered several alternatives, such as allowing more people to take vacations or using this time to catch up on the training backlog, due to the level of retirements we have this year, but this was not acceptable to the company," the statement said.

Union members said it does not make sense to lay people off when employees are being asked to work overtime.

"This continues to be a profitable facility and has received tax exemptions for creating new jobs," the union statement said. "Many times overtime is required in a facility like this, but we have people being required to work overtime at the same time others are to be laid off."

Pending the outcome of a lawsuit with Clatsop County, the mill may lose a \$4 million tax exemption because the company hasn't maintained the promised level of employment since it completed construction of its No. 6 paper machine in 2006.

# News Briefs from around the Industry

**International Paper (IP)** announced mid-October that it will close its paper mill and associated operations in Franklin, Va., and its containerboard mills in Pineville, La., and Albany, Ore. The company also announced it would permanently shut down the previously idled No. 3 machine at its Valliant, Okla., containerboard mill.

IP Chairman and CEO John Faraci said the company has excess capacity in its North American paper and packaging businesses and that the closures will better match the company's supply with anticipated customer demand. Since the beginning of the recession, demand for uncoated freesheet in North America has plunged and this has prompted the company to further reduce its uncoated freesheet capacity.

Although the company expects demand to grow for its containerboard and coated paperboard businesses as soon as the economy rebounds, it is still permanently shutting the Pineville and Albany mills and No. 3 machine because it does not think demand will reach 2008 levels in the near future.

**Georgia-Pacific** has agreed to participate in a Works Council with its union workers at European plants to establish basic wages and work rules. Unite member Craig Foster, who is a deputy convener at the GP mill in Lancashire, U.K., was elected to chair the council at the meeting in Brussels, Belgium on Oct. 21.

**Fraser Papers**, which filed for bankruptcy last June, is seeking court approval to terminate the pension plans of 1,000 of its pensioners in Canada. The retirees could lose up to 40% of their pension benefits.

**The Western Wood Products Assn. forecast** that sawmills in the Western U.S. should see signs of a slow recovery from 2010. The WWPA said production would reach its lowest point this year at 31 billion board feet (bbf), less than half 2005 levels, and said that housing starts in the region at 551,000 were the lowest since 1945. It said Western output would be 10.2 bbf this year, about half of 2005 production.

**Weyerhaeuser Mill Integration Completed:** IP workers from the former Weyerhaeuser mills overwhelmingly approved a new agreement with management that integrates their Weyerhaeuser contracts into the IP system and makes them part of the IP-USW Mill Master Agreement. They will negotiate with the other IP mills for a new master in 2011.

Highlights of the agreement include significant cash payments for integration and standardization, and a \$3,500 per member signing bonus; big contributions to retiree health care funding; health care that cannot be changed during the life of the agreements; successorship protections for the workers' union contracts; job security provisions that restrict work force downsizing; national health and safety conferences; a public policy committee; and guarantees of company neutrality during organizing campaigns.

**IP worker injured:** USW Emergency Response Team member Duronda Pope reported that on Nov. 17 USW member Will Spaulding, 51, of Local 9-738 was seriously injured while working at IP's Riegelwood, NC, facility. A truck backed over him and he sustained a crushed pelvis and

some additional injuries. Emergency Response Team District Coordinator Joe Smith is assisting the family and Health and Safety Representative Don Faulkner is assisting with the investigation.

**IP worker injured:** An IP worker from the Georgetown, SC, pulp and paper mill was sent to the hospital Nov. 17 after his arm was caught in a double-pulley conveyor belt, reported WMBF-TV News. The man's shoulder and face were injured and his arm was broken following the incident, said Georgetown County Assistant Fire Chief Tony Hucks.

**NewPage Corp.** has been taking about 160,000 tons of market-related downtime in the fourth quarter, and the No. 63 paper machine at the Whiting, Wisc., mill has been shut indefinitely. NewPage CEO Rick Willett said the No. 63 machine and the No. 10 machine in Rumford, Maine, which was idled in September, will be restarted as soon as market conditions allow.

**Weyerhaeuser** was ordered in October to pay four employees of the former Okanagan Falls mill in British Columbia (BC) \$260,000 compensation after the workers were terminated while on long term disability. All four were terminated shortly before the company announced the closure of the Okanagan Falls mill. USW Local 1-423 filed a discrimination complaint against the company with the BC Human Rights Tribunal, which ruled in favor of the union. The tribunal found that Weyerhaeuser had rushed to terminate the four to avoid paying them severance.

Thanks to lobbying by USW members and staff to keep the black liquor tax credit (alternative fuel tax credit), **Rock-Tenn**, along with other paper companies, obtained a much-needed infusion of cash. The company's net profits for the third quarter were more than double that of the same period last year. Nearly a third of those profits came from the black liquor tax credit. Over the past 12 months, Rock-Tenn has received almost \$55 million from the black liquor tax credit.

**Domtar** also got a boost from the black liquor tax credit. In the third quarter, its earnings were \$183 million, up from \$43 million a year earlier.

Local 1478 members at **Sappi's South Glens Falls, NY, mill** agreed on a new four-year contract in mid-November that contains the wages and benefits of the USW-Sappi national framework agreement. The contract also includes an agreement to collaborate on productivity improvements and the creation of a joint health and wellness committee. The pact will start when the current agreement expires in July 2010. Local 1478 represents 250 hourly workers at the South Glens Falls plant and at its Saratoga Springs distribution center.

The local's president, Keith Baker, said the contract was a "win-win." He told *The Saratogian* that "both sides worked hard in collaborating on this contract. It's a good agreement and one that will allow us to continue to work together toward continued success."

OSHA conducted a random inspection of the **Rock-Tenn Milwaukee, Wisc., plant** and issued a citation to the company for alleged violations of the Occupational Safety and

# News Briefs from around the Industry

Health Act of 1970. The citation said: "Each recordable injury or illness was not entered on the OSHA 300 Log and/or an incident report (OSHA Form 301 or equivalent) within seven (7) calendar days of receiving information that a recordable injury or illness has occurred: Case number 06-07 on the 2007 OSHA Form 300 was improperly lined out and not included in the annual totals; an injury involving days of restricted work occurred on 1-14-07 and was not entered on the 2007 OSHA Form 300."

**Graphic Packaging (GPK) members** are standing together in demanding that the company not cut health insurance benefits and shift more of the cost onto workers. They have worn blue stickers on the job that say, "Hey GPK, World Class Workers Deserve Quality Affordable Healthcare." A handbill was handed out and it warned management that workers "will not be bullied or tricked into giving up this important union-won benefit." While our union is willing to listen to reasonable suggestions by management to keep the company productive and profitable, our members will speak with one voice when GPK tries to eliminate our health insurance, saying, "NO WAY!"

**PCA** workers at the company's Counce, Tenn., mill ratified their local union contracts Oct. 20. USW local unions 9-978, 9-992 and 9-993 made improvements in several areas with no concessions. The allotment for safety shoes increased from \$100 to \$135. There is an addition of a second tall oil operator, and the company reduced the notice of absence from four hours to one hour. Now workers only have to call in one hour in advance of the start of their shift if they are going to be absent.

USW members at **Fraser Papers Inc.'s Madawaska, Maine**, mill overwhelmingly voted down an initial contract offer by the company on Nov. 22.

"The terms of the contract were not advantageous for employees," said USW International Representative Duane Lugdon to the *Bangor Daily News*. "The task now is to go back to the table and build a contract to benefit everyone."

Fraser filed for bankruptcy in June and is in the process of restructuring. Lugdon said the union is bargaining to ensure the future of the mill. Both sides returned to the table Dec. 3.

Locked-out **Tembec** newsprint mill workers in Pine Falls, Manitoba may receive help from the provincial government. USW leaders met with several provincial cabinet members Nov. 30 who promised to send a letter to Tembec urging the company to return to the bargaining table. The officials also promised to write a letter to the federal government about providing employment insurance benefits to the workers. Negotiations broke down in late October and both sides have not returned to the table. Negotiations began Aug. 13, but both sides have not been able to reach an agreement.

Tembec locked out the workers Sept. 1. The company is demanding that its 250 workers accept a 35 percent cut in wages and benefits to keep it competitive in a "radically changed market for newsprint." Workers would have an immediate 25 percent wage cut and have to pay for half their benefits package.

"It represents a loss of \$15,000 a year in wages alone for some people," said Cam Sokoloski, president of Local 3-1375, to the *Lac Du Bonnet Leader*.

The Canadian government is giving a \$25-million loan to **Terrace Bay Pulp** to help restart the mill, which filed for bankruptcy protection last February. Company officials are optimistic about securing more financing because the pulp sector is in better shape than it was a year ago, pulp prices have risen and short-term market forecasts show prices are likely to remain stronger than they were last year. The company aims to put USW members back to work within three months.

**Canadian USW leaders** are trying to get contract talks back on track with the Council on Northern Interior Forest Employment Relations (Conifer). Talks broke off Oct. 19 with the employers' federation. USW Local 1-424 President Frank Everitt said the union is pushing for contract improvements, but the industry has called for major concessions.