



LEFT TO RIGHT: Sappi's Ken Fox with the PPI Awards host, Liz Brunner, formerly a Channel 5 newscaster and a representative from FM Global who sponsored the award; Mike Haws, Managing Director of Sappi's Somerset Mill in Maine; discussing chainsaw safety during a Sappi Safety Day.

## A fine way to make paper safely

In October, Sappi North America was presented with the 2014 Pulp and Paper International (PPI) award for managing risk and safety. According to PPI, the judges looked for a company that has been “truly innovative in its approach to loss prevention and safety and has shown an ability to manage its risk effectively”. But safety is not about trophies and coveted accolades. For Sappi, it is a matter of focusing on minimising on-the-job injuries and eradicating loss of life incidents.

Over the past three years, Sappi's safety measures have resulted in its ability to perform better than the paper industry average lost-time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) incident rates. In 2013, the region achieved an LTIFR of 0.43 (63% improvement over the previous four years) and an OSHA Recordable Rate 1.3 (48% improvement over the previous four years).

### SAFETY FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE

Sappi's employees are a dedicated group of safety facilitators, coaches and subject matter experts.

“We are proud of Sappi's leadership commitment to continually improving prevention efforts while creating a culture of teamwork, working together protecting our team,” said Ken Fox, Corporate Manager of Safety and Health, Sappi North America. “Our safety department works hand-in-hand with engineering and maintenance during the design planning and testing of new equipment, maintenance and capital projects,” said Fox.

Innovative thinking has supported Sappi's drive for continuous safety improvement. Sappi has invested in a capital project to install an overhead crane in its wood room, removing material handling exposures to people. The group has fitted blue lights on forklifts as a visual aid for pedestrians to notice approaching forklifts even around corners. Rain shields are used on Somerset's forklifts to eliminate exposure to airborne metal particles and hydraulic fluid thus preventing eye exposures of the clamp truck drivers.

### BACK TO BASICS TO GET TO ZERO

The programme is supported by an integrated and participatory health and safety approach. Being good at the details allows our team to work on the complex problems.

Launched in 2010, Sappi's Project Zero is a global initiative that strives to accelerate improved safety performance in areas of concern and to develop a safety awareness culture in all parts of the business. The group's ultimate goal is zero injuries.

Sappi performs root cause analyses of all major incidents and fatalities, which are reviewed at all levels of the business including the board while group and industry-wide sharing of all incidents and associated mitigating steps ensure that all its regions remain in the top 10% quartile for the industry.

Compliance with the basic rules are clearly defined and expected and supported by continuing education. Our disciplined approach to all transgressions of its safety policies, including contractors sets a clear safety climate.

## COMMUNICATION IS THE FOUNDATION

Sappi asserts that consistent, interesting and targeted safety communication has been the foundation of its improvement. This has meant that meetings start with a safety topic and review of the prior day incidents, hazards and the plan of the day. Reminder video clips are shown and posted on its Safety News site, daily toolbox talks are reviewed at the maintenance meetings and weekly focus inspections are part of our standard routines. Best practices and Safety alerts are published and communicated with the objective of preventing a reoccurrence or eliminating an exposure.

“Maintenance performs routine pre-job task analysis identifying hazards and controls prior to work. Near misses incidents and safety issues are investigated for root causes and corrective actions are implemented,” said Fox. “The findings are available to all employees across North America.”

Three exercises and programmes have added particular value for the company:

- The 10 Foot Safety Circle – This is a tactical safety reminder for anyone who enters a Sappi facility to identify potential risks within a 10-foot radius. Our Safety Circle is a visual trigger that initiates actions
- Green Safety Cross – In 2009, Sappi implemented a visual safety score card “Green Safety Cross.” The operational leader takes the time to mark the scorecard daily, marking safe days with the colour green. Monthly crosses are located at the entrance of each facility and department.
- Global Safety Awareness Day – This annual event held across Sappi global regions reinforces the commitment to ensuring that colleagues are aware and stay safe. “The event is a day that we recommit to safety, take stock of the past year, and also think about how we will improve to achieve safety success worldwide,” said Fox.

## IDENTIFYING HAZARDS AND MANAGING RISK

Sappi’s hazard identification and risk assessment efforts aim to drive improvement by asking: “What more can we do to further reduce risk and exposure for our employees?”

Sappi’s hazard identification and risk assessment process identifies and quantifies its exposures, drives Sappi to evaluate the current controls, brainstorm additional

controls and most importantly take action. The method focuses on finding new and improved opportunities to eliminate or reduce the likelihood and severity of an incident. Every day, Sappi is focused on safety awareness by continuously discussing potential hazards and determining risk prevention methods.

Consistently keeping Sappi’s complacency factor in check is a persistent challenge. As the number of injuries declines and Sappi’s hazards are identified and controlled, the company can become complacent of the base line risks. Sappi’s goal is to maintain consistency in its operations and improve its hazard controls.

## REACHING MILESTONES AND RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENTS

Ken Fox highlighted some recent Sappi safety successes: “We formed a team of operations, engineers and safety professional and performed an audit of our winder operations with the focus of hazard control and reduction,” said Fox. “Our Cloquet mill updated the new employee orientation programme and developed a mentor programme focused on coaching and hands on training new employees. Additionally, the internal audit systems have supported and maintained the process and procedures.”

The \$13 million Somerset Mill PM3 Upgrade was completed in 2013 with zero lost time and recordable injuries. In 2013, Sappi successfully completed the \$170 million capital project to convert the Cloquet pulp mill for Specialised Cellulose production on time, on budget and most importantly, without recordable injuries.

Cloquet Mill earned the Governor’s Meritorious Achievement award for Minnesota Pulp and Paper mill from Minnesota Safety Council in 2012 while Somerset emergency response teams won the MEMA Hazmat Challenge two years in a row. Somerset mill’s waste treatment plant has achieved 16 years without injury. In 2013, Westbrook Mill’s Ultracast team achieved a record of over 1,000 consecutive days without injury.

Another trophy for Sappi’s cabinet was also received at this year’s PPI awards by Mike Haws of Somerset Mill as Mill Manager of the Year. “The combined efforts of the entire Sappi Somerset Mill team made it possible to successfully implement a growth strategy for the increasingly challenging pulp and paper industry,” said Mike Haws in a statement released issued by Sappi. “This award recognises the achievements of Sappi’s bold, ambitious plan for driving innovation in our Somerset Mill, while also taking into account our commitment to stringent environmental and safety factors.” ■