

Wisconsin Paper Council: Paper & converting industries are essential partners in meeting our nation's health & safety needs

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(MADISON, WI) The Wisconsin Paper Council and Converting industries have joined forces to promote and emphasize the unique strengths and importance of Wisconsin's pulp, paper and converting production necessary to meet COVID-19 challenges.

Paper and forestry products are essential for everyday life and are made from renewable and sustainable resources. Wisconsin leads the nation in paper product production. Papermakers manufacture hundreds of specialty paper products that are used for personal hygiene, medical protective equipment and supplies, food packaging and processing, pressure sensitive liners, industrial and technical papers, high-tech manufacturing, clothing and communications, just to name a few.

The state's converting industry - which takes raw paper and processes it into a finished product - is also the largest in the nation, particularly in the "converting corridor" from Green Bay to Milwaukee where many small to mid-sized producers operate, and are often contracted by large national distributors, medical and brand partners.

Many of these crucial products are in high demand and medical necessities. The production of these essential products cannot be done remotely and must continue

to operate. Facilities have taken careful steps to protect both their workforce and their customers from the spread of COVID-19.

As the trade association representing Wisconsin's pulp and paper industry since 1968, the Wisconsin Paper Council has teamed up with members of the converting industry to ensure key policymakers are aware of how critical the contributions are to not only the state of Wisconsin but the country and the world. Paper products play an important role in ongoing health and safety efforts and in supporting essential commerce. Any disruptions in the availability of these goods, including any portion of the supply chain, would cause tremendous difficulties.

"The paper and converting sectors in Wisconsin are absolutely critical to our economy and medical community nationwide," commented United States Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI).

"I applaud all of those brave workers in these industries who are working around the clock to provide the essential products that we all need during this worldwide medical crisis. Our Made in Wisconsin work ethic is second none and our workers are proving that and making us all proud."

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers said, "Wisconsin's paper and converting industries are the best in the nation. They produce products Wisconsinites, and the rest of the country, depend on during the COVID-19 epidemic. Safely keeping up supply of these essential goods will help everyone overcome the challenges currently facing our state."

"Our paper and converting industries produce critical medical and personal hygiene products which our communities depend on, particularly during this pandemic," stated Rep. Scott Krug (R-Nekoosa). "Wisconsin is the number one paper producing state in the nation and these industries need to continue their operations particularly at this difficult time."

Wisconsin's producers use "mill rolls" of paper, films, and nonwovens substrates through many processes that result in medical and other products. These mill rolls

can weigh up to 13,000 pounds and are 137 inches wide. There are several steps to create finished, packaged products. They include mill production, automated precision cutting, application of antibacterial agents, coatings, and layering of finely “woven” materials. Paper-Converter-manufacturer jobs are often computer and touch-screen production controlled, meeting all necessary FDA requirements and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs).

“Wisconsin’s papermakers are key producers and shippers of the products which are critical in the fight against this worldwide pandemic. Our mills are working around the clock to manufacture and distribute personal and medical supplies where needed. We appreciate the Governor exempting our operations from his Safer at Home executive order,” stated Scott Suder, President of the Wisconsin Paper Council. “The paper industry, and the converting industries, are working diligently to keep up with consumer demands while keeping our employees and consumers safe.”

“The converting industry, which has specialized equipment to target many healthcare products comprises more than 100 companies,” according to Masood Akhtar, Founder and President of CleanTech Partners. “Logistics and distribution channels nationwide are longtime strengths of these Midwest companies, many of which have divisions in other states.”

Below is a list of essential consumer and medical products produced in Wisconsin

by our paper and converting industries:

- Medical Personal Protective Equipment – including the base papers and support materials to produce face masks and gowns
- Patient gowns, lab coats, scrubs, O.R. caps and EMT items
- Disposable bags, sterilizer bags, SWABS and infection control products
- Disposable cleaning wipes and antibacterial wet wipes used for hand and

surface cleansing

- Packaging for medication and medical instruments
- Liners used in medical applications
- Medical tapes used to keep IVs in place
- Carryout bags used in fast food facilities
- Food packaging products
- Sterile packaging solutions and packaging fill
- Saturating papers used for residential and commercial building
- Tissue papers, toilet papers, napkins, adult briefs

Note: This list is not comprehensive of the thousands of diverse products produced at both paper manufacturers or paper converting facilities in Wisconsin.