

## **FOLLOW THE RECYCLED PAPER TRAIL**

Ever wonder what happens to the newspapers, envelopes, catalogs and unwanted mail that you toss in your recycling bin every day?

After the paper is collected curbside or at a transfer station, it is trucked to a recycling center or materials recovery facility (MRF), where contaminants such as plastic wrappings, paper clips, and staples are removed. Once the paper is cleaned up, it is baled and transported to a paper mill where the recycling process begins.

### **The makeover begins**

The paper is de-inked, shredded, and mixed with water to make a pulp, which is then washed, refined, cleaned and turned into an oatmeal-like slush in a giant mixer. Color dyes, coatings, and other additives are mixed in, and the pulp slush is pumped onto a large moving screen. Computers and special sensors monitor each step of the papermaking process.

As the pulp travels down the screen, the water is drained away and later recycled. The resulting crude paper sheet, known as web, is pressed between massive rollers to extract most of the remaining water and ensure both a smooth surface and uniform thickness. The semi-dry web is then run through heated dryer rollers to remove the last traces of water.

The finished paper is then wound into large rolls. These can be up to 30 feet wide and weigh as much as 25 tons. A slitter cuts the paper into smaller, more manageable rolls, which are then sent to a converter for manufacturer into new products.

### **Paper Reincarnation**

More than 80 percent of all paper mills in the United States today use recovered paper to make new products we use in our everyday lives. Recycling paper instead of throwing it away also reduces the flow of waste into landfills and incinerators. So, paper recycling is truly beneficial for both the environment and the economy.

Different types of paper can be recycled into new products. Used newspapers are typically made into new newsprint, egg cartons, or paperboard. Used corrugated boxes are recycled into new cardboard boxes or paperboard used in cereal, cracker and cookie-packaging. White office paper can be recycled into almost any new paper product, including tissue.

The Newark Group's Massachusetts paperboard plants, Haverhill Paperboard and Newark America Paperboard in Fitchburg, use nearly 300,000 tons per year of recycled paper and paper products to make paperboard for hardcover books, game boards, and packaging for a wide variety of consumer goods.

So, the next time you pick up a newspaper, remember that today's headlines probably share something in common with those you have read in the past: The paper they are printed on.