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news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Verso Paper Corp. Reports Sustainability Progress in "A Climate of Change"

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 30, 2009 – Verso Paper Corp. (NYSE:VRS) today announced its release of "A Climate of Change - Sustainability Report 2008." The report details Verso's progress against its commitment to respect a sustainable balance among environmental, social and economic needs. As the title of the report suggests, Verso is pursuing its sustainability objectives in a dynamic climate where change is the rule rather than the exception, but the company is defining this change rather than being defined by it, according to Verso President and CEO Mike Jackson.

In the report's introductory letter Jackson says, "Certainly, we factor issues like the strained U.S. economy, increased input costs and an ever-evolving coated paper marketplace into how we operate our business. But external forces have not deterred us from fully integrating our Sustainability Principles into our business decisions, and doing so remains a key strategy at Verso." In addition to Jackson's message, the report includes updates in key environmental areas such as wood fiber procurement, air and water quality, global climate change and environmental compliance, as well as information on safety performance, product stewardship, community involvement and financial results.

2008 Report Highlights

- Verso has reduced greenhouse gas emissions per ton of production by 28 percent since 1998. More than half of the energy used to manufacture Verso products – some 53 percent – comes from renewable, greenhouse gas-neutral biofuels.
- Verso increased its use of third-party certified wood fiber from 60 percent to 65 percent, surpassing its 2008 goal. The company's goal for certified fiber use in 2009 is 67 percent.
- Verso's four paper mills were independently audited and certified to the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) chain of custody standard (PwC-PEFC-319). PEFC is the world's largest forest certification system.
- Verso's four paper mills were independently audited and certified to the ISO 14001:2004 environmental management system (EMS) standard. This internationally recognized standard identifies specific requirements for organizations that want to implement a comprehensive EMS aimed at continuous environmental performance improvement.

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- The company provided a two-year, \$100,000 grant to the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands to expand participation in that organization's Forest Stewardship Council group certification program. Group certification programs promote responsible forestry practices and help make the certification process more accessible and affordable to smaller landowners.
- Verso received notices from regulatory agencies related to four environmental compliance issues. All issues were addressed, with three resulting in no fines or penalties and an \$11,350 fine paid on the fourth.
- Verso's 2008 safety performance exceeded that of its industry peers. The company achieved a total incidence rate (TIR) of 1.97 and a best-in-class lost workday incidence rate (LWIR) of 0.15, compared to recently published industry averages of 3.5 and 1.1 respectively. The company believes that zero injuries is achievable and continues to strive toward that goal.
- Verso completed the first phase of a comprehensive program to determine the carbon footprint of its paper products by grade. This study, one of the most thorough carbon assessments of paper products to date, included a forest-to-gate estimate of carbon dioxide equivalents for a 30-pound coated paper with post-consumer waste content versus a similar product with no post-consumer waste content. Verso is an industry leader in manufacturing such lightweight paper products, which require less resources – energy, wood fiber, water and chemicals – to produce.
- With its most expansive campaign to date, Verso, customer Time Inc. and the National Recycling Coalition launched *ReMix – Recycling Magazines is Excellent!* – in New York City. *ReMix* is a national public education campaign to encourage residential recycling of magazines and catalogs. By the end of 2008, New York City saw a 29.3 percent increase in the recovery of magazines and catalogs compared to baseline numbers, the best results for *ReMix* so far. Before the launch of the New York City campaign, *ReMix* pilot campaigns were successfully conducted in Boston; Prince George's County, Md.; Milwaukee, Wis.; and Portland, Ore.
- Verso employs nearly 3,000 people across the country, primarily in Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Tennessee. Verso's community participation is driven by these employees who contribute thousands of hours each year in various company-sponsored and individual volunteer efforts to enhance the quality of life in their communities. Verso made the United Way the centerpiece of its contribution efforts because of the organization's focus on identifying specific local needs and because all the money raised remains in local communities. Verso's combined employee and company United Way contributions totaled nearly \$275,000 in 2008, a 10 percent increase over 2007.

For more information, download a full copy of the Verso 2008 Sustainability Report from the company's Web site at www.versopaper.com/sustainability.

About Verso

Based in Memphis, Tennessee, Verso Paper Corp. is a leading North American producer of coated papers, including coated groundwood and coated freesheet, and supercalendered and specialty products. Verso's paper products are used primarily in media and marketing applications, including magazines, catalogs and commercial printing applications such as high-end advertising brochures, annual reports and direct-mail advertising. Additional information about Verso is available on the company's Web site at www.versopaper.com.

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