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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

news release

Verso Paper Corp. Completes \$45 Million Renewable Energy Project at Mill in Quinnesec, Michigan

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (January 9, 2012) Verso Paper Corp. (NYSE:VRS) today announced that the company has completed a \$45 million renewable energy project at its pulp and paper mill in Quinnesec, Michigan. The project includes design upgrades to the mill's existing combination boiler (which burns biomass from waste wood sources), a new biomass handling system, and a new turbine generator. The project is delivering 28 megawatts of additional green energy for consumption within the mill, which is equivalent to the amount of electricity consumed by 18,000 homes in a year.

"The completion of the Quinnesec renewable energy project is a milestone in the implementation of Verso's long-term energy strategy," said Verso President and CEO Mike Jackson. "Besides delivering annual energy savings, the project helps Verso deliver on our commitment to increase our use of renewable biofuel and thereby reduce our carbon footprint."

The boiler upgrades enable the mill to use renewable, carbon-neutral, wood-based biofuel for more than 95 percent of its on-site electricity generation. The new biomass handling system expands the mill's capabilities for processing residual wood such as tree tops, limbs and bark. Verso ensures that the expanded harvesting of this logging residue meets forest sustainability standards. The mill's boilers also will continue to burn black liquor, a byproduct of the wood pulping process.

"In addition to reducing our carbon footprint, these improvements will improve boiler combustion and efficiency and will markedly reduce the mill's reliance on electricity produced from fossil fuels," said Verso Vice President of Energy and Technology Mark Daniel.

Verso began ordering major components for the project in May 2010, construction was begun in October 2010, and the project was completed with the commissioning of the new turbine earlier this month.

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 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

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brochures, annual reports and direct-mail advertising. Additional information about Verso is available on the company's website at www.versopaper.com. References to "Verso" or the "company" mean Verso Paper Corp. and its consolidated subsidiaries unless otherwise expressly noted.

Forward-Looking Statements

In this press release, all statements that are not purely historical facts are forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Forward-looking statements may be identified by the words "believe," "expect," "anticipate," "project," "plan," "estimate," "intend," and similar expressions. Forward-looking statements are based on currently available business, economic, financial, and other information and reflect management's current beliefs, expectations, and views with respect to future developments and their potential effects on Verso. Actual results could vary materially depending on risks and uncertainties that may affect Verso and its business. For a discussion of such risks and uncertainties, please refer to Verso's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Verso assumes no obligation to update any forward-looking statement made in this press release to reflect subsequent events or circumstances or actual outcomes.

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