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## **WestRock Wins Two 2019 AF&PA Sustainability Awards**

*Recognized with Awards for Safety and Innovation*

WASHINGTON – The American Forest & Paper Association ([AF&PA](#)) recognized WestRock with two 2019 AF&PA Sustainability Awards. This is the fifth consecutive year AF&PA has honored WestRock for their sustainability advancements. The awards were presented at AF&PA’s annual meeting on Friday, Nov. 8, in Bluffton, South Carolina.

WestRock received the Leadership in Sustainability Award for Safety for creating recovery boiler safety shields and the Innovation in Sustainability Award for developing EnShield® Natural Kraft, a completely recyclable paperboard that is suitable for foodservice packaging.

“WestRock’s safety shield helps to eliminate a safety hazard, showing that creativity and ingenuity go a long way in protecting the wellbeing of employees,” said AF&PA President and CEO Heidi Brock.

WestRock’s Kraft containerboard mill in Hopewell, Virginia developed a safety shield to cover the recovery boiler ports and eliminate the risk of burn injuries to boiler operators and bystanders. Mill workers made the shields in-house out of durable lightweight aluminum and applied complementary safety controls, such as signage and a safe pedestrian walkway. The safety shields can be implemented at any Kraft paperboard and containerboard mill and are helping WestRock to achieve their company-wide goal to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities.

“EnShield® Natural Kraft is one way WestRock is positioning itself as a leader in the emerging circular economy,” said Brock.

EnShield® Natural Kraft is an innovative, completely recyclable paperboard that has the same level of oil and grease resistance as plastic and plastic-lined alternatives. Manufactured at WestRock’s Mahrt, Alabama paper mill, its proprietary coating is achieved on the paper machine, eliminating the need for additional manufacturing steps. EnShield® Natural Kraft has the natural aesthetics that match consumers’

environmental preferences; meets the requirements for takeout food, bakery and frozen food packaging; and allows WestRock customers to improve their sustainability profiles without sacrificing performance.

“Thank you to AF&PA for recognizing WestRock’s commitment to sustainability with two awards in the areas of safety and product innovation,” said WestRock CEO Steve Voorhees. “Congratulations to my teammates who worked hard to make our company a safer place to work and to help our customers meet their sustainability goals! I look forward to WestRock making even more progress in sustainability in the years to come.”

The 2019 AF&PA Sustainability Award winners were selected by a judging panel of sustainability experts from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy; the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University; GreenBlue; Quad Packaging; Two Sides; and the U.S. Department of Energy.

AF&PA’s annual awards are designed to recognize exemplary sustainability programs and initiatives in the paper and wood products manufacturing industry and are given based on the merit of entries received across multiple categories.

Projects that support progress toward the *Better Practices, Better Planet 2020* sustainability goals qualify for recognition in the “Leadership” category, which has five subcategories that correspond to the goals: Energy Efficiency/Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Paper Recovery for Recycling, Safety, Sustainable Forest Management and Water. The “Innovation in Sustainability” award is reserved for projects that merit recognition for their contribution to sustainable business practices, not one of the goals specifically.

AF&PA’s 2018 Sustainability Report showed that the U.S. pulp, paper, packaging, tissue and wood products manufacturing industry has made significant, measurable progress toward achieving its *Better Practices, Better Planet 2020* sustainability goals. For more information, visit [afandpa.org/sustainability](http://afandpa.org/sustainability).

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Editor’s Note: Click [here](#) to retrieve photos (caption included) of the award winners.

#### **About AF&PA**

*The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) serves to advance a sustainable U.S. pulp, paper, packaging, tissue and wood products manufacturing industry through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. AF&PA member companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry’s sustainability initiative — [Better Practices, Better Planet 2020](#). The forest products industry accounts for approximately four percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures nearly \$300 billion in products annually and employs approximately 950,000 men and women. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$55 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 states. Visit AF&PA online at [afandpa.org](http://afandpa.org) or follow us on Twitter [@ForestandPaper](#).*

#### **About WestRock**

*WestRock (NYSE:WRK) partners with our customers to provide differentiated paper and packaging*

*solutions that help them win in the marketplace. WestRock's team members support customers around the world from locations spanning North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Learn more at [www.westrock.com](http://www.westrock.com).*