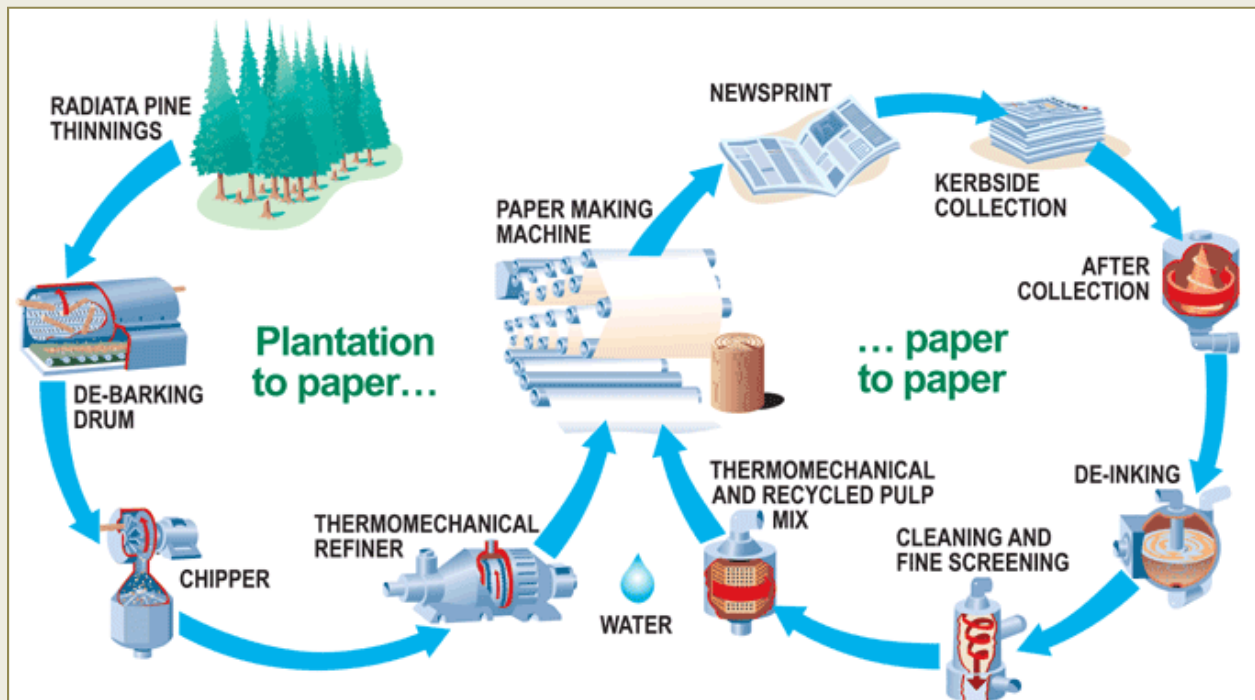


# THE PAPER'S JOURNEY



**In the early days of recycling** it was not uncommon to hear someone say, "Oh, they just pick up your recyclables and take them to the landfill." The markets for recycled materials were just starting up and many people who were resistant to recycling did not believe in the process. Times have changed and those of us involved with the Person County Recycling Center have learned there are many vendors for recycled goods and these goods are being used to manufacture new products. In order to illustrate this point we are going to accompany paper from its entry point in the recycling stream to its transformation into

PCRC receives shredded, mixed and office paper from many businesses in the community. Person County Schools and Person County Departments recycle the most paper at PCRC. During our first year of operations, PCRC processed 387.8 tons of paper. Once we receive the paper, it must be sorted and freed of "contaminants" such as trash, glass, plastics and metals. Then it is compacted into large bales. When 20 tons of paper have been processed, paper vendors are contacted for bids and the paper is sold to the highest bidder.

page 2

The buyer for the paper sends a truck to PCRC to pick up the paper and it is taken directly to a paper mill, where it is shredded and mixed with water to make a pulp. The pulp is washed, refined and cleaned, then turned to slush in a beater. The slush is heated and screened for small contaminants. The pulp goes through a few other processes and may be mixed with new wood fibers to give it added strength. Then more water is added to make the pulp a liquid. The liquid is sprayed onto wide screens that move very quickly through press rollers and dryers. As the pulp fibers bond and dry, paper is formed. The paper goes onto giant rolls, which can be as wide as 30 feet and weigh 20 tons. The roll is cut into smaller rolls and sheets. This product is then sent to a converting plant where it is made into everything from tissue paper to fine writing paper. The final step in this process is for consumers to buy products that are made from recycled materials. Recycled paper products can contain anywhere from 10% to 100%

PCW ( post consumer waste). Seventh Generation paper products in grocery stores are 100% PCW. Treecycle is a website that offers recycled paper products for sale over the internet. When people and businesses that recycle buy recycled products this increases the many economic and environmental benefits of recycling. It supports local recycling programs, like PCRC, by creating markets for the collected materials that are processed and used to manufacture new products. It creates jobs at recycling centers, recycled paper vendors and paper mills, and helps strengthen the economy.

It conserves natural resources; saves energy; reduces solid waste, air and water pollutants. Paper can be recycled over and over again, so bringing your recycled paper products to PCRC restarts **THE JOURNEY**.