



UNFOLDING

THE FUTURE

2026 NPTA UPDATE

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As I reflect on my time serving as chair of the National Paper Trade Association (NPTA), I am most grateful for the people who make this organization what it is. NPTA has always been more than an association – it is a community built on trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to strengthening the paper distribution channel.

During my tenure, I have seen our members navigate change with resilience and leadership. Together, we have advanced meaningful conversations about the future of our industry, strengthened relationships across the supply chain, and remained focused on delivering value through networking, education, and advocacy. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our board, volunteers, staff, and engaged members.

Serving as chair has been an honor and a privilege. I am proud of the foundation we have built and confident in the direction ahead. As I step away from this role, I extend my sincere thanks to the entire NPTA community for the trust, support, and collaboration you have shown throughout my service.

I look forward to continuing to support NPTA – and the industry we care so deeply about – in the years ahead.



GERRY KLUG

*Chair, Board of Directors,
National Paper Trade Association*

LETTER FROM THE INCOMING CHAIR

The paper industry is entering a period of continued evolution, shaped by innovation, new market demands, and changing customer expectations. In moments like these, the role of NPTA is more important than ever.

As I step into the role of board chair, I do so with deep respect for the leaders who have guided this association before me – especially Gerry Klug, whose steady leadership and commitment have greatly strengthened our organization. We are well-positioned because of that work.

Looking ahead, NPTA will remain focused on what matters most to our members: delivering relevant industry insights, fostering meaningful connections, and advocating for a healthy, sustainable distribution

channel. We will continue to create opportunities for collaboration, leadership development, and thoughtful dialogue that help our members adapt and succeed.

The future of our industry is still unfolding, and NPTA will be there – supporting, connecting, and leading alongside our members every step of the way. I am honored to serve in this role and excited about what lies ahead.



ED ALLEN

*Incoming Chair, Board of Directors,
National Paper Trade Association*

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

In our first Member Pulse Survey, NPTA members shared a clear picture of both confidence and complexity across the paper distribution channel.

Members pointed to real business pressures shaping the industry today. The most commonly cited challenges include:



45-50%

Pricing pressure and margin compression



35-40%

Demand uncertainty and shifting market dynamics



25-30%

Workforce and talent challenges

Members are also looking to NPTA to deliver even greater impact, particularly through stronger advocacy, more actionable market insights, and expanded opportunities to connect across the industry.

Looking Ahead

Our next Member Pulse Survey launches in early fall 2026. Your input ensures we continue to reflect the realities of the market and deliver on our promise to members.

FORGING NEW CONNECTIONS

74

Member Companies

95

PDC 2026 Attendees

342

Paper Meets LIVE! Attendees

NEW in 2026!

NPTA Printing United Breakfast

Wednesday, Sept. 23

7:30-9 a.m. PT | Las Vegas, NV

Meet your paper industry peers for a free networking breakfast and walking tour ahead of the Printing United Expo. NPTA membership is required to attend. RSVP in advance.

Learn more at
[gonpta.com/
Printing-United-Breakfast](https://gonpta.com/Printing-United-Breakfast)



Better Together

NPTA Returns to Two Sides

NPTA has officially rejoined Two Sides to strengthen the industry's commitment to environmental advocacy. Together, they will work to promote the sustainable story of print and paper packaging while combating greenwashing.

Learn more at
gonpta.com/Sustainability



A LEGACY THAT CONTINUES TO UNFOLD

The Stanley O. Styles Industry Excellence Award is presented to an individual who has made a positive impact through innovation, dedication, and business excellence.

2026 Stanley O. Styles Award Recipient

Bill Garvey of Athens Paper was selected as the 2026 Stanley O. Styles Industry Excellence Award recipient in recognition of a career that exemplifies leadership, adaptability, and long-standing commitment to the paper distribution industry. With more than four decades of experience, Bill has successfully navigated every level of the business, from sales to executive leadership, bringing a well-rounded perspective that has driven meaningful impact across organizations.

As president of Athens Paper, he has led the company through significant industry disruption, including the

challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, while strategically transforming the business into a more diversified and future-ready organization. His ability to evolve alongside a changing marketplace reflects both strong business acumen and a forward-looking mindset.

Beyond his organizational leadership, Bill has made lasting contributions to the broader industry. As a former chair of NPTA and an active advocate for engagement, he has consistently invested in strengthening the paper and graphic arts communities. Respected for his integrity, mentorship, and vision, Bill's influence extends well beyond his own company, making him a truly deserving recipient of this prestigious honor.



“Receiving the Stanley O. Styles Award is deeply meaningful to me because it reflects the industry strength of this industry and the relationships that define it. NPTA represents the very best of the paper.”

BILL GARVEY, PRESIDENT, ATHENS PAPER



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

The NPTA Business Management Academy is a 10-week digital-first program designed for today's and tomorrow's leaders across the paper distribution channel. Grounded in MBA-level curriculum, the Academy equips participants to sharpen their leadership instincts, decode the financials that drive growth, and build the people management skills that define high-performing organizations, all while strengthening their bottom line.

Register today at gonpta.com/BMA

Learn on Your Terms

Fully asynchronous eLearning puts you in control, allowing you to move through the curriculum at your own pace and on your own schedule.

Connect With the Industry

Every two weeks, you'll engage directly with industry experts, asking questions, exchanging ideas, and bringing the curriculum to life through real-world conversation.

Earn Recognized Credentials

Upon completing the 10-week program, graduates receive a digital badge and certificate of completion to mark their achievement and signal their commitment to professional growth.



The NPTA Business Management Academy gave me a much clearer understanding of how financial and operational decisions connect to overall business performance. I walked away with practical tools I can apply immediately and a broader business perspective that will help me create greater value for my organization in the years ahead.



WILL LARKIN, CATEGORY MANAGER - PACKAGING, KELLY SPICERS

EARLY 2027 EVENTS

PDC 2027

Jan. 19-21
Naples, Florida

Where the industry's top executives come to set the agenda for the year ahead. If you're shaping the future of your organization, PDC is where that conversation starts.

Learn more at
gonpta.com/PDC

Registration will open in
November 2026.

UID 2027

March 15-18
Indianapolis, Indiana

250+ courses. Six topic areas. One focused week built for distribution professionals ready to grow. Whether you're building your foundation or staying sharp on where the industry is heading, UID delivers.

Learn more at
gonpta.com/UID

Registration will open in
fall 2026.

Paper Meets LIVE! 2027

May 4-6
Clearwater Beach, Florida

The event where partnerships are forged and deals begin. Co-hosted with AF&PA, Paper Meets LIVE! brings together the sales and business development minds driving the paper industry forward.

Learn more at
gonpta.com/Paper-Meets-Live

Registration will open in
December 2026.

EMERGING LEADERS

Emerging Leaders Summit

In August, NPTA will bring together the next generation of industry talent for the third annual Emerging Leaders Summit, a dynamic, in-person experience built around peer-driven conversation, leadership development, and the connections that carry careers forward. The Emerging Leaders Network continues that momentum year-round, offering ongoing training, discussion, and a community united by a shared stake in what the paper distribution industry becomes. The future of this industry is unfolding, and this is where the people shaping it find each other.

Benefits of Participation

- Tailored educational opportunities and involvement in projects that directly impact NPTA
- Connection to a diverse network of industry pros
- Invitations to both Paper Meets LIVE! and PDC

Interested in participating? Nominations for the 2027 program open in September.





The future of the paper industry will be shaped by collaboration and adaptability. NPTA provides the trusted forum where leaders come together to navigate change and move the industry forward.

**KATIE ZORN, VP MARKETING, PRODUCT MANAGEMENT,
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT, DOMTAR**



TOP 5 PAPERCHAIN ARTICLES FROM 2026 SO FAR

1

EPR Is Here. Now What? What the Paper Supply Chain Needs to Know

2

With EPR, WCP President Allen Warns the Industry's Margin for Error Is Paper Thin

3

Arcadia Paper Mills Completes Purchase of Paper Mill in St. Helens, Oregon

4

PaperChain Chats: Wallace Williams, Head of Business Development, Cauthorne Paper Company

5

Millcraft Acquires Steen-Macek Paper, Strengthening Customer Capabilities and Preserving a Legacy of Service in Wisconsin

PaperChain Chats

PaperChain Chats adds a video dimension to NPTA's digital content, featuring conversations between NPTA Executive Director Mark Swets and members across the paper supply chain. The series offers an engaging way to hear firsthand perspectives on the ideas, challenges, and priorities shaping the business.

Read more at paperchain.gonpta.com.



UNFOLDING



WHAT'S NEXT

TOGETHER

Looking Ahead

The future of paper isn't something we wait for, it's something we actively shape.

Across the industry, change continues to accelerate. From evolving sustainability expectations and regulatory landscapes to new applications, technologies, and customer demands, the path forward is unfolding in real time. With that comes opportunity, for those ready to adapt, lead, and think differently about what paper can be.

At NPTA, our focus remains clear: equipping our members with the insight, connections, and tools needed to move confidently into what's next. Through forward-looking education, stronger industry collaboration, and a continued investment in emerging leaders, we are helping define the next chapter of the paper distribution channel.

The future won't arrive all at once. It will unfold, through the decisions we make, the relationships we build, and the ideas we choose to pursue.