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Nekoosa Mill Earns 2026 Energy Efficiency Excellence Award

Domtar's mill in [Nekoosa, Wisconsin](#), earned a 2026 Energy Efficiency Excellence Award from [Focus on Energy](#). The award celebrates the mill's implementation of projects that reduce energy use, improve operations and deliver long-term savings.

"Our partnership with Focus on Energy has supported efforts to enhance the facility's efficiency while saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy-related expenses," says Craig Helgeson, general manager of the Nekoosa Mill.

Not only that, but the improvements made at Nekoosa also have a far-reaching impact on the paper industry and communities across Wisconsin.

"Energy efficiency does more than reduce energy usage and lower costs — it helps create jobs, drive economic growth and strengthen communities statewide," says Summer Strand, chairperson of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. "The 2026 Energy Efficiency Excellence Award [recipients](#) exemplify these positive impacts, and I applaud their commitment to energy efficiency improvements that deliver far-reaching benefits across Wisconsin."

Teamwork Drives Results

Focus on Energy is Wisconsin's statewide energy efficiency and renewable energy initiative. It helps businesses and communities identify energy-saving opportunities through technical expertise, assessments, incentives and other resources.

At Nekoosa, that support has become part of the mill's continuous-improvement culture. An energy team meets every two weeks to identify opportunities, evaluate solutions and move projects forward.

The results are significant. In 2024-2025, Nekoosa completed numerous Focus on Energy-supported projects that delivered the equivalent of millions of kilowatt-hours (kWh) worth of savings. The substantial amount of energy saved by these projects generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in bottom-line savings, helping to strengthen the mill's competitiveness while freeing capital for additional investments.

The mill uses the full range of Focus on Energy resources, including audits, performance assessments, technical support, energy team projects, incentives and rebates.



“Their dedicated local resources, known as energy advisors, take a hands-on approach that helps drive energy efficiency projects to completion,” says Ben King, manager of Quality at the Nekoosa Mill. King leads the energy team that managed the award-winning projects, and he encourages members to find solutions and make consistent progress toward saving energy, reducing water consumption and lowering operating costs.

“Wisconsin’s Focus on Energy program has enabled the Nekoosa Mill to significantly extend our budgeted spend on energy-reduction initiatives,” King says. “They bring valuable pulp and paper industry experience, helping deliver measurable energy and financial savings.”

Energy Efficiency and Innovation

For more than a century, the Nekoosa mill has been part of the community and Wisconsin’s forest products industry. Today, the fully integrated specialty paper mill employs more than 400 Wisconsinites and generates an estimated annual economic impact of more than \$600 million.

The mill produces specialty papers for food packaging, security, publishing, functional coating base stocks and other applications. It can also generate 100 percent of the electricity needed for its operations.

The Focus on Energy award is just the latest example of the Nekoosa Mill’s innovative approach. Recently, the facility built a [new precipitated calcium carbonate \(PCC\) plant](#) that offers long-term sustainability improvements and increased operational efficiency, not just at the Nekoosa Mill but for Domtar’s [Rothschild Mill](#) and other Wisconsin paper mills.

Strong Community Partner

For the Nekoosa Mill, sustainability also includes giving back to the community where its employees live and work.

In 2025, eight local initiatives received \$2,000 grants through [Domtar’s “\\$2k Your Way” employee-driven giving program](#). The projects supported tree planting and trail cleanup, fire safety education, a Head Start playhouse, urban forestry, skilled trades education, public safety, animal welfare and organ-donor recognition.

Nekoosa’s [Domtar Connects](#) team also participated in more than 25 community events during 2025, including Toys for Tots drives and the local Christmas parade. Through longstanding agreements with the city of Nekoosa, Domtar also makes company-owned lands around the mill available for recreational parks.

Together, these efforts reflect the same spirit of collaboration that has made Nekoosa’s Focus on Energy partnership successful. By finding practical solutions to operational and local concerns, the mill can create lasting value for the business, the environment and the community.

The 2026 Energy Efficiency Excellence Award celebrates that commitment — and the Nekoosa team’s ongoing work to build a more resilient future.

“Together with Focus on Energy, we’ve built on previous mill successes and are targeting bigger savings to come,” King says.



Get to know the 2026 Focus on Energy “Energy Efficiency Excellence Award” winners by watching [“Cutting costs. Powering communities. Wisconsin honors 2026 energy efficiency leaders.”](#)

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About Domtar

Domtar is a leading, privately held manufacturer of diversified forest products with locations across North America. The company manufactures pulp, paper, packaging and tissue, as well as lumber and other wood products.

Domtar prides itself on operational excellence, delivering high-quality, cost-effective products to meet and exceed customer needs globally. The company is dedicated to sustainability and committed to turning responsibly sourced wood fiber into everyday essential products. For more information, visit www.domtar.com.