

PANEL DISCUSSION

STRATEGIES TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF AGING POWER DISTRIBUTION EQUIPMENT

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Abstract – Power distribution equipment installed in existing paper mills continue to serve as critical components in driving mill operational reliability and safety. As these assemblies age, diminishing availability of renewal parts and emerging new power distribution offerings suggest support of a compelling case for replacement. However, given management reluctance to approve capital funding and commit to extended mill outages for replacement often drives decisions to find creative ways extend the life of existing equipment rather than replacing it with new. In this panel session, facility and corporate engineers with 100+ combined years of experience explore proven strategies to keep aging power distribution equipment operating reliably and cost-effective. Strategies outlining life-cycle extension retrofits, condition monitoring, modernization, and predictive tools are shared to help mills reduce downtime and optimize budgets in a capital constrained environment.

PANELIST INFORMATION

Todd Legette, received a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in 1987. He began his career with International Paper at the Texarkana Mill serving in a Plant Engineering role. In 1990, Todd transferred to IP's Corporate Engineering Division in Mobile, Alabama and worked on various large capital projects at facilities across the company. In 2001, Todd joined IP's Corporate Technology Group. In 2017, he was promoted to Group Leader for the Instrument/Electrical Precision Maintenance team. In 2020, he was also named Group Leader for the EPD and Motors teams. Today he serves in this same capacity, IP Containerboard Reliability. Todd is a Senior Member of the IEEE, past chair of the IEEE IAS Pulp & Paper Industry Committee (PPIC), recipient of the 2022 IEEE IAS PPIC Meritorious Service Award and incoming Co-Chair of the 2027 IEEE IAS Pulp & Paper Industry Technical Conference scheduled in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Greg Drewiske, P.E., has held various corporate and mill level engineering positions with Consolidated Papers, StoraEnso, NewPage Corporation, Verso Corporation, and Billerud for nearly 35 years. Greg is presently the Engineering and Capital Manager for Billerud North America. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in Wisconsin. Greg has been an IEEE member since 1987 and is currently a Senior Member. He is a past Chairman of the Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry (TAPPI) Process Control, Electrical & Information Division PLC Subcommittee, past Chairman of the IEEE Pulp and Paper Industry Committee (PPIC) Drives and Control Systems Subcommittee and past Chairman of the IEEE PPIC National Committee. He has authored and presented technical papers at TAPPI, the IEEE Pulp and Paper Conference and the IEEE Electrical Safety Workshop. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from Milwaukee School of Engineering in 1991.

Walter Simpson, graduated from the University of Georgia in 1980 with a B.S. in Agricultural Engineering. He began his career that year with Union Carbide Agricultural Products Corporation as a Production Engineer. The company was acquired by Rhone-Poulenc in 1986, followed by Avantis in 1999, and finally Bayer in 2002. He held various positions in maintenance, operations, and engineering, including Maintenance Leader and Technology Leader. Walter lead numerous automation upgrade and electrical reliability projects. In 2011, Walter joined Rayonier's Pulp Mill (now RYAM) in Fernandina Beach, Florida where he served as Senior Plant Electrical Engineer. He was responsible for reliability of motors, drives, power generation and distribution, and capitol projects. Retiring from industry in 2024, Walter works as a consultant with Engineering Group of the Southeast, where he remains active in supporting local Mills. Walter is a past chair of the IAS PPIC Power Distribution subcommittee, past local Co-Chair for the 2019 IAS PPIC in Jacksonville, FL, and received the 2024 IAS PPIC Meritorious Service Award.

Michael Harrington, P.E., received a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Clemson University in Clemson, SC in 1995. He began his career as an Electrical Project Engineer at Willamette Industries Marlboro Paper Mill now owned by Domtar. He later served in various roles in mill engineering including Process Control Engineer, Electrical and Instrumentation Maintenance Specialist, and Senior Electrical Project Engineer. He is presently serving as Electrical Reliability Engineer responsible for motors, drives and the mill's power distribution system. Michael is a Senior Member of the IEEE, currently serving as chair of the IAS PPIC Process Control, Engineering, Maintenance, Construction subcommittee. He is a registered Professional Engineer in the state of South Carolina.