ZAO International Paper: anniversary year for the company and the region

Vesti newspaper – July 2017 – International Paper’s vision it to be one of the most successful, sustainable and responsible companies in the world. The Russian branch of a multinational company – ZAO International Paper – is a major employer and taxpayer in the Leningrad region and represents Russian pulp and paper industry. ZAO International Paper runs business responsible and actively invests in social initiatives and protection of the environment of the Leningrad Region, where the company’s operations are strategically located. Keith Townsend, President of International Paper in Russia, told our magazine about the company’s business in the country.

- Please tell us about the company’s enterprises located in Russia. As far as we know, Svetogorsk pulp and paper mill celebrates its 130th anniversary this year?

Yes, indeed. It is an important date for us, as generations of our workers call the mill their second home. We do our best to take proper care of our employees, first and foremost providing them with safe working conditions. Safety is our key priority. More than 1,600 employees work at our Svetogorsk enterprise and we aim to make sure all employees, contractors and visitors come back home safely every day. We offer safe working conditions, train our employees to identify unsafe behavior and activities, call for accountability for yourself and others, and support all efforts to secure safety both at home and at work.

We make sustainable investments to protect and improve the lives of our employees and mobilize our people, products and resources to address critical needs in the communities where our employees live and work. Since Svetogorsk pulp and paper mill’s acquisition in 1998, we have carried out a number of large investment projects, including the repair and purchase of equipment for educational, childcare, and social institutions of Svetogorsk. The overall value of these investments has exceeded $9.5 million. Our employees are the core of our business, and we are very proud of our people.

Speaking of the mill's 130th anniversary, we would like to mention that our Svetogorsk mill is one of the oldest enterprises in Russia. Thanks to our investments in production process modernization, it also operates with state of the art technology and most modern equipment in the country. We create innovative, sustainable and recyclable products that help our customers achieve their objectives. The mill produces products that are familiar to Russian consumers – SvetoCopy and Ballet paper and liquid packaging board. These are products that we all use every day – paper that we use to print everything from important documents to cinema tickets, liquid packaging board that juice or milk is packaged in. This is the mission of our company. We improve people’s lives, the planet and our company’s performance by transforming renewable resources into products people depend on every day.

Another important division of our company in Russia – Tikhvin Complex Logging enterprise – is also located in the Leningrad Region. It has been a part of International Paper Russia since 2011. All the company’s forestry operations are concentrated in Tikhvin. By the way, Tikhvin Forestry Complex is one of the region’s oldest enterprises as well, as it will celebrate its 90th anniversary in two years. It is also a key part of the sustainable forestry project that is crucial for our company.

- Could you please elaborate on the project in more detail?

Our entire business depends upon the sustainability of the forests. Sustainable forestry means responsible management of forest resources which are renewable and recyclable, improvement of forest infrastructure, proper reforestation and forest use, control over procurement of timber, fighting against timber procurement from illegal sources. We see a lot of opportunities in developing a unified approach to sustainability among all key industry stakeholders – forest tenants, business owners,
partners, in order to actively promote and implement the sustainable forestry concept and regulations in Russia. We will continue to lead the region in responsible forest stewardship to ensure healthy and productive forest ecosystems for generations to come. We believe that our joint efforts will help to make the forests healthier and timber more available, and this will benefit the local residents, communities and industry.

- 2017 was declared the Year of Ecology. What are the company’s efforts in this area?

Environmental strategy is an important part of what we do. We tackle the toughest issues in our value chain, reduce our environmental footprint and promote the long-term sustainability of natural capital. We make every effort in order to minimize our impact on the environment to the benefit of our employees and local residents. We are continuously implementing investment projects aimed at modernization of treatment facilities. One of these projects was recently recognized by a letter of acknowledgment from Rosprirodnadzor – the Department of Federal service for supervision in the sphere of nature. We regularly carry out monitoring of the environmental indicators. In fact, our sanitary industrial laboratory was recognized as one of the most precise ones in Russia. We will continue these important efforts.

Generally speaking, we follow our strategic framework, The IP Way Forward, which consists of five strategic drivers, enabling us to set goals, make decisions and prioritize our work. These drivers are Sustaining Forests, Investing in People, Improving our Planet, Creating innovative Products, and Delivering inspired Performance. These pillars are the same for all of our businesses around the world, including in Russia.

- What would you wish the region on its 90th anniversary?

On behalf of International Paper, I would like to congratulate all Leningrad region residents with this important date – the 90th “birthday” of the region. Our company reaffirms its commitment to support social, environmental, and economic development in the region. We support the traditions of our industry development and are focused on long-term presence and further achievements for the benefit of our employees, partners and all the stakeholders to contribute to sustainable and favorable development of the region as a whole.