

# Old Town mill eyes extended shutdown

BY VALERIE ROYZMAN  
PISCATAQUIS OBSERVER

OLD TOWN — Old Town’s pulp mill that reopened in 2019 will operate until mid-April before shutting down operations for an extended period.

ND Paper, which is owned by Nine Dragons Paper Limited paper manufacturing company in China, is “taking extended downtime,” at the mill, spokesperson Jay Capron said Tuesday afternoon. He cited the rising cost of fiber, along with energy costs and market conditions as reasons.

The mill produces unbleached softwood kraft pulp and recycled market pulp, manufactured from old corrugated containers, according to its website. The products are used in retail inserts, magazines, flyers, brochures, books, and corrugated boxes and in other ways.

The company invested more than \$200 million in the mill and created high-paying jobs directly tied to the facility, Capron told the Bangor Daily News in October of last year. Now just under 200 Mainers with jobs there will be out of work.

An email to employees announcing the decision circulated on a few Old Town area Facebook pages Tuesday, though who signed the message to employees was not immediately clear. The announcement was made Tuesday, Capron said.

The facility, located off Portland Avenue on the edge of the city’s limits, re-

See Mill, Page A3

Continued from Page A1

opened in 2019 as ND Paper after its previous owner shut it down in 2015.

“The decision was difficult and will have a significant impact on our employees, their families, and these local communities,” the email from ND

Paper said, noting the company's human resources department is working to make sure employees' questions are addressed.

ND Paper has offered some of its employees positions at the Rumford mill and other locations, Capron said.

"I was contacted by the mill today just saying they are going to be in extended shutdown over the next 60 to 90 days," Town Manager Bill Mayo said Tuesday afternoon.

He declined to comment further because he had limited background information.

ND Paper will also significantly reduce market pulp production at its Fairmont, West Virginia, mill due to market conditions. The dry-pulping line at the facility will continue to run, Capron said.

"We will continually evaluate market conditions for a potential restart," he said.