Sustainable, responsible, innovative, recyclable and essential: These five adjectives describe a modern forest products industry that consistently meets the evolving needs of people across the country and around the world. I’ll underscore that commitment any day. Importantly, National Forest Products Week (NFPW) — #ForestProductsWeek — celebrated this year from October 20 – 26, provides a welcome stage to recognize and reinforce the contributions of our companies, their employees and an extensive range of products. We’re ready to share this story and hope you’ll join us.

AF&PA members — U.S. manufacturers of pulp, paper, packaging, tissue and wood products — are committed to applying sustainable and voluntary business practices across the value chain through our Better Practices, Better Planet 2020 initiative. Their dedication to one of the most extensive sets of sustainability goals established for a U.S. manufacturing industry led to improved energy efficiency and worker safety ahead of schedule as outlined in the 2018 AF&PA Sustainability Report.

The business practices of this responsible industry are constantly at work in undeniable ways. According to the U.S. Forest Service, the nation grows more wood than it harvests, and more than 3.2 million trees are planted per day in the United States. Sustainable forest management supports the thoughtful use of resources and furthers the health of the planet.

When it comes to being innovative, paper and wood products manufacturers display a long record of meeting the challenges of market demand with ingenuity and versatility. Take energy production. On average, about 66.6 percent of our members’ energy demand is met through carbon-neutral, renewable biomass energy when manufacturing residuals — the leftover materials from the production process like tree

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limbs, bark and liquid biomass — are used to power an industry. That’s not just smart business, that’s also common sense.

Recyclable speaks to the environmental success story of paper recovery for recycling. By weight, more paper is recovered for recycling from municipal solid waste streams than glass, plastic, steel and aluminum combined, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

In 2018, industry and consumer commitment to increasing the quality and quantity of paper recovered for recycling contributed to a record high 68.1 percent U.S. paper recovery for recycling rate. This metric demonstrates sustained progress as it has now met or exceeded 63 percent for the past decade. And, the U.S. recovery for recycling rate for old corrugated containers grew to an exceptional 96.4 percent in 2018. On the road ahead, we look forward to sharing how we’re working to further success in recycling.

Now, just try imagining a day without paper and wood products. Innovative products enhance our daily life. From wiping up spilled milk, to carrying the day’s first cup of coffee, to drying hands, holding groceries, transporting online orders, sanitizing the kitchen counter, penning a note to a friend, framing the house under construction down the street, forest products play an essential role. They allow us to connect, communicate, teach and provide for our safety, health and convenience.

During NFPW, we’ll be using our websites and digital media channels to amplify these key points and others as we educate and inform those who may not be aware of our contributions to society and the economy. Join the conversation at #ForestProductsWeek, and stay tuned to www.afandpa.org, @ForestandPaper, facebook.com/forestandpaper, linkedin.com//company/american-forest-&-paper-association, www.paperrecycles.org, @PaperRecycles and facebook.com/paperrecycling for details.

We are one of the largest manufacturing sectors in America and account for roughly four percent of U.S. manufacturing GDP, employ approximately 950,000 employees in rural and urban communities across 45 states and meet a payroll of about $55 billion annually.

Let’s celebrate that commitment to our communities as we work together to grow!