

## Long Falls Paperboard: 2018 Approved VEGI Participant

### Employee Stories

**Name:** Shana Gilstrap  
**Job Title:** Converting Team Leader  
**Hired by Longfalls:** December 2018



Shana began working at the Brattleboro papermill in a temporary position as administrative assistant in October 2017. Long Falls Paperboard purchased the facility in December of 2018 as it was facing permanent closure and liquidation of its assets and employees. One co-worker spoke to the Long Falls ownership group about Shana, noting her positive contribution to the company. “She’s great. You’ve got to keep Shana,” said the fellow employee. The new owners agreed and hired Shana in a permanent team leader position in Converting. After the paper is made on the paper machine, some of the rolls move from the board machine to Converting where they are further processed for their end product use.

On the floor, Shana’s leadership skills and management experience are evident and have earned her the respect of her colleagues. One project manager described Shana as a fantastic asset to the company. “She’s a hard worker. She knows how to get things done and I’m always happy to work with her.”

Prior to being employed at Long Falls Paperboard, Shana spent 20 years in the Marine Corps where she feels she learned many of her skills. “Working as a young marine, as a U.S. embassy guard taught me responsibility at the onset of my career,” she says. “I wouldn’t know what I know today, if someone hadn’t taught me. And I love figuring things out, learning new things.”

After retiring from service, Shana packed up her two daughters and drove cross-country, back to the area she calls home, to live and work for the first time in her adult life. “I never imagined I’d be working in manufacturing. And I had no idea what went into papermaking. It’s fascinating!” she says with a smile.

Shana, like other employees at the Brattleboro facility worked hard in 2018 to keep the mill operating and productive. “I didn’t give up on the mill because I believe in the people here. And I enjoy it.” Recently, Shana identified and organized the nearly 20 military veterans who are employed at the mill and helped the company celebrate them as an important part of the work force.

“I don’t look at this as a job,” she says. “It’s a career.” With her new raise and responsibilities, Shana will be working with the paper machine team leaders, and ensure the employees in Converting are safe, supported and efficient. “I want to grow with the place. Especially now that we are our own company.” In Shana’s mind, “It’s always been ‘us’. It’s 100% teamwork.”

**Name:** Paul Stoddard  
**Job Title:** Finishing & Converting Helper –  
(Operator in Training)  
**Hired by Longfalls:** December 2018



Paul was hired just five days before the previous papermaking company announced its intention to close the Brattleboro, VT mill in October of 2018. Paul demonstrated his value to the future of Long Falls Paperboard by consistently showing up ready to work and contribute to the mill's success, a great example of how Brattleboro employees sustained mill operations in anticipation of potential new ownership.

“Not once during the emotional roller coaster of the closure did he let it hinder his work performance,” commented a fellow employee. Long Falls Paperboard hired Paul and over 70 other employees in December 2018, retaining the skilled workforce responsible for the high-quality products, some exclusive to Brattleboro, produced at the facility.

Paul just completed his 90-day probation and was told during his review that he works above and beyond expectations. Completion of the probation period entitles Paul to membership in the United Steel Workers. “One good thing about this place, is it's a union shop – which means if you show up and do your work, you can move up.”

In other states, \$20 an hour jobs are a dime a dozen but around here that not common says Paul. He appreciates the mill because of its opportunity for advancement. There is on the job training and even though Paul has a manufacturing and construction background working this is his first time working in a paper mill.

Paul is currently training to be a Finishing and Converting Operator who will work on machines that add things like clear coats, coloring and embossing to the paper.

“For me it's a good place,” says Paul. “It pays well. The benefits are good. I have a retirement. It hits all the marks for what a good job should be. It's a well-rounded job.”