

Fort Eustis showcases bridges constructed of recycled material

by Monica Miller Rodgers

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Fort Eustis, Va., held a media day May 27 to show off its two newly constructed recycled structural composite bridges. The bridges that had been replaced were made of wood, and they had aged to a point of concern in supporting the engines and rolling stock used by the U.S. Army Transportation School during training of Transportation Reserve Soldiers in the proper operation of locomotives.

“This has been a great project,” said Phil Reed, Fort Eustis Engineering Division chief, speaking about one of the new bridges during the event. “The bridge was made out of nearly 100 percent recycled product, and it was a winning situation between Fort Eustis and our contracting team. Not only will it cut our maintenance cost for years to come, but it will last longer than the 57-year-old bridge we removed.”

The two new railroad bridges are the first of their kind in the United States, although recycled material has been used to construct bridges for other traffic. The bridges are made completely of RSC, a nearly 100 percent recycled material made of post-consumer and industrial plastics. The new bridges have a load capacity of up to 130 tons and were designed to weight and speed limit standards.

“The magic to this material is quite simple; we’re taking 100 percent recycled materials and pulling them out of landfills and re-diverting them into useful life,” said Jim Kerstein, CEO of Axion, the producer of the RSC. “For example, 20-year-old milk jugs laying around that have not degraded can now be used as recycled materials.”

The Fort Eustis Directorate of Public Works oversaw the work on the bridges of the main contractor, Centennial Contractors, and subcontractors Axion, English Construction Co. Inc., B&R Contractors, McCallum Testing, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Innovative Green Solutions since the contract was awarded in September 2009 for \$1.37 million.