“We’re in the recycling business,” says Michael Meuli, New Business Development Manager for The Newark Recycled Paperboard Solutions. It’s a simple way to sum up their company, given that Newark has been in business for over 100 years, well before the green movement became such a mainstay. Their focus is creating paperboard products that use recycled secondary fibers, all without compromising on product quality or safety.

Newark and George Brown College’s Centre for Construction and Engineering Technologies partnered to test and validate a new cost-effective product—a paperboard product that can be used to hold welded wire mesh and rebar in place while concrete is poured into a foundation. Picture a square paperboard tube with notches cut strategically and legs shaped like a bridge arc; its modest appearance hides an amazing strength.

“The partner was looking for confidence in the product,” says Mark Krantzberg, project investigator and faculty member at George Brown. “We were physically testing to see how the product would perform in concrete pours, as well as identify how the product would react when wet.” Testing these elements was crucial; the mesh needed to be held securely during the concrete pour as well as provide stable, long-term support after concrete hydration.

“There were some neat things that came up in the research process,” Meuli says. “We dealt a lot with the students, and it was a natural fit. They made sure everyone was on the same page, and it made the working environment very relaxed but also professional.”

In the end, after extensive testing, the research team recommended a few small changes to the product: one to the notch mechanism that held the mesh in place, as well as widening the product for stability.

“The industry is moving towards more sustainable solutions, but they need to have the right benefits and features. This product has both.”

MICHAEL MEULI, NEWARK RECYCLED PAPERBOARD SOLUTIONS

NEW INNOVATIONS FROM OLD MATERIALS
NEWARK RECYCLED PAPERBOARD SOLUTIONS HELPS THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BECOME MORE SUSTAINABLE.