

Innovation & Technology Take Center Stage At RTA

New Apps Train & Connect Members To Market Trends By Jim Gauntt

Who says the wood tie industry is old and uninteresting? If you do, you might be behind the times.

Not only is RTA leading the way with a variety of video training modules, some earning valuable Personal Development Hours, but RTA will also unveil two new web- and mobile-friendly applications very soon.

These apps are designed for members to better connect to real-time marketplace procurement trends and to learn more about tie specifications and tie grading through visual defect analysis.

Tie Defects App

Through a partnership with the Western Wood Preservers Institute (WWPI), RTA

will soon release a Tie Defects App that dives deep into wood tie defects. For the first time in the tie industry's history, members will be able to download an app to their mobile device that features a visual reference guide to each of the known wood tie defects, with dozens of examples of

RTA – First in Wood Ties, First in Technology & Innovation for Members.

grade, IG and cull pictures to illustrate the defects.

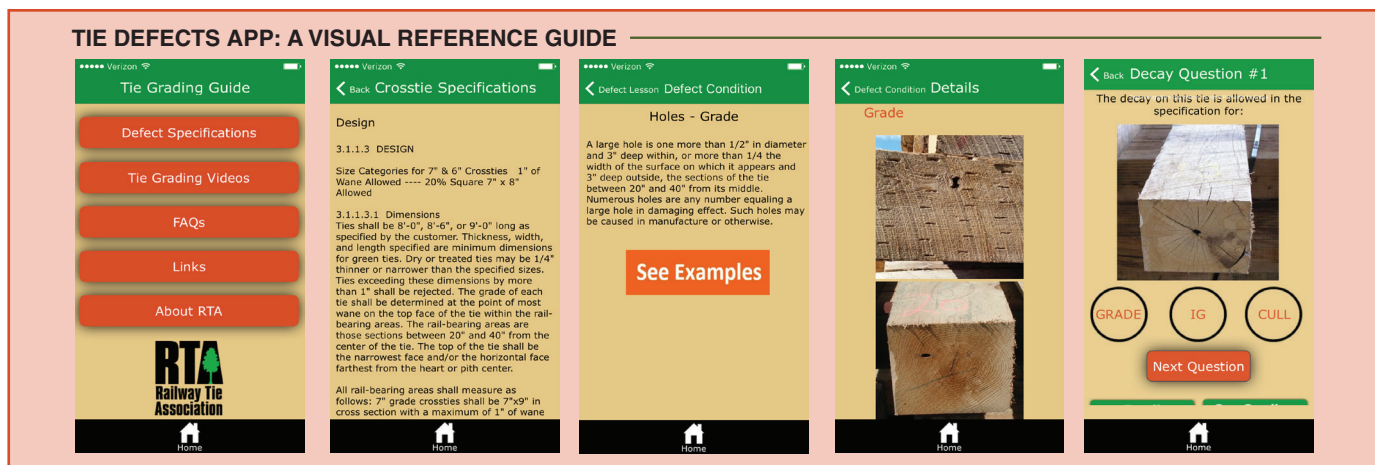
In addition to visually covering all the defects in-depth, certain tie conditions that are not defects, such as blue stain, will also

be visually referenced in the app's section, entitled "Defects? NOT!"

All of the above material will be native to the app, but also there will be connectivity within the app, via the web, to SD and HD videos of tie grading booths with and without illustrations of each tie's grade as it flows across the chain.

And there's even more. The RTA/WWPI design team has thought of everything...

Not only are there sections within the app to test what you have learned, but just in case a member wants to ask a question or make a suggestion to improve the app, they can also email Tie Grading Seminar instructors and staff questions via ties@rta.org from the link native to the app right on the mobile device. ➤



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Some of the illustrations within this article give a flavor of what to expect once the app is live and available for download. Once it is, it will be announced at www.RTA.org and in

a blast email. Also, for those members who might want to customize the app, a landing page option will be provided to allow member logos and messages to appear on the

splash page for a nominal fee.

Field Procurement Trends

The second exciting app is available now and is an attempt to continually improve members' and railroads' ability to get real-time field procurement trends reports.

Currently, reports are only updated once a month when field procurement managers are issued an interactive PDF form to fill out.

With the new app (available on mobile devices and on the RTA website at www.RTAstats.org) reporters can open their web-linked app from their mobile device or computer and input data at any point in time during the reporting period. A landing page allows all members to see real-time updates on a monthly and traveling timeline that archives and tracks previous months' data. The traveling timeline feature will allow members to see changes in trends at a glance as the marketplace ebbs and flows from month to month.

Another new feature for this app is the viewer's ability to combine smaller regions within a larger super-region to view larger reporting areas on the same landing page. This adds versatility to the app and provides more global information than has ever been available before.

RTA's procurement trends reporters overwhelmingly approve of the new app format.

"I like it a lot more than the old system," said David Roberts of Stella-Jones Corp. "User-friendly."

"Report layout is great. Very quick and easy," said Bob Bradley of Koppers Inc. "I like the way it goes to the summary at the end."

John Heller of Koppers Inc. echoed his colleagues' statements. "It works great. Hope everyone likes it. It's a nice improvement!"

"I like the new form very much," said Will Cumberland of North American Tie & Timber LLC.

"The new format works pretty good, and I don't have to save three files every month to pass them on. So, life is good. Thanks," commented Gene Willcutt of Stella-Jones.

The new form and a mock-up of the landing page are provided as illustrations to how this new app will function for reporters and users alike. ■

Wood Crosstie Procurement Trends

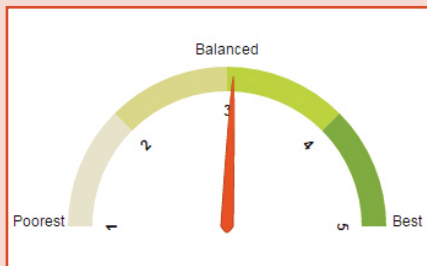


Railway Tie Association (RTA) Procurement Trends Dashboard below represents the monthly opinions of "in-the field" wood tie buyers who procure untreated crossties from sawmills in their specific regions. The data is submitted to RTA within the first two weeks of the month following the reporting period covered. The output is in two forms—monthly and a 12-month running view (which started in July 2016). You can choose individual regions or grouped regions from the dropdown menu for both the monthly and trend data for each question for the period selected.

Since the information provided represents a snapshot-in-time-opinion of individuals, each working for a variety of tie procurement companies, RTA does not warrant nor accept responsibility for the accuracy of the data generated. For questions or feedback please email us. © 2016 Railway Tie Association.

Hardwood Procurement Trends Eastern Half U.S. – July 2016

Crosstie Competitiveness vs. Other Hardwood Products



Current Demand For Pallet Lumber



Current Demand For Paper (Chips)



Current Demand For Lumber (#2 and #3)



Current Demand For Export



Current Demand For Board/Mat Timbers

