

Top-Notch Tie Grading Students Raise The Bar In Illinois

The Railway Tie Association's (RTA) Annual Tie Grading Seminar took students, instructors and RTA representatives to the Koppers Inc. plant in Galesburg, Ill. The

seminar, a three-day hands-on experience is designed to teach students engineering principles, wood identification and anatomy, defects, inspecting, fungi, drying, procurement and more as the concepts relate to wood ties.

Seminar instructors taught students how to spot defects that could limit tie life and also addressed manufacturing plant hygiene. "Students learned wood treatment practices and how a wood preservation facility works," said RTA Education Committee Chairman Marshall L. Allen. "We very much appreciate that so many from the Koppers team were on hand to share their knowledge with our students."

Enjoy the next few pages of photos and captions explaining the ins and outs of the

2018 Tie Grading Seminar. If you haven't joined RTA for one before, make plans now to attend next year's seminar. ■



Watch RTA.org for more information as it becomes available on next year's Tie Grading Seminar.

DAY 1

After enjoying a Koppers Inc.-sponsored reception on Monday, attendees get down to business on Tuesday. Union Pacific's Kevin Hicks joined us this year to present an introduction to railroad engineering principles. Then it's into the nitty gritty of wood species identification with Dr. Terry Conners of the University of Kentucky.



Koppers generously sponsored the kick-off reception on Monday. Good food and great conversation!



Education Committee Chairman Marshall Allen starts us off right with a safety briefing.



Thomas the Tank Engine offers some wisdom to begin the Tie Grading Seminar. "A train is only as good as its track."



Kevin Hicks begins the morning with coffee and engineering principles. His delivery sparked great questions from the class.



Terry Conners begins the basics of wood ID, condensing his usual semester-long class into a few hours.



Instructors, loupes, and knives all make wood identification a little easier. Rufus Fontenot of Stella-Jones takes a closer look at Douglas Fir.



Norfolk Southern's Kevin Conn cuts into a block to look more closely at species characteristics.



Stella-Jones' Jeffrey Benson discovers that red oak is porous. Dipped in bubble solution, it adds a bit of fun to the steep learning curve.



CROSSTIES CONGRATULATES RTA ON A 100-YEAR MILESTONE

Covey Communications Corp., publisher of *Crossties* magazine, joins with **Railway Tie Association** members in a biennial celebration of 100 years of service to the North American railroad community with the cost-effective and environmentally sound use of treated wood crossties.

As RTA enters its next century continuing its mission to improve the life-cycle performance of the treated wood crosstie, while enhancing its members' potential for market penetration and business opportunities, let us be the first to offer congratulations now and best wishes for the next 100 years.

Keep up the great work providing valuable, independent resources for market statistics, research and product development pathways, plus educational events that help connect the vast network of treated wood tie producers, their customers and their suppliers.

Congratulations from **Covey Communications Corp.**, your friends, associates and partners in publishing RTA's *Crossties* magazine since 1992.

RTA.org • ties@RTA.org
770-460-5553

Why Hack 'em
with a FRICK No. 0

The Frick Tie Mill
and save time and timber.
This mill is of approved design, light in weight, has plenty of pep, is durably constructed, and can be moved quickly and easily. Has all the desirable features and conveniences of larger and more expensive mill.
FRICK COMPANY, Inc.

The Trees, by Romeyn B. Hough.



After a full day of classroom work, attendees enjoy a reception sponsored by Brewco's Mike Goldston, pictured here with UP's Nate Irby and Stella-Jones' Kenny Dailey.



RTA President Tim Ries of Koppers Inc. enjoys the reception with Norfolk Southern's Kevin Conn and Koppers' Mary Kay Walker and Joe Rosenberg.

DAY 2

Species ID gets a wrap-up and then it's on to Defects 101 with Stella-Jones' Robert Pearce. Students get a look at cut tie ends and take a tie grading test. Then, it's off to the Koppers' Galesburg plant for some hands-on with full-sized ties.



Robert Pearce (L) helps students understand what defects look like. Marshall Allen (R) is on hand for discussion.



Eric Baughman of Stella-Jones is the winner of the first of three Amazon gift cards. He was first to correctly identify the species of the full-sized tie in the classroom breaking a three-way tie between Eric, Stella Jones' Jeffrey Benson, and voestalpine Nortrak's Shawn Bryant.



Instructors are on hand to help with species ID and defects in this practice test. Here, Nate Irby helps Eric Baughman of Stella-Jones and Clay Skinner of Koppers with a question.



Students concentrate on species and defects as they consider the ties at the plant. Terry Conners discusses a split tie with Koppers' Neal Galford.



Norfolk Southern's Courtney Watts smiles as she discovers the species and decides if this tie is grade, IG, or cull.



Robert Pearce, right, discusses tie characteristics with Stella Jones' Jeffrey Benson and Rufus Fontenot, and CP's Wade Ostrander.



Lightning & thunder drove the class inside for the answers to the practice tie grading derby.



Greg Voysey of Koppers Ashcroft wins the practice test. Bragging rights only for this win!

DAY 3

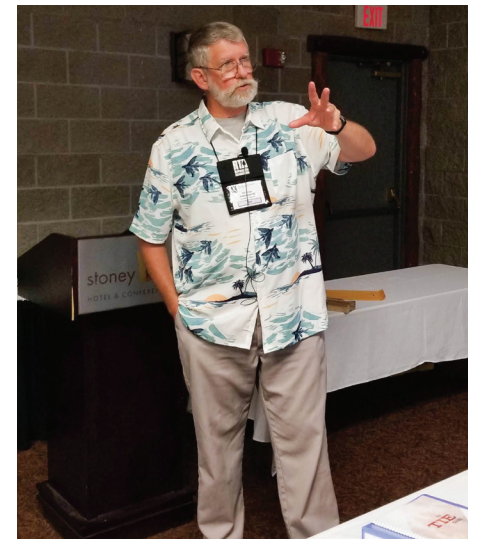
Students get right down to species ID with the Big Block test and a chance at another Amazon gift card. A treating demonstration follows a discussion about insects, fungi, and air-drying. Then it's off to Galesburg to tour the plant and the final Tie Grading Derby.



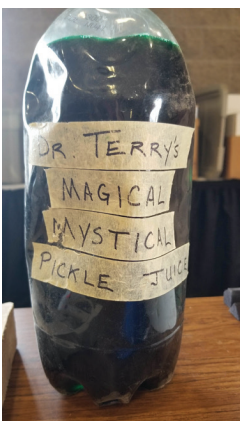
Cheryl Ponticello of Applied Testing & Geosciences, a new RTA member, considers species in the Big Block test.



Norfolk Southern's Sean Woody is the Big Block winner and gets the second Amazon gift card.



UK's Jim Ringe gets into the basics of air-drying and how insects and fungi can complicate the process of producing a railroad tie.



Terry Conners uses his magical mystical pickle juice...



...to demonstrate the pressure treating process.



CP's Wade Ostrander, UK's Chad Niman, and Applied Testing and Geoscience's Craig Joss watch the grading process from the booth at the plant.



Plant Manager Jim Evans leads the class on a plant tour.



A few more examples of ties before the test begins. Nate Irby goes over what we've learned so far with Stella-Jones' Quincy Borderlon and Robert Chapman.



A unique and effective way to display the ties for the Tie Grading Derby is to put them on rails. It's usually the other way around!



The Tie Grading Derby winner is Johnny Allison of Koppers with the highest score in memory.

Hats Off To The Tie Grading Crew!

Special thanks are in order for the **TIE GRADING INSTRUCTORS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES:** Marshall Allen, Terry Conners, Kevin Hicks, Nate Irby, Robert Pearce, Jim Ringe, Tim Ries, Ted Woerle and Barbara Stacey.

RTA TIE GRADING STUDENTS INCLUDE Johnny Allison, Karl Born, Milford Bryant,

Michael Embry, Neal Galford, Caleb Hutcheson, Joe Rosenberg, Marcus Sandman, Mark Siemsglusz, Clay Skinner, Bryan Stout, Jim Thompson, and Mary Kay Walker of Koppers Inc.; Eric Baughman, Jeffrey Benson, Quincy Borderlon, Doug Bryant, Robert Chapman, Craig Cook, Rufus Fontenot, Kendall Greer, Shaun Hollander, William Sensabaugh, Ronnie Travis, and Brad Vaught of Stella Jones

Corp.; Shawn Bryant, Brantley McClendon and Richard Payne of voestalpine Nortrak; Craig Joss and Cheryl Ponticello of Applied Testing & Geosciences; Chad Niman of University of Kentucky; Wade Ostrander of Canadian Pacific Railway; John Swearingin of Dudley Hardwoods; Greg Voysey of Koppers Ashcroft Inc.; and Courtney Watts and Sean Woody of Norfolk Southern. ■

