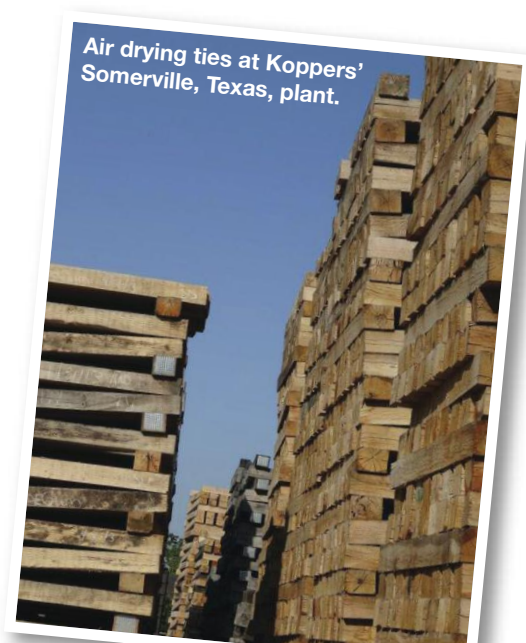


RTA **BLASTS OFF** To Houston For Summer Field Trip

Railway Tie Association (RTA) members attended the annual Summer Field Trip, which was held June 2-5 in the Houston area. The trip allowed attendees to tour a variety of operations, with an emphasis on safety procedures and manufacturing processes.

“Ensuring the safety of every RTA member, along with improving product quality, are very important goals for RTA,” said Executive Director Jim Gauntt. “The annual summer field trip plays a very important role in helping achieve these goals by allowing members to tour a variety of plant operations to see first-hand how other organizations implement safety procedures and other manufacturing processes.”

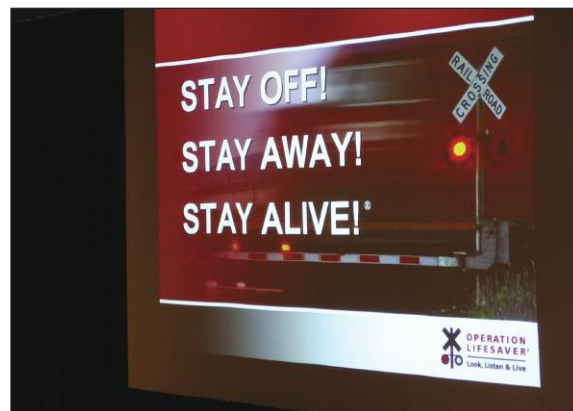


**Let's
Get It
Started!**

How best to start the Annual RTA Field Trip?



A fantastic Operation LifeSaver Railroad Safety Seminar was graciously put on by Mike Connell of the Port Terminal Railroad Association.



Attendees learn all about the nationwide program and the keys for staying alive near a railroad track.

DAY 1

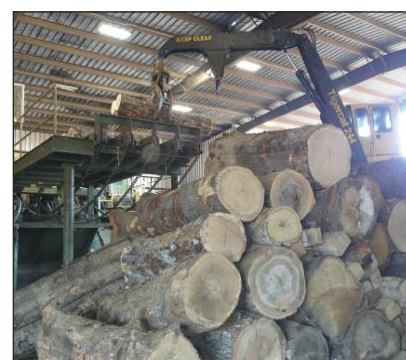
Woodville Hardwoods, Pacific Wood & Lufkin Creosoting



Our first stop is Woodville Hardwoods, a sawmill that sells ties to Gross & Janes Co.



Mike Pourney of Gross & Janes introduces Clint Anthony (left of post), owner and operator of Woodville Hardwoods, who gives the group a safety briefing.



Even with logs running scarce, the size of the logs on the deck are impressive.



Running two Circle Head rigs, this mill cuts upwards of 10,000 per week at capacity.



They were down to four days of logs, so they were only cutting three to four days per week. Here, a few ties are in the sorting chain.



The second step of the day was to new RTA member Lufkin Creosoting.



Located in Lufkin, this plant is part of a three treating plant group of companies (Colfax and Kisatchie are sister plants) dedicated primarily to pole production.



Operating three creosote cylinders 80 ft. x 8 ft., 72 ft. x 8 ft., and 140 ft. x 8 ft....



...they also produce bridge timbers for BNSF and others. With their purchase of Colfax they hope to do more railroad product business...



...while maintaining their pole business prowess.



The final stop of the day was Arizona Pacific's yard in Lufkin, Texas. Here, they build a variety of crane mats and ship them by rail to the oil shale lands in North Dakota.



Lufkin also operates a pine sawmill onsite and cuts not only bridge timbers, but also other high-quality pine timber products as well.



Assembling up to 100 per day for average orders of 3,000 to 5,000, this little operation is non-stop busy when they aren't stacking ties.

DAY 2

Koppers, Texas A&M University & UPRR Hearne Transload Center



First stop is the Koppers plant in Somerville. Here, the group is treated to a second breakfast and a safety briefing by Plant Manager Billy Newton before heading out to the yard.



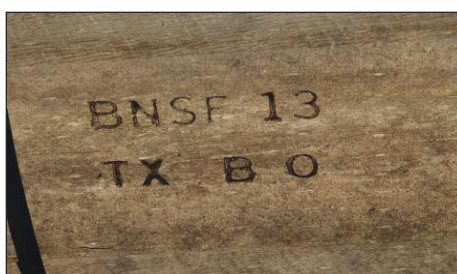
And what a yard it is! This high capacity plant annually produces well in excess of 1 million treated ties for BNSF and some commercial clients.



Beautifully managed, the yard is laid out perfectly for air-drying ties in the sweltering Texas summers.



No plant visit is complete without a review of the grading station and sorter.



Each BNSF tie is branded in a way that is visible after treatment.



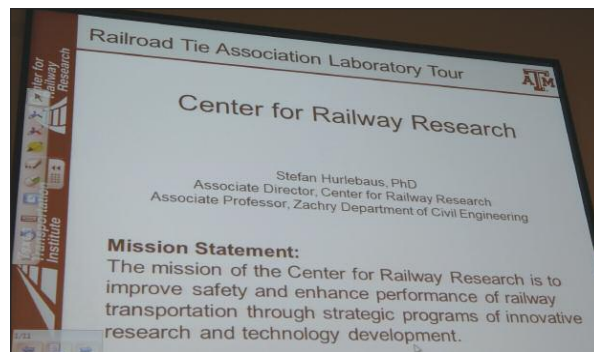
And they treat a lot. Note the cleanliness of these freshly treated ties!



Their four 8 ft. x 155 ft. cylinders are the workhorses for this operation.



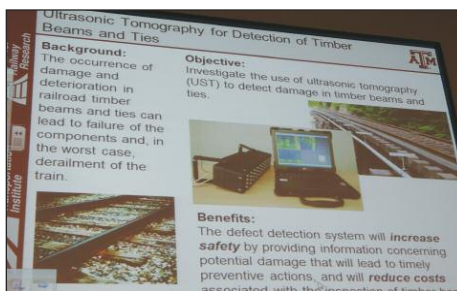
Proud Texans run this operation. There is no doubt you are in the Lone Star state here.



The next stop is the Center for Railway Research at Texas A&M University. This center's lab is dedicated to enhancing performance of railway transportation through technology.



Dr. Stefan Hurlbaeus guides the attendees through a tour of the facility's primary programs before visiting the labs and viewing some very interesting technologies.



One such new technology provides for tomographic mapping of tie condition using ultrasound.



This little device can be used for that and much more in the way of defect analysis.



In other parts of the lab we see axle testing and destructive methodologies for testing a variety of railroad products.



Then, it is on to the Westfield Auto Facility in Houston, Texas, guided by Shawn Cook.



At Westfield, contractors use a bi-level autorack to unload as many as 600 automobiles and trucks daily. (See the HD video of this in action in the digital edition).

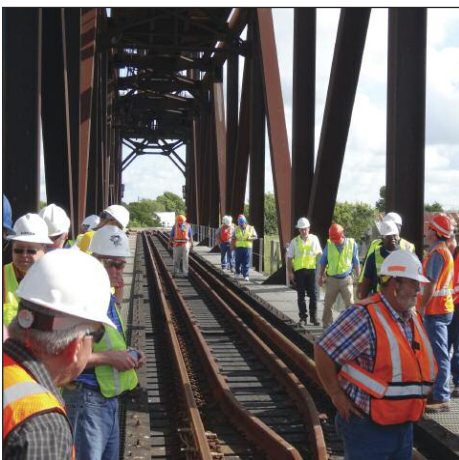
DAY 3 **Freeport & NASA**



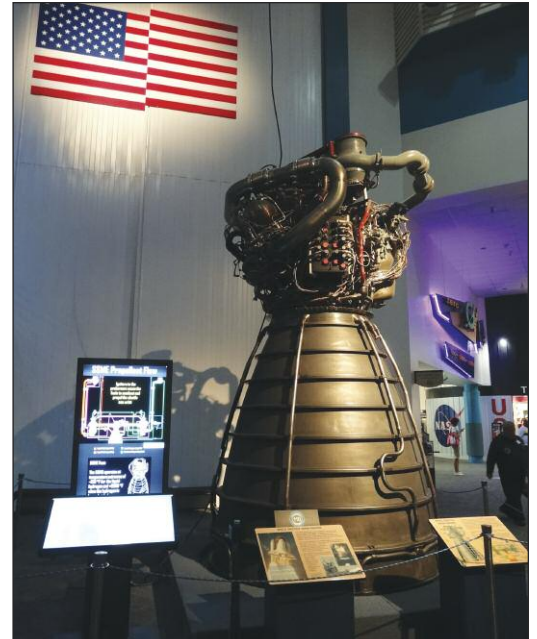
It's another Union Pacific day with our first stop at the lift bridge in Freeport. Here, the tall guy in the middle right is RTA Board Member Kevin Hicks giving the crew a safety briefing.



Railroad Bridge is only 1.25 million pounds shown in the up and down position.



In Freeport, Texas, this bridge is an important link to several major chemical and petroleum companies on the Gulf that receive vital plastics and petroleum products produced in Freeport.



After being stymied by traffic, the trip ended by visiting NASA in Houston, Texas. Some of the highlights included viewing the Mars manned project space capsule Orion, a space shuttle primary stage engine and the pilot's station on the shuttle.

Shout Outs!

Our most sincere thanks to everyone who attended and sponsored the 2013 rendition of the Annual RTA Field Trip. RTA would especially like to thank Marion Brown of Lufkin Creosoting (newest RTA producer member!), acting photographer, who captured this group photo in front of a prize-winning Blue Marlin caught by her dad (Dan Vines) off the coast of Mexico—Cabo San Lucas—in 1993. This picture was taken in Lufkin's stunning new office building. We also want to thank all those who hosted our visitors. And, of course the trip does not happen at all without those that coordinated things on the ground—Committee Chairman Wayne Kusmierczyk of Stella-Jones, Phil McDonald of Koppers Inc., Jim Brient of Nisus Corp., Kevin Hicks of Union Pacific Railroad and Mike Pourney of Gross & Janes.



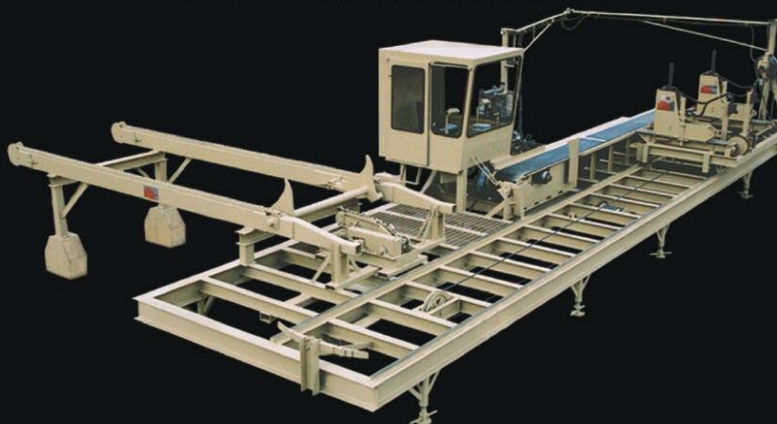
Attendees

Marshall Allen of Allen Railroad Services; John Getz of AmeriTies Holdings LLC; Allen Bowman of Arizona Pacific Wood Preserving; Rob Banister, Alicia Bitner and Mark Huston of BNSF Railway Company; Claus Staalner of C.S. Industries LLC; Brandon, Marc and Justin Stephens of Cahaba Pressure Treated Forest Products; Mark Austin of CSX Transportation; Bill Taylor of DTE Energy Services; Cal Bole and Baird Quisenberry of Eagle Metal Products; Mike Pourney of Gross & Janes Co.; Jerry Farley of JH Baxter & Co.; Wes Chandler of K.L. Barton & Sons Tie Co. Inc.; Sparky Hardeman of KMG-Bernuth Inc.; William Rhea of Kop-Coat Inc.; Gary Ambrose, Matthew Houk and Phil McDonald of Koppers Inc.; Ryan Simmons of Lone Star Specialty Products LLC; Grady Brafford of Lonza Wood Protection; Marcela Malinowski of Mariani Ecoline Dormentes; Bill Moss of MiTek Industries Inc.; Jeff Broadfoot of National Salvage & Service Corp.; Jim Brient of Nisus Corp.; Jack Hughes of Norfolk Southern Corp.; Tom Marr of Osmose Inc.; Johnny Clark and Brian McElwain of P&G Manufacturing LLC; Jim Gaunt of RTA; Buddy Downey, Wayne Kusmierczyk and David Whitted of Stella-Jones Corp.; Casey Ladloski, Anita Starbuck and Patrick Sullivan of Tolko Ashcroft Treating; Kevin Hicks of Union Pacific Railroad; Dave Koch and Jeff Parrett of Wheeler Lumber LLC.

Sponsors

Appalachian Timber Services, transportation; Eagle Metal, transportation; Gross & Janes, breakfast on-the-go; JH Baxter, lunch at NASA; Koppers Inc., breakfast on-the-go; MiTek Industries, snacks and drinks; Osmose Inc., transportation; P&G Manufacturing, lunch in Lufkin; Stella-Jones Corp., reception on Sunday; Tolko Ashcroft Treating, breakfast on-the-go; Union Pacific, lunch at Texas A&M University.

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