

2008 Field Trip Visits 3 States

Kentucky, Mississippi & Tennessee—7 Plants In 3 Days

Thirty-five members of the Railway Tie Association visited seven different plants representing several different cross-tie and wood applications for this year's field trip.



Sunday Reception

Gary Williams organized a delicious barbecue dinner that was sponsored by his company, Koppers Inc. David Caldwell, assistant editor of the *Hardwood Market Report*, gave everyone the latest information on the state of wood industries. His comments included recent past production and possible future trends. The reception was preceded by meetings of both the Manufacturing & Safety and the Research & Development committees.



Koppers members Rusty Pfeifer and Field Trip Coordinator Gary Williams flank Committee Chair Harry Bressler of Stella-Jones/BPB as they get ready for three great days.

Day 1

The first stop included three different facilities within Canadian National's huge Memphis operation.



This yard can handle more than 3,100 freight cars from 35 or more freight trains per day on 300,000 track feet of new construction.



It's pretty amazing to stand by a track as huge gravity-powered freight cars rumble by.



The third facility was the CN-CSX Transportation Gateway Intermodal Terminal—opened in 2005. With 1,800 parking spaces, two overhead cranes, and two sideload cranes, this operation can move massive numbers of containers on their way to your hometown.



CN's new Locomotive Shop sits adjacent to their 100-year-old roundhouse and offers more efficient elevated platforms and a wash bay with room to work on three engines simultaneously.



Our CN host, Martita Mullen, manager of the Memphis Yard Project (second from right), then took us to the newly upgraded Switch Yard.



This project reconfigured the switching facility to include an automated mini-hump over which freight cars are directed by gravity into sorting tracks for train make-up. At the top, a scanner reads the car's bar code and determines its final destination. The car is uncoupled and allowed to roll freely through a variety of switches that are electronically controlled based on the destination until it couples onto the end of the other cars going to the same place.



Joules (piston) "retarders" are strategically placed throughout the 45 different tracks to maintain each car's speed at 6, 4, and 2 mph. These upgrades have resulted in increased efficiency and decreased cost.



Bob Henderson of Miller Lumber Company then met us at the Casey Jones Railroad Museum and Old Country Store where he treated us to a grand buffet of down-home Southern cooking. He reminded us about the story as we climbed on the caboose in front of Casey Jones' actual engine # 382.



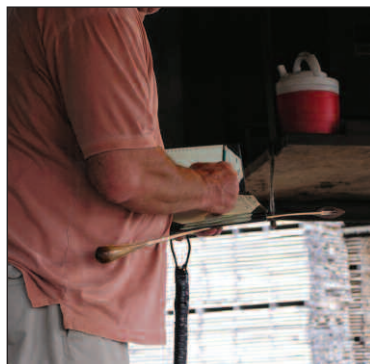
From there, Mr. Henderson took us to his Jackson, Tenn., plant which was started in 1929. He said this steam-powered band sawmill would be our smallest facility to visit. They specialize in switch ties, grade lumber, flooring and pallets.

Under normal conditions, Miller Lumber produces about a 75,000 board feet of lumber per week.

Harry Bressler (Stella-Jones/BPB) uses the dollar bill measuring test.



General Manager Gordon Street (second from right) explains Miller Lumber's procedures to Jamie McMillan (Tolko Industries/Ashcroft Treating), Tim Ries (Koppers), Wayne Kusmierczyk (Stella-Jones/BPB), Walt King (Norfolk Southern), and Gary Williams (Koppers).

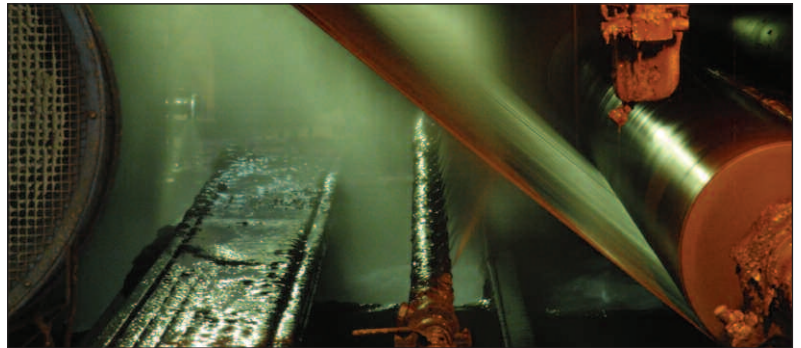


A Miller Lumber supervisor uses a hickory measurement tool to grade and record their product.

Our first day ended with a visit to the Temple Inland plant. Jim Shupe guided us around the facility that converts recycled boxes and virgin wood chips into paper reels that go on to become the corrugated center of new cardboard boxes. This plant feeds 85 different box plants.



Wood chips arrive at the New Johnsonville, Tenn., plant in container cars that are pulled onto the receiving platform. The entire truck is raised to let the chips fall into the collection bin and off to processing.



From the transfer tower, the chips are conveyed to a pile for storage. They are further screened and washed before being sent to the pulpmill. Refuse wood (bark and sawdust) is burned in the boiler and the steam is used to cook chips and dry paper.

Softened, cooked chips and recycled corrugated boxes are broken into individual fibers and mixed with water into a pulp. After several cleaning and screening steps, this pulp flows under pressure onto a moving fabric. The paper fibers align and form a wet web of paper that is pressed and dried over numerous cylinders.



Each large reel is moved to the winder. Here, it is cut into smaller rolls for shipment to various box plants. These rolls weigh between two and three tons. This plant uses 1,000 tons of chips & 500 tons of recycled boxes to produce 1,000 tons of paper per day.

Day 2



Day 2 began with a visit to the big Koppers treating plant in Guthrie, Ky.



Plant Manager Doug Lowe (center) led the tour of their facility and graciously answered many questions.



The stacks of air-drying ties at Koppers dwarf our tour group.



Untreated ties arrive and are sorted and stacked to air dry prior to treatment.



Based on the users' specifications, end plates are attached to many of the ties.

All ties are then loaded onto trams and off they go....



Trammed ties before

and after treatment.

This Koppers plant also prepares 40-foot track panels with 24 ties attached to track sections in advance.



A "feller buncher" at work...

...and the results.



Then it was on to Progress Rail Services' newest Locomotive Shop in Mayfield, Ky.

Plant Manager Andrew Kalke explains that this facility primarily does start-to-finish engine remanufacturing, locomotive repair and overhauling, and reconfigurations. Locomotives are then load tested, painted and out the door.



From there, it wasn't far to the new Stella-Jones/BPB plant in Fulton, Ky. But the first order of business was being treated to a tasty barbecue lunch with all the trimmings.



Plant Manager Wayne Kusmierczyk got everyone together for a walk through this new operation.



Large mirrors help during the grading process.



Some stacks at the Fulton plant are stickered and some use the German stacking method.



Face branding is a Canadian National requirement.



Treating cylinders are color-coded to ensure coordination between the loading process and the people in the back who oversee the treatment.



Production Manager Joe Fields explains how the treated ties are housed under cover and then loaded onto cars for transport.



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Day 3



Our final stop (no pun intended) on this 2008 RTA Field Trip was at the Batesville Casket Company Panola plant in Batesville, Miss., where Jon Oakley, plant manager, was our host.



This plant uses eight primary-appearance wood species—cherry, mahogany, maple, oak, pecan, pine, poplar and walnut. Cottonwood is used extensively in the construction of casket frames.



Caskets can be produced in any one of 350 different styles, 22 different stains, and three different finishes.



It was evident that great care and respect as well as outstanding craftsmanship go into each casket produced.



A Giant Thank You

from RTA and all 2008 field trip attendees to Gary Williams of Koppers Inc. who organized this comprehensive three-state trip and sponsored the reception dinner. RTA also wants to thank Bob Henderson from Miller Lumber Company for hosting the buffet lunch at the Casey Jones Country Store, MiTek for sponsoring the breaks each day on the bus, and Stella-Jones/BPB for the barbecue lunch at their Fulton plant. We also want to thank Dave Caldwell from the *Hardwood Market Report* for his timely industry updates.

ATTENDEES

Jonathan Hunter & David Piper of Brewco Inc.; Mark Daniel of Cross Ties of Virginia; Lisa Benz of CSX Transportation; Robby Johnson of Gross & Janes – Tight Spike; Chuck Black, Phillip Dowell, Phil McDonald, Rusty Pfeiffer, Tim Ries, Jonathan Thornton and Gary Williams of Koppers Inc.; Jimmy Williams of the Missouri Dept. of Agriculture; Bill and Jane Moss of MiTek Industries; Jack Hughes & Walt King of Norfolk Southern; Will Cumberland of North American Tie & Timber; Cliff Jones of Osrose, Inc.; Jim Gauntt & Carol Sue Ray of the Railway Tie Association; Bernie Gierschke of Robbins Engineering; Kenny Dailey of Seaman Timber Co.; Randy Bakkestuen, Harry Bressler, Doug Gentry, Wayne Kusmierczyk, and Brad Martin of Stella-Jones/BPB Corp.; Jim & Brenda Watt of The Crosstie Connection; Jeff Broadfoot & Mike Poor of Thompson Industries; and Wade Greenall, Scott Holness, & Jamie MacMillan of Tolko Industries Ltd./Ashcroft Treating.