

# 2010 Field Trip

RTA Members Visit Virginia & West Virginia

## RTA Field Trip Takes Participants On Forest Products Journey

The Railway Tie Association (RTA) held its annual summer field trip June 7-9 in the Roanoke Valley/Goshen, Va., region.

Participants visited a variety of railroad and timber manufacturing operations during the three-day event that took them through Roanoke, Salem, Blacksburg and Goshen, Va., as well as Ronceverte and Princeton, W.Va.

Following an opening reception sponsored by Thompson Industries, attendees were eager to get started on their forest products journey, as shown on the pages that follow.

### Welcome Reception



From left, Committee Chairman David Whitted; Jack Hughes, Chris Spiceland and Bill Rousis of Norfolk Southern (NS); Trip Coordinator Gary Williams of Koppers; and Randy Bowman of NS gather for a photo after the reception and superb presentation by Spiceland on NS partnerships with the short line railroads.

### Day 1 | Koppers Treating Plant - Salem, VA



On the first day, our eager group heads from Koppers' office in Salem to the tie unloader.



Creosote tank cars are spotted for unloading.



Bridge Mill Supervisor Steve Nipper (right) explains how a customer's drawing is turned into a finished bridge as Assistant Plant Manager Dale Akers looks on.



A single-block bridge timber being processed through a Mallotte gainer. Timbers are manufactured to exacting standards, numbered and packaged, and shipped to the end-use site for assembly.



16-foot oak switch ties—end trimmed, incised, inspected, and ready to be trammed and treated.



On the first day of the tour, the group stops in front of Koppers' Salem, Va., office just long enough for a picture, and then it's on to Virginia Tech.

### Day 1 | Virginia Tech School of Forest Products



Dr. Urs Buehlmann of the Virginia Tech School of Forest Products reviews the upcoming tour with attendees.



Attendees visit the pallet department where pallet design, materials, fasteners, etc., are rigorously tested.



Dr. Brian Bond explains the kiln-drying schedule tests conducted on a variety of hardwood species.



In this lab, destructive testing of structural members occurs.

### Day 1 | Allegheny Wood Products

The tour of the Allegheny Wood Products (AWP) mill starts with a visit to the log yard where a bar coding system is used for inventory and processing. AWP produces lumber from all of the Appalachian species. Its extensive inventory, diverse mill locations, and flexible transportation options allow the company to meet nearly every lumber buyer's requirements, from 4/4 through 8/4 and up to 16/4 in poplar.



AWP's Dean Alanko (left), vice president of sales and marketing, and Mark Jones (right, at center), facility manager, give a pre-tour safety briefing.



AWP packs its lumber for shipment in North America and around the world.

### Day 1 | Acme Wood Preserving



Johnny Batton, AWP yard manager (left), explains hardwood lumber grading (Note: A few ties come down this line, too!) and how the lumber is dried in one of their three kilns.



Acme's Bruce Hobbs (right) shares a little about the Gardner property where ties are first brought in from the sawmills for grading and fabrication work. The ties are prepared for treatment in this facility and are transported to the Princeton Yard, where the actual treating facility is located.



Field trip attendees watch as Acme's uniquely designed end-plating machine operates.



From left, Tony Chambers of Encore Rail and Stoner Parsons with Acme Wood Preserving and Bill Moss of Mitek Industries discuss the operations.



Acme Wood Preserving Inc. treats about 75-80 percent creosote wood ties (shown here), the balance CCA fence posts.

## Day 2 | Mullican Flooring



Mullican Flooring's four manufacturing facilities utilize state-of-the-art machinery to reduce labor costs and time and enhance the product. Here, the company's Jake Harmon discusses the operations and products.



Randy Bowman of NS inspects packs of oak flooring ready for shipment.



As the flooring comes out of the final stage of the production process, it is inspected and sorted for grade prior to packaging.



RTA Executive Committee Member Skipper Beal, left, and Harmon pause for a quick photo at the end of the tour.

## Day 2 | Greenbrier, The Bunker



Attendees visit The Greenbrier Resort for lunch and tour The Bunker, the former U.S. Government Relocation Facility, whose location was exposed in 1992.



The location of The Bunker, critical to its effectiveness, remained a secret for more than three decades. Today, it is a secure data storage facility, so cameras are not allowed inside. The resort is pictured here.

## Day 2 | Stella-Jones - Goshen, VA

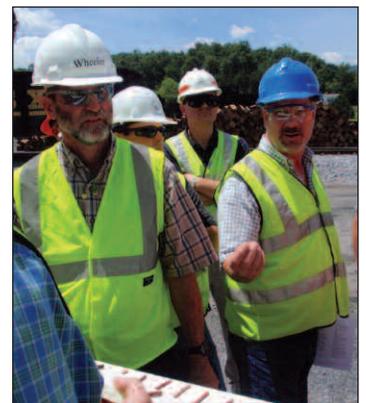
Attendees toured Stella-Jones' Goshen, Va., plant on June 8. The plant produces and treats bridge, switch, flange and crossing along with crossties for the railroad industry. The facility has five treating autoclaves, a tie trimmer, and a prefab operation where the bridge and flange timbers are produced. In April, the Goshen plant started full-scale treating of ties using a boron/creosote-based, single-stage process. During the tour Doug Gentry, division manager, informed the group of the progress and results of the single-stage process.



Doug Gentry, division manager, welcomes the group.



Attendees were shown borings from Stella-Jones' new one-stage boron/creosote-based, dual-treatment process, eliciting much interest and many questions.



The tour included a look at the air season tie yard at Goshen...



...and ties being processed through the tie trimmer in the grading area.



Stella-Jones' Goshen plant does quite a business in bridge timbers, shown here being dapped.

### Day 3 | Turman Lumber

Mike Turman established Turman Sawmill in 1967. The company later evolved into The Turman Group, whose Turman-Mercer division is a major component. Turman-Mercer purchases green lumber and sells 70 million board feet of dried lumber annually. The company operates multiple kilns with the capacity to dry more than 50 million board feet each year. Products include Appalachian oak, hickory, cherry, walnut, poplar, hard and soft maple, and Eastern white pine.



Gary Williams introduces Mike Turman, who describes the several mills and log home business he operates.



An example of the products cut by Turman Lumber.



Kevin Hicks, right, of UPRR and Gary Williams pause for a quick photo.



At the heart of Turman's operation is a bandsaw mill.



Sharpened bandsaw blades ready for installation.

### Day 3 | Norfolk Southern Material Yard - Roanoke, VA



Randy Bowman, engineer, track and material for NS, explains how used crossties, rail, rail plates, and miscellaneous hardware is reclaimed and reused at this facility while Gary Ambrose of Koppers and Carla Groves of NS listen closely.



Bill Rousis, Jim Watt and Jack Hughes enjoy lunch provided by NS prior to a tour of its material yard. This is a rare opportunity to visit the last surviving Class 1 turnout and track panel construction and material reclamation operation.



Jack Hughes, senior research engineer for NS, explains results of the recently completed test of various tie treatments at the NS Material Yard.



Bill Rousis of NS and Koppers' Gary Ambrose discuss test results of the various treatments.



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**A BIG THANK YOU** from RTA and all 2010 field trip attendees who attended this year's trip to Virginia and West Virginia. Thompson Industries sponsored the Sunday Night reception; Koppers Inc., the Bunker Tour at the Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.; Stella-Jones, the lunch Monday and Tuesday; MiTek Industries for the bus snacks and refreshments; and Norfolk Southern for the day three lunch. Thank you also to trip organizer, Gary Williams, his efforts made this one of the best organized and smoothest running trips ever. And finally, thank you David Whitted, who as chairman leads the RTA Manufacturing, Safety, Resources, and Statistics committee that sponsors this annual event.

**ATTENDEES**

Gary Ambrose, Gerry Roskovensky and Gary Williams of Koppers Inc.; Skipper Beal of Beal Lumber; Randy Bowman and Jack Hughes of Norfolk Southern; Jeff Broadfoot of Thompson Industries; Tony Chambers of Encore Rail; Will Cumberland and J.T. Permenter of North American Tie & Timber; Kenny Dailey of Boatright Railroad Products; Buddy Downey, Ken Peirson and David Whitted of Stella-Jones; Kevin Ford of Merichem Co.; Jim Gauntt of Railway Tie Association; Roy Henderson and Don Leary of Appalachian Timber Services; Kevin Hicks of Union Pacific; Bruce Hobbs of Acme Wood Preserving; Dave Koch of Wheeler Lumber; Jeffrey Lippincot of Tank Fab; Bill Moss of MiTek Industries; Jeff Parrett of Wheeler Lumber; Baird Quisenberry of Eagle Metal Products; Howard Tomlinson of Mellott Wood Preserving; and Jimmy Watt of Crosstie Connection.



**THERE, THEN.  
Here, Now.**

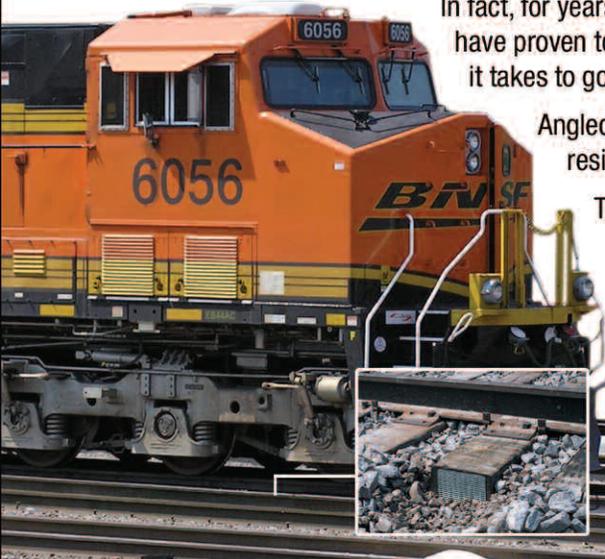
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