

RTA Makes History With 101st Annual Symposium & Technical Conference

By Kristen McIntosh



One hundred years after officially forming as the RTA, the association is making history with its upcoming 2019 Annual Symposium and Technical Conference.

Slated for Oct. 15-18 at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Ariz., this year's event marks the association's 101st general membership meeting.

RTA's predecessor groups date back to the late 1800s when the National Association of Railroad Tie Producers was formed to support the railroad tie industry and preserve the forest through conservation.

Since its earliest days, RTA's mission has been to provide the forum and direction for the continual improvement in the lifecycle of the engineered wood crosstie and its purpose is to promote the economical and environmentally sound use of wood ties.

RTA's Annual Symposium and Technical Conference will bring together those representing all facets of the railroad and wood tie industries for a busy few days of networking, sharing information and ideas, and fun.

Conference presenters and exhibitors will review new products and services, share updates on the latest Class 1 railroad

purchasing plans, provide status reports on major engineering projects, and provide insight on a variety of related topics, including the latest in procurement, economic issues and R&D initiatives affecting the industry.

To finalize your registration, log onto www.RTA.org/2019-conference or complete the registration form that follows in the issue and email it to ties@RTA.org. Call (770) 460-5553 or email with questions.

THE RESORT

Loews Ventana Canyon in Tucson offers a magnificent view of the surrounding Catalina Mountains and the indigenous saguaro cactus in every direction. While at the Loews, you are encouraged to explore nearby hiking trails, an 80-foot waterfall, and the resort's host of relaxing offerings.

The resort was designed to blend right into the Southwest landscape, including the pool and golf courses. Be sure to take a swim or relax on the luxurious pool deck as you take in the surrounding scenery.

Food will be plentiful during the conference, but don't miss the opportunity to visit the hotel's numerous dining and beverage outlets. Another fun option is a visit to the

guest-sponsored hospitality suites for good conversation, snacks and beverages. Hours will be posted on the printed agenda.

DAY 1

On Wednesday, Oct. 16, attendees will be able to connect with old friends and make new ones during events like the annual RTA Golf Tournament, to be held on the Mountain Course at The Lodge at Ventana Canyon. The Mountain Course's signature hole is a short, par-three third that plays from an elevated tee box next to boulders and over a ravine to a small green 100 yards away that is tucked between boulders. The remainder of the course is a gently rolling test of golf with water hazards and desert lining most fairways. Keep your eye out for wildlife like deer, coyote, quail, red-tailed hawks, bobcats, rabbits and roadrunners.

Also on tap for this day is Jewelry Making at Tohono Chul and a Desert Jeep Excursion. Both activities are optional and require a registration fee. The jewelry-making group will join two regional jewelry makers to make earrings and necklaces with turquoise, agates and other gems. Complementing the activity is brunch with bottomless Prickly Pear mimosas and mar- ➤



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garitas. Afterwards, visit the Palo Verde and Hummingbird Gardens or visit the gift shop.

The Desert Jeep Excursion is a guided tour through the plants, animals and history that make the Sonoran Desert unique. Learn about the saguaro cactus, visit the Hohokam Indian occupation site, and see bountiful desert wildlife.

Later in the evening, enjoy RTA guest-sponsored hospitality suites and the RTA President's Reception.

DAY 2

The RTA General Business Session and Welcome begins at 7:45 a.m., Thursday, Oct. 17. Victoria Wilcox, Georgia Author of the Year and author of the "Southern Son" trilogy, will give a presentation titled "Connecting Two Centuries: Guns, Gamblers & Railways."

Member guests may choose to participate in the Best of the Barrio Tour from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The tour is a culinary tour through the authentic Mexican cuisine of Tucson.

The special presentation will be followed by a session discussing economic, trade and policy featuring the expertise of ABH Consulting's Tony Hatch and Mayer-Brown LLPs Tiffany Smith.

Next up is the Hardwood Resources/Procurement session moderated by Hardwood Federation's Dana Lee Cole and featuring the insights of sawmillers and academicians who offer details on current and future resources and procurement landscape.

The RTA Working Luncheon will feature a keynote address from Jack Hellmann, president and CEO of Genesee & Wyoming, and an industry update from Christy

Sammon of GoRail. Scholarship winners will also be announced during the luncheon.

The Class I Engineering and Environmental Forum will follow with railroad engineering professionals sharing the details and status of their major engineering projects for the year, including how wood ties have factored into those projects.

In a major shift from conferences past, the second day will be capped off by the **New Grand Awards Reception**. To be held in place of the annual banquet, the Grand Awards Reception is designed to allow attendees more opportunity to connect with one another in a laid-back setting filled with food, music, honors and fun. Attendees will be able to mix and mingle with one another as well as exhibitors during this time.

During the reception, RTA will honor industry veterans for the significant roles they have played in the success of the wood tie industry with awards and biographical videos.

Once the awards ceremony is complete, attendees are free to continue enjoying the evening at the reception or depart for evening activities of their choosing.

"The Grand Awards Reception takes the evening in a new direction that offers more choice and opportunities for vendors and also for networking," said RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt. "We heard from members in the past they wanted something a little less formal, and we believe this event fulfills that objective."

DAY 3

Friday, Oct. 18 will begin with the Research Session, where attendees will be brought up to speed on the latest research and develop-

ment projects affecting the wood tie industry involving tie life expectancy, inspection, forestry and more.

The Railroad Purchasing Forum will follow. During this standing-room-only session, attendees will learn first-hand from Class I purchasing professionals their anticipated tie program for the coming year.

"RTA is taking the opportunity during our Centennial Celebration to take off into a new direction with some of our events," Gauntt said. "It will be exciting and fun and provide multiple new opportunities for everyone to gather at our Grand Awards Reception and still have time for other evening activities—the time you spend with us is flexible and offers a new twist on how to enjoy our event."

Gross & Janes Co. President Bill Behan also commented on the upcoming conference. "I am very proud to be a part of the Centennial Celebration of the Railway Tie Association. As a fourth-generation forest products professional, I appreciate the longevity and importance of this accomplishment. Railroading also runs deep in my family roots, as my great-great-grandfather was a director of The St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railway Company in 1886. Thus, my involvement today with RTA has a special significance to me. The upcoming RTA Conference is the beginning of the next century of service for our industry. The educational content and networking opportunities are a valuable tool for any industry professional. The Grand Awards Reception will highlight the importance of personal accomplishments and the historical significance that our industry provides. While we may be in the age of information technology, it is the railroad that continues to serve goods, food and shelter for America. The RTA is excited to continue this service well into its second century." ■

Register for the
**101ST ANNUAL
RTA SYMPOSIUM
& TECHNICAL
CONFERENCE**

by using the form
on page 22 or visiting
RTA.org/2019-conference.



SYMPOSIUM & TECHNICAL CONFERENCE

Oct. 15-18, 2019 | SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE*

*Subject To Updates

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

- 1-3 p.m. RTA R&D Committee Meeting
- 3-5 p.m. RTA Executive Committee Meeting
- 6-8 p.m. RTA Executive Committee President's Dinner

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16

- 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. RTA Golf Tournament (optional*)
The Lodge at Ventana Canyon
- 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Jewelry Making at Tohono Chul (optional*)
- 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Desert Jeep Excursion (optional*)
- 3-6 p.m. RTA Guest Sponsored Hospitality Suites
- 5:30-7 p.m. RTA President's Reception

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17

- 7:45-8 a.m. RTA General Business Session & Welcome
- 8-8:45 a.m. Special Presentation by Victoria Wilcox, Georgia Author of the Year, "RTA Time Machine - Connecting Two Centuries: Guns, Gamblers & Railways"
- 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Guest Event: Best of the Barrio Tour (optional*)
- 8:45-9:45 a.m. Economic/Trade/Policy Session
Tony Hatch, ABH Consulting
Tiffany Smith, Senior Policy Advisor, Mayer-Brown LLP
- 9:45-10 a.m. Networking & Exhibition Break
- 10 a.m.-Noon Hardwood Resources/Procurement Session
Dana Cole, Hardwood Federation, Moderator
Dr. Matthew Pelkki, University of Arkansas-Monticello
Joe Conway, Ozark Wood Fiber
Tommy Battle & Craig Miller, Battle Lumber Company
Claire Getty, Thompson Appalachian Hardwoods
- 11:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Networking & Exhibition Break
- Noon-2:30 p.m. RTA Working Luncheon
Luncheon features keynote address, scholarship presentation and mini workshop and continues directly into next session
Jack Hellmann, President/CEO, Genesee & Wyoming, Keynote Address
Christy Sammon, GoRail, Industry Update
- 2:30-4 p.m. Class 1 Engineering & Environmental Forum
Three-minute Vendor-mercials will occur during session

- Edward Sparks**, Assistant Chief Engineer of Structures, CSX, AREMA President
- Rachel Beck**, Union Pacific (invited)
- Matt Hammond**, AVP/Chief Engineer-System Maintenance and Planning, BNSF (invited)
- Tod Echler**, AVP Engineering, CSX
- Michael Singelyn**, Sr. Manager Engineering, Canadian National (invited)

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Grand Awards Reception & Tapas (NEW FORMAT!)

Reserve a table for the entire evening or choose to mix and mingle and enjoy creative western cuisine specialties. Doors open promptly at 5:30 p.m., with awards following from 6:15-7 p.m. More food, music, networking and fun continues, or make outside dinner plans for after 7 p.m.



Download the Conference App with this QR code and at www.eventmobi.com/rt2019

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18

- 7:45-10:30 a.m. Research Session
Mark Mankowski, Research Entomologist, U.S. Forest Products Laboratory
- Creosote Council Presentation
Stephen Smith, Stephen Smith Consulting, "Societal Benefits of Creosote-Preserved Wood"
- Sam Minton**, BNSF/Tony Mauricio, Georgetown Rail, "Wooden Crosstie Life Expectancy on the BNSF"
- Tony Mauricio**, Georgetown Rail, "Complete Machine Vision Inspection of Newly Fabricated Railroad Timber"
- Robert Fronczak**, Association of American Railroads, "AAR Tie Survey"
- Dr. Tim Young**, University of Tennessee
- 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Railroad Purchasing Forum
Kristine Storm, Genesee & Wyoming, Moderator/Presenter
Cory Thomas, BNSF (invited)
Nate Irby, Union Pacific
Erin Carson, CSX Transportation (invited)
Bill Blaise, Kansas City Southern (invited)
Hamza Founane, Canadian National (invited)
Wade Ostrander, Canadian Pacific (invited)

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR ATTENDEES & SPOUSES/GUESTS

THESE EVENTS REQUIRE ADDITIONAL REGISTRATIONS. All of the below activities are optional and require additional registrations. All events have minimum participation requirements, and maximums may apply in some cases.

OCTOBER 16, 2019

RTA Golf Tournament

The Lodge at Ventana Canyon

8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. / \$245 pre event/\$275 on site

The Mountain Course has made a name for itself due to one hole: the short, par-3 third that plays from an elevated tee box next to boulders, over a ravine to a small green 100 yards away tucked between boulders. The remainder of the course is not as dramatic, but it is a gently rolling test of golf with a collection of water hazards and desert lining most fairways. It's not uncommon to see wildlife at Ventana Canyon, including deer, coyote, quail, red-tailed hawks, bobcats, rabbits and roadrunners.

Private Jeep Excursion Into The Sonoran Desert

25 minimum/30 maximum

9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. / \$150 pre event/\$175 on site

Experience the desert first hand! Our knowledgeable guides will lead us through the plants, animals and history that make the Sonoran Desert unique. On the way we will learn about the life of the giant saguaro cactus,

visit a 1,000-year-old Hohokam Indian occupation site, and see bountiful desert wildlife. Our guides will even bring along a critter or two.

Jewelry-Making & Lunch At Tohono Hills

25 minimum/30 maximum

9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Last year, we went glass-blowing with a Chihuly artist, and this year we expand on the idea by joining two of the Southwest's coolest jewelry makers to learn how to make earrings and necklaces with turquoise, agates and other gems. Better yet, we do it with brunch and bottomless Prickly Pear Mimosas and Margaritas at the stunning gardens of Tohono Chul. Learn the process, then grab a bite and make your own exactly the way you want. Afterwards, visit the Palo Verde and Hummingbird Gardens or visit the gift shop before wearing your new creation back to Ventana Canyon. If you want to explore the entire gardens on your own or even take a docent tour, that's also an option. Transportation and food and beverages plus the class, hands-on instruction and help, plus all that's required to make your jewelry, is

included in this special day in the desert Southwest.

OCTOBER 17, 2019

Private Best of the Barrio Tour

6 minimum/45 maximum

9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. / \$125 pre-event/\$150 on site

Ride aboard one of our luxury vehicles through Tucson's Barrio while getting an insider's look at each location and its recipe for success. With tastings ranging from handmade pastries/tortillas (behind-the-scenes bakery tour), carne aside, Sonoran hot dogs, chicken quesadillas, grilled shrimp and more, you will not go hungry. This combination of cuisine, history and fun has already proven to be a winner with RTA attendees, worldwide visitors and locals. RTA's most popular tour in 2015, this tour is a "Best of Tucson" award winner and in 2012 inspired Visit Tucson's international marketing campaign, "The Best 23 Miles of Mexican Food," which can be found in Tucson.

RTA 101st Conference Centennial Celebration

Grand Reception/Buffer

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Entertainment will be provided by Latin guitarist Gabriel Romo whose unique style, influenced by Jose Feliciano, and talent delight audiences throughout the Southwest and especially in his hometown of Tucson.



101ST ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM & TECHNICAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Tucson, Arizona | Oct. 15-18, 2019



Download the Conference App with this QR code and at www.eventmobi.com/rta2019

NOTE: CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES COVER ALL MEETINGS, BUSINESS LUNCHEON, PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION, AND GRAND AWARDS RECEPTION. Please complete **both** the registration AND golf/activities form if you want to play in the golf tournament or attend the optional events



#rta2019 for 2019 Conference Tweets

Reserve Your Hotel:

Loews Ventana Canyon

Make your reservations now!

Reserve Online At: <https://www.loewshotels.com/ventana-canyon/rta-2019-annual-symposium-technical-conference>

The room block expires Sept. 23, 2019.

Room Block Only Guarantees Rate. **ROOM BLOCK DOESN'T GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY SO BOOK EARLY!**

Make hotel reservations under the RTA Room Block by calling 1.855.563.5127

RTA Room Block Rate is \$195 + tax per night.

Reserve Your Space:

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (Golf registration form is at the bottom)

Name _____ Company _____

TO APPEAR ON BADGE

Address _____ Phone _____

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD, PLEASE USE ADDRESS ON CARD

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Business) Email: _____ Spouse Name (if attending) _____

Please Check All Fees That Apply.

Yearly Membership fees must be paid in advance.

	Fees For Early Reg. (Before 9/1/19)	Fees For Late Reg. (After 8/31/19)
<input type="checkbox"/> Producer, Supplier, Contractor & Consulting Member	\$595	\$645
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate Member	\$375	\$425
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Member—Railroad, Government & Academic	\$655	\$705
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Member—Other	\$995	\$1045
<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse Participation (Fee to attend any conference events.)	\$275	\$325

(Full refund (minus \$50 admin fee) until 8/31/19. Half refund until 9/14/19. No refunds after 9/14/19)

Optional Events

	Advanced Registration	On Site Registration
<input type="checkbox"/> Golf Tournament <i>Fill out form below.</i>	\$245 pp	\$275 pp
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeep Tour with Lunch	\$150 pp	\$175 pp
<input type="checkbox"/> SW Jewelry Making at Tohono Chul with lunch	\$245 pp	\$275 pp
<input type="checkbox"/> Best of Barrio Tour—Occurs during Business Sessions	\$125 pp	\$150 pp

****Minimums & Maximums Are In Effect So Advanced Registration is Necessary****
Tours are not guaranteed to run if minimums are not met.

TOTAL PAYMENT (Include spouse fees & any optional tours or golf fee) \$ _____

Payment Type:

CHECK CREDIT CARD

Card # _____

Exp Date _____

Name On Card _____

3 digit CVC on back of card _____

4 digit CVC on front of AMEX _____

Billing Zip/Postal Code if different from above: _____

NOTE: Presenters and attendees who are RTA members need to check the box that corresponds to their membership type and submit that fee.

RTA GOLF REGISTRATION PLEASE SUBMIT ONE FORM PER GOLFER

THE LODGE AT VENTANA CANYON

Wednesday, October 16, 2019 • RTA Tournament - Shotgun start format (\$245 each player).
Contact golf shop at 520-577-4015 for club rentals.

Name _____ Company _____ Handicap _____

If you have preferred playing partners for main tournament list them below (Each must register separately.)

1. Your Name: _____ 2. Preferred Partner: _____

3. Preferred Partner: _____ 4. Preferred Partner: _____

Return this form with all registration fees to:

Railway Tie Association

115 Commerce Dr.,
Suite C
Fayetteville, GA 30214

(P) 770-460-5553

(F) 770-460-5573

To submit form electronically, e-mail to:

ties@rta.org