

# Blockbuster Treatment In Store In The South

## RTA 85th Convention Packs A Big Punch

It just keeps getting bigger and better. In fact, this year's annual gathering of tie industry officials at the 85th Annual RTA Convention in Charleston, S.C., promises to be more exciting than ever. Presentations of exceptional depth and importance will once again run into a second day—great activities for the entire family, a fabulous location and a Polynesian luau. What more can you ask?

The RTA annual convention has grown into one of the year's most important events for the railroad and wood preserving industries. And, because of the number of important topics lined up for the convention, the sessions have increased to include another half day. "Over the past two or three years, the subjects that had to be covered have grown so quickly that we had to increase the seminar time by 50 percent," said Gary Ambrose of Koppers Inc., RTA president. And this year is no different.

Keynote presentations are expected from Allan Rutter, administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, and Roger Nober, chairman of the Surface Transportation Board. Special addresses are also expected from Wendell Cox of The Heartland Institute, Ed Hamberger of the Association of American Railroads and Richard Timmons of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association.

We'll also hear a special presentation from Canadian Pacific Railway's Robert Nash, general manager of Signals and Communication. Nash is incoming president for the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Association and will share his thoughts on how future grade crossing initiatives will impact the tie industry.

Additionally, a great variety of wood preserving issues will be covered by Dr. Kenn Brooks of Aquatic Environmental Sciences; David Crow, the Creosote Council's voice in Washington; Colin McCown, the American Wood-Preservers' Association's new executive secretary; and more.

Attendees will also hear from the lead researcher heading the USDA's Formosan Subterranean Termite Task Force, Dr. Alan Lax, who will explain the current issues in Mississippi and the efforts under way to mit-



Charleston is a beautiful, historic city that will serve as the site of the 2003 RTA Convention. Pictured here is Rainbow Row.

igate the effects of this pest in railroad track.

A host of research-oriented work will be presented from TTCI staff, ZETA-TECH Associates and railroad engineers. Conducted in conjunction with the Engineering Forum, new information on how tie replacement strategies are extending the life of the wood tie as well as the expanding use of Parallam by BNSF will be presented.

An introduction to RTA's new visual guide to tie inspection and a report on strategic planning is also intended, along with a Short Line Executives' Forum and the Class 1 Purchasers Forum.

But this event won't be all business. Spouses will be able to enjoy a presentation from Charleston's Silver Lady, Dawn Evers, who, through the use of several million dollars of antique silver, shares the area's fascinating history. Evers, a frequent guest on PBS's "The Antiques Road Show," will host this entertaining event. Further adding to the convention's appeal, The Mills House, our

host hotel, is situated within two to three blocks of almost every significant shopping and historical area in Charleston. So, don't forget to pack your walking shoes.

If you are up for a little fun on the links, Arnold Palmer's First Signature Course is ready. Can you handle a bit of spicy "action" in the Lowcountry? Truly a spectacular venue to test the seasoned and not-so-seasoned golfer, RiverTowne Country Club highlights the extracurricular activities as host of this year's golf tourney.

And what would an RTA convention be without a unique banquet? The Polynesian luau theme of this year's annual banquet will be held in one of the oldest historical buildings in the city, and noted psychologist and humorist Dr. Charles Petty will enchant and delight participants.

Petty was raised in Arkansas, has been a counselor and a professor of psychology and was a senior staff member in the North Carolina governor's office for seven years. He even taught former President Bill Clinton how to shoot a rifle in Boy Scout camp when Clinton was just 12 years old. Petty, a Certified Speaking Professional and member of the National Speakers Association Hall of Fame, will share with attendees how the family plays a role in everything they do—from the home to business and more.

Call now to make your reservations for this year's convention by calling The Mills House at (843) 577-2400. You may also visit the hotel's website at [www.millshouse.com](http://www.millshouse.com). §

### Silver Lady Set To Engage & Entertain RTA Spouses

Dawn Evers, a native of Charleston, will be the featured presenter at a spousal event to be held in conjunction with the RTA Annual Convention.

Known as "The Silver Lady," Evers has more than a quarter century of experience in silver and jewelry of all types and periods. Along with business partner David Bigda, Evers owns a shop at the corner of State and Cumberland streets. Evers is a gifted and humorous instructor who is a nationally recognized expert on the history and construction of silver. She has been featured in many publications, including *Southern Accent*, *Veranda*, and *Town & Country*, and makes regular appearances on national and local media, including PBS's "Antiques Road Show" as well as her own weekly educational program. Evers has served as a consultant to the U.S. Department of State, the White House and many museums. She is a specialty consultant for *Fortune* 500 Forum and is a senior instructor with the Charleston Antiques School.

A typical presentation includes a 10-minute walk from The Mills House to her shop on State Street, where guests are invited to peruse the inventory before retiring to her office in the rear of the shop. There, Evers has on display approximately \$4 million worth of antique silver for guests to see and learn more about. She also encourages guests to bring a piece of silver from their own home that they wish to learn more about. §