

# Crosstie Grading Seminar To Offer Students More Instruction, Greater Access To Teachers

**By Kristen McIntosh**

The Railway Tie Association (RTA) will hold its 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Crosstie Grading Seminar Aug. 2-4 in the Roanoke/Salem, Va., area.

Fieldwork, including the Species Identification and Crosstie Grading Derby, will take place at the Koppers Inc. plant in Salem.

“This is another shirt-sleeves and jeans working and learning experience,” said RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt, who will serve as an instructor during the seminar. “The teaching staff includes professors, railroaders, foresters and wood preservers. Attendees will represent a cross-section of those involved in processing, inspecting, specifying and using treated wood crossties. We’ll cover untreated wood deterioration, storage and handling, species identification, defects and grading, treating technology, and more. We will strongly emphasize the practical aspects of tie grading.”

This year, the seminar has been expanded to include **three full days** of instruction to accommodate a variety of learning experiences, including grading station videos, discussion and testing, as well as an additional review session on species identification.

“The course has also been revamped to give more one-on-one time with the instructors at the full-sized tie grading session on day two of the seminar,” said Marshall Allen, chairman of RTA’s Education Committee.

Instructors for the course will include Marshall Allen, Terry Conners, Jimmy Watt, Jeff Morrell and Gauntt.

Marshall L. Allen is district manager, Track and Right of Way Maintenance for Metrolink Commuter Rail System in Southern California. Prior to this he was a 20 year veteran of the former Southern Pacific Transportation Company Engineering Department. He has a B.A. degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix.

Conners, an associate extension professor at the University of Kentucky, holds a bachelor of science degree in forest products from Pennsylvania State University, a master’s degree in wood science from the University of Massachusetts, and a Ph.D. in forestry and forest products from Virginia Polytechnic and State University.

Jeff Morrell, a researcher at Oregon State University in the Department of Forest Products, holds a bachelor’s degree in forest biology from the College of Environmental

Science and Forestry at the State University of New York, a master’s degree in plant pathology from Pennsylvania State University, and a Ph.D. in forest pathology and mycology from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at the State University of New York.

Jimmy Watt, owner of The Crosstie Connection in Austinville, Va., performs crosstie inspections for Class 1 and short line railroads as well as for treating facilities and railroad contractors. Formerly quality assurance engineer for Norfolk Southern, Watt is also a past chairman of AREA Committee 30 – Ties and Wood Preservation. Watts holds a bachelor of science degree from North Carolina State University.

Jim Gauntt, executive director of RTA, is a 30-year veteran of the wood preserving industry, having worked as director of product acceptance for Osmose Wood Preserving Company and vice president of sales for Randall Brothers. He is also the published author of numerous articles, papers and publications, and a speaker on the topic of wood preserving and tie industry subjects.

The cost of the seminar is \$525, which includes the price of the seminar, take-home materials, Sunday night reception and dinner Monday night (sponsored by Koppers Inc.).

Attendees should arrange for their own accommodations by the July 1 deadline through the Holiday Inn Tanglewood in Roanoke by calling (540) 774-4400. Attendees must ask for the RTA room block during the registration process to receive the negotiated \$113 per night rate (not including tax) for a single room or \$137 per night rate (not including tax) for a double room. The rate includes breakfast and lunch on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

RTA recommends making airline reservations into the Roanoke Regional Airport and either renting a car to drive the approximately eight miles to the hotel or taking the hotel’s complimentary shuttle.

For more information, contact Debbie Corallo, RTA administrator, at dcorallo@rta.org or (770) 460-5553. To register online or view a complete agenda visit [www.rta.org](http://www.rta.org).

## CROSSTIE GRADING SEMINAR

### August 2-4



✂ Cut Here

Yes, I will be attending the **2009 TIE GRADING SEMINAR FOR \$525**

Please call the **Holiday Inn Tanglewood – Roanoke, VA location at 540.774.4400** to make your hotel reservations. The Railway Tie Association negotiated rate for a single room is **\$113/night + tax** and **\$137/night + tax** for a double room. Room block will be lifted **July 1<sup>st</sup>**! The course will begin at 8:45 a.m. on Sunday, August 2.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

ANTICIPATED ARRIVAL TIME \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT TYPE**

CHECK (make payable to Railway Tie Association)

VISA, MASTERCARD, AMERICAN EXPRESS, DISCOVER

NAME ON CARD AND BILLING ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PAID \_\_\_\_\_

CARD # \_\_\_\_\_

EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SECURITY CODE \_\_\_\_\_

3- or 4-digit validation code from back of card (Front of card for AMEX card holders)

Please include **\$525 REGISTRATION FEE** with this form and mail or fax to  
RTA, 115 Commerce Dr., Suite C, Fayetteville, GA  
30214 • Fax 770.460.5573

**Register online at [www.rta.org](http://www.rta.org)!**