Final Plans Under Way For Tie Grading Seminar

By Kristen McIntosh
The Railway Tie Association (RTA) is making final preparations for its 24th annual Crosstie Grading Seminar, slated for July 20-22 in the Fulton, Ky., area.

Fieldwork, including the Species Identification and Crosstie Grading Derby, will take place at Stella-Jones’ treating plant in Fulton.

RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt said the course has been designed to give tie-graders hands-on experience, as well as in-depth instruction from some of the leading experts in wood technology, wood preservation and tie inspection.

“Instructors will spend time reviewing untreated wood deterioration, storage and handling, species identification, defects and grading, treating technology, and more,” he said. “Most importantly, the practical aspects of tie grading have become the real focus of the instruction.”

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 additional review sessions on species identification.

“We have worked very hard to increase the time instructors have to spend one-on-one with students. The course length was extended to accommodate this and other enhancements to the agenda,” said Marshall Allen, RTA’s Education Committee chairman.

“A roster of distinguished experts in the forest products industry will provide seminar instruction,” said Gauntt, who is also serving as an instructor. Other instructors include Terry Conners, associate extension professor at the University of Kentucky; John Zuspan, president of Track Guy Consultants; and Jimmy Watt, owner of The Crosstie Connection.

The cost of the seminar is $525, which includes the price of the seminar, take-home materials, welcome reception Tuesday night, lunches and dinner Wednesday night. Attending non-members who represent railroads will also receive a complimentary one-year’s subscription to Crossties magazine (a $50 value).

Attendees should arrange for their own accommodations by the June 15 deadline through the Hampton Inn in Union City, Tenn., by calling (731) 885-8850.

The Railway Tie Association negotiated rate for a single room is $89/night + tax. This rate includes breakfast each morning. Room block will be lifted June 15th! Cancellations received prior to June 15th will be refunded in full.

Register online at www.rta.org!