

Summer Field Trip Offers RTA Members Insight Into Safety, New Ideas & Product Improvements



The Railway Tie Association (RTA) held its member-wide Summer Field Trip in the Birmingham, Ala., and Starkville, Miss., areas in late May and early June. The event was hosted by Stella-Jones and included numerous tours of manufacturing, railroad, research and development, and other operations.

The summer field trip focuses on helping RTA members ensure safety of their workers and improving product quality, said RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt.

“It is an important RTA mission to provide members an opportunity to tour plant operations to see first-hand how their colleagues implement safety procedures and other manufacturing processes. We believe having this hands-on experience plays a pivotal role in all of our members’ success stories.”

A special thank you is due to our host for this event, Stella-Jones. Other sponsors are noted on page 14. ■

Chris Isaacson, executive vice president of the Alabama Forestry Association, keynotes the opening reception of the 2015 RTA Summer Field Trip and shares facts about the Alabama Forestry Association’s work and the state’s forest industry.

DAY 1 **IndusTREE, Stella-Jones, Cahaba Pressure Treated Forest Products**



Day 1 begins with a full bus and RTA’s largest attendance ever for an Annual Field Trip.



Larry Jones, president of IndusTREE, Inc. guides us through our first stop, their pole peeling operation in Goodwater, Ala. ➤





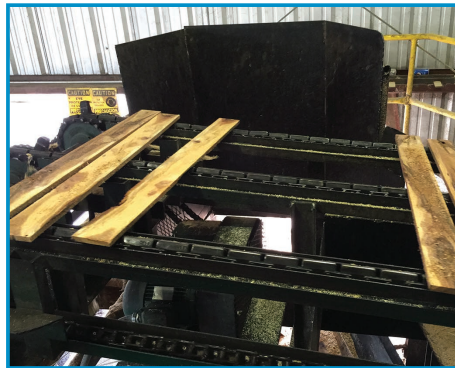
This operation not only peels poles for shipment as far away as Canada but also kiln dries poles to maintain quality of the shipped product as long as possible.



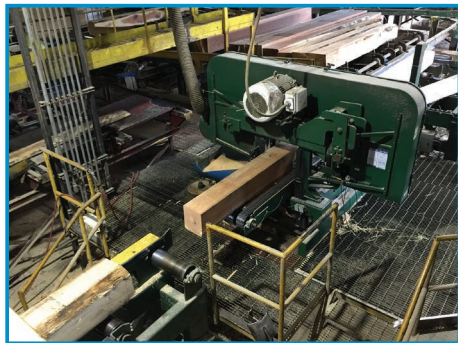
At IndusTREE's tie mill in Nixburg, Ala., Larry explains to the group that multiple products are manufactured.



Trapezoidal bridge materials are one of the more unusual products.



And pallet stock...



...along with cross-ties make up the bulk of the industrial products produced here.



Then it is on to Clanton, Ala., to tour Stella-Jones' expanding operations there. Here, we start with a safety briefing.



This treating plant is set up with two cylinders and is a dedicated railroad plant treating with creosote and borates.



Plant Manager Jeff Jordan explains that the capacity of the plant is now about 1.2 million ties but will expand to nearly 2 million or more over the next year.



This view is of the plating and sorting portion of the operations.



Here we are inside the tie grading booth...



...an example of superb branding...



...and, of course, lots and lots of ties.



Our next stop is met with the hospitality of Cahaba Pressure Treated Forest Products, where the Stephens family treats the group to Dreamland Bar-b-que Ribs for lunch.



Cahaba is known as the largest single pole treating operation in the world. On the right is an example of pole branding.



But, today, the group is focused on the new tie operations. This is a grading station...



...a tie sorting chain...



...and the new borate dip operation...



...and a growing tie inventory.



Our last stop of the day was a drive-through tour of the Stella-Jones treating plant in Montevallo, Ala.

DAY 2 Mississippi State University Forest Products Research Facility, RTA-AWPRP Test Site



Our main stop of Day 2 is in Starkville, Miss., at the Mississippi State University Department of Sustainable Bioproducts...



...where we are greeted by the Department Chair (?) and receive a presentation on the RTA – Alternative Wood Preservative Research project under way there by Senior Research Associate Mike Sanders.





With hundreds of ties in test, it takes most of the day to learn about both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the test. The RTA-AWPRP project is a joint venture with producer members, Class 1 railroads and Mississippi State University. All of the reports on the project to date can be found at www.rta.org.

Then it's off to view the Dorman Lake test site. Here, Dr. Mike Barnes, Warren S. Thompson Professor of Wood Science and Technology, shares info on the test ties with some of the group.

DAY 3 **Norfolk Southern's Birmingham Regional Intermodal Facility**

On Day 3, we visited the Norfolk Southern Birmingham Regional Intermodal Facility in McCalla, Ala. With a footprint of 250 acres, the facility has more than 6,000 feet of track for working intermodal and 1,400 feet for working automotive traffic.



The facility averages between eight and 12 trains per day in and out of the facility, with trains doing pickup, setoff or both.



Phase 1 of construction has been completed. Two pad tracks provide 7,400 feet for unloading/loading of trains. Four storage tracks provide 1,400 feet for empty cars or cars waiting to be unloaded. There are 697 parking spots.



The facility has a lift capacity for 100,000 units per year. In 2012, there were 12,050 lifts. Last year, that number increased to 33,948 lifts. ▶

- Bridge Timbers
- Tapered Ties
- Crossties
- Crossing Timbers
- Piling
- Drilling
- Dapping
- Planing
- TSO

Wheeler Lumber

Committed to performance since 1892

QNAP™

COPPER NAPHTHENATE

Treated Ties & Timbers

Proven oil-borne preservative preferred for environmentally sensitive areas

Engineering and Shop Drawings services available

800.843.8304 www.wheeler-con.com dakoch@wheeler-con.com

AWPA Standards

AREMA Approved

Cleaner Handling

No Corrosion Concerns

TPI Certified Facility



CAHABA PRESSURE
TREATED FOREST PRODUCTS
— INC —



Cahaba Pressure Treated Forest Products, Inc. is back in the crosstie business, and in a big way! Already the largest single plant producer of wood poles, Cahaba is now a major supplier of hardwood crossties. New processing equipment, new borate dip tank, new tie storage areas, but we kept the same hardworking dedication built on forty years of manufacturing excellence.

Our team is here for you. Contact us today for more information.

205-926-9888 • 12755 Montevallo Rd. Brierfield, AL 35035 • www.cahabapressure.com



RTA members smile for the camera at Stella-Jones' plant in Clanton, Ala.

A Big Thank You!

RTA could not develop successful member-focused events like this year's Annual Field Trip without a lot of volunteer efforts and support. We are thankful for our sponsors—Stella-Jones, Koppers Inc., Gross & Janes Co., Union Pacific, Appalachian Timber Services, JH Baxter and Co., MiTek Industries, Brewco, Cahaba Pressure Treated Forest Products—and also for those companies that opened their doors to: IndusTREE, Stella-Jones (both Montevallo and Clanton operations), Cahaba Pressure Treated Forest Products, Mississippi State University and Norfolk-Southern.

RTA would also like to recognize the members who took time from their busy schedules to attend: Claus Staainer, American Wood Technology; John Getz, AmeriTies Holdings LLC; Rick Gibson and Roy Henderson, Appalachian Timber Services; Tim Carey, Arch Wood Protection; Kenny Cheng, American Wood Protection Association; Zach Dombrow, Nathan Loftice, David Smat and Rob Banister, BNSF

Railway; Josh Dearmond and Nathan Rowe, Brewco Inc.; Alan Cox, Tony Nichols and Wes Platt, Bridgewell Resources; Stephane Gadbois and Angela Negro, Canadian National Railways; Mark Mallory, Cordstrap USA Inc.; Larry Fenwock, CSX Transportation; Gene Coats and Gary Ginther, Eagle Metal Products; Bill Behan and Michael DiRaimondo, Gross & Janes Co.; Jerry Farley and Jeanne Olson, JH Baxter & Co.; Gary Ambrose, Chuck Kraynik, Tim Ries, Koppers Inc.; Chuck Shaw, Koppers Performance Chemicals; Tim Thornburgh, Linden Lumber; Kevin Conkright, George Morris and Matt Seal, Missouri Tie LLC; Bill Moss, MiTek Industries Inc.; Curtis Schopp, National Salvage & Service Corp.; Jeff Broadfoot, Shane Kitchens and Brian Lindsey, Natural Wood Solutions; Jim Brient, Nisus Corporation; Gibson Barbee and Jack Hughes, Norfolk Southern Corp.; Tony Helms, North American Tie & Timber; Jim Gauntt, Railway Tie Association; Kenny Scott, Scott Post Co.; Mark Porter, Shoreline Plastics LLC; Kenny Dailey, Buddy Downey, Eddie Horton, Ken Peirson, David Roberts and David Whitted, Stella-Jones Corp.; Mike Baxter, StrikerBilt LLC; Carl Ferrans and Juan Fritschy, UES Avista Oil Group; and Jeff Parrett, Wheeler Lumber LLC. ■

The industry standard for producing cross-ties



In today's changing markets, you lose money if you can't take advantage of every opportunity. The Hurdle mill is engineered to be able to start sawing in days, not months, so you can be ready when the market moves. Many of our customers install multiple Hurdle mills for extra production instead of other slow to implement, expensive options.

- Easy to install, setup, and maintain - proven design with over 40 years of refinements and design improvements - over 450 complete mills sold
- Complete with 36" Challenger carriage, log deck, log turner, offbearer belt, sawyer's cab, carriage drive, and setworks
- We have customers who report cutting up to 650 ties a day on our mill!
- Go to www.youtube.com/HurdleMachineWorks to see it in action!



SIMPLE, DEPENDABLE, AFFORDABLE



16195 Hwy. 57 Moscow, TN 38057 (901) 877-6251

See our new website at www.hurdlemachineworks.com