

# RTA Members Reconnect For Annual Conference In St. Louis



The Railway Tie Association held its 103rd Symposium & Technical Conference Nov. 2-4 at the Union Station Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. Since the 2020 annual conference was conducted virtually, attendees were eager to make the most of this year's in-person event. Attendees participated in a variety of activities ranging from a friendly golf tournament to a special culinary demonstration from a

renowned chef and a unique tour of the area's history conducted by a well-known local storyteller.

The conference kicked off with the annual President's Reception followed by one and a half days of business sessions. Also included was the annual grand reception where RTA's award winners were honored by their peers. ■

## RTA Golf Tournament

Golfers hit the greens at the Sunset Country Club in St. Louis for the annual RTA Golf Tournament. Following a virtual golf tournament in 2020, this year's in-person competition was a great opportunity for friends and colleagues to reconnect.



John Heller



Truss Beasley, Robert Pearce, Jim Renfro and Brad Crawford



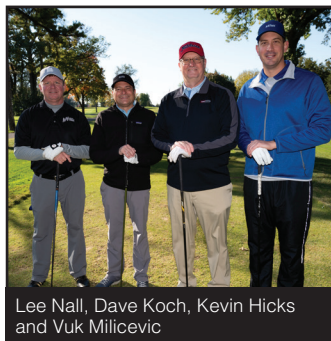
Randy Huffman, Chuck Swann, Brian Roth and George Caric



Ben Leidy, Peter Ray, Bryan Stout and Jason Hosko



Kenny Dailey is with Jordan Estes, Ray Turner and David Knopsnider



Lee Nall, Dave Koch, Kevin Hicks and Vuk Milicevic



John Heller, Tracy Romig, Charlie Briggs and Dan Britton



Shae Koenke, Tim Brake, Mike Raab and Josue Hernandez



Josh Kmoch, Ted Woerle, Travis Smith and Ray Koch



Glenn Floresca, Gene Dodson, Tony Nichols and Brett Moler



Nick Delmonico with Bill Gunning, Hakan Eksi and Leo Jaime



David Knopsnider with Kenny Dailey



Matthew Netterville, Bill Zimmer, Jeff Harris and George Apostolou



Jeff Peterson, Howard Tomlinson, Michael Wickham and Lisa Roberts



John Giallonardo, Travis Gross, Michael Skeen and Chase Armstrong



Rick Gibson with Andy Andreykovich, David Pike and Derrick Wynn



Greg Koehler, Mike DiRaimondo, Terry Good and Bill Behan

## Tour & Culinary Event

Hosted by Amanda Clark, founder of Renegade STL, tour participants learned the history of St. Louis through a storyteller's eyes. They were transported through time and place into a side of the city others have never seen. At the hotel, Chef Vince Bommarito Jr. conducted a special demonstration for attendees teaching them how to prepare a gourmet meal starting with an aperitif and followed by a three-course meal.



Doug and Becky Mellott are with Susan and Howard Tomlinson.



Vince Bommarito goes over the menu with the culinary event group.



Storyteller tour makes a stop at the famous St. Louis Arch.

Guest event photos by Susan Gauntt

## President's Reception

Always a fun event to kick off the conference, the President's Reception brought everyone together in the Great Hall of the St. Louis Union Station Hotel for hors d'oeuvres, beverages and a special Beatles-themed light show.



Jeff Lloyd, Rob Banister and Shane Kitchens



Matthew Netterville, Mike Collins and Skipper Beal



Ed and Jennifer Sparks with Tod Echler



Tim Carey and Tony Nichols



Dan Britten is with Hakan Eksi.



Former RTA President Tim Ries is with current RTA President Rick Gibson.



Jeff Lippincott with Kenny and Selinda Peden



Jeff Parrett with Jeff and Kathleen Broadfoot



Travis Gross, Chuck Swann, Michael Skeen and Mike Goldston



Corrie and Ted Owens



Steve Lish, John Uhrman and Travis Smith



Tom Mitchell of Rain Carbon



Robert Pearce with Jim Pagel



Sydney Feagans with her dad, Jason



Chad and Rachelle Sorrells



Dawn Campbell with Paul Cabrol



Amanda Battisti, Jim Raines and Steve Lish



The RTA crowd gathers in the Grand Hall for the President's Reception.

## Wednesday Morning Sessions

Sessions on Wednesday morning kicked off with a presentation about the economy and its current and expected future impact on the railroad and wood tie industries. Other sessions followed and explored challenges faced by sawmill professionals, legislative updates and the latest on major railroad engineering projects.



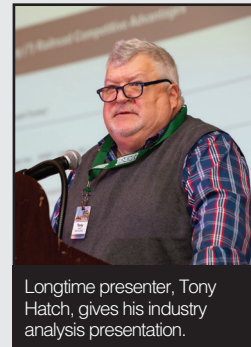
Michael Skeen kicks off the morning with a safety briefing.



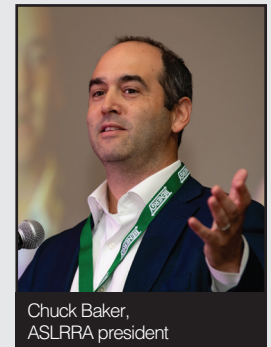
New Executive Director Nate Irby is introduced to the audience.



Connor Lokar with ITR Economics



Longtime presenter, Tony Hatch, gives his industry analysis presentation.



Chuck Baker, ASLRRA president

# Business Luncheon

The keynote speaker for Wednesday’s Business Luncheon was former NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt.



## Wednesday Afternoon Sessions



Hardwood Federation Executive Director Dana Cole moderates the afternoon hardwood session.



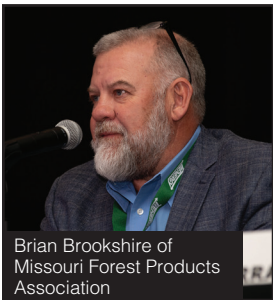
Darwin Murray of McClain Forest Products



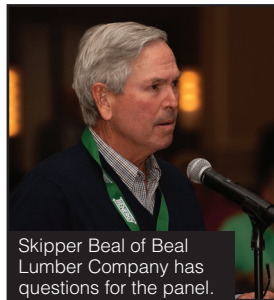
Frank Wilson of Wilson Brothers Lumber



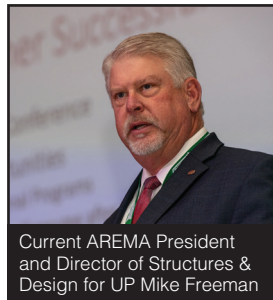
Paul Gaines of Madison County Wood Products



Brian Brookshire of Missouri Forest Products Association



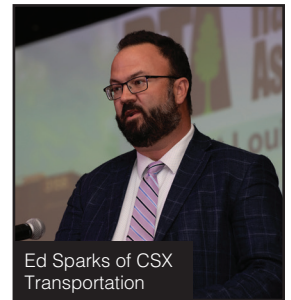
Skipper Beal of Beal Lumber Company has questions for the panel.



Current AREMA President and Director of Structures & Design for UP Mike Freeman



Adam Bankston of BNSF



Ed Sparks of CSX Transportation

# Grand Annual Reception & Awards Recognition

RTA’s annual award winners were recognized at a reception that saw comedian and “spouse whisperer” Mark Cordes as the evening’s emcee.



It’s a full house for the Awards Reception.



RTA President Rick Gibson, far left, with the 2021 RTA award winners.



Kevin Hicks with Mark Cordes



Truss Beasley, Ray Turner, and Michelle and Kasey Pittman



Jeff Thomas with Dave Koch and Jeff Parrett



Jason Thompson with Jason and Candise Dallas



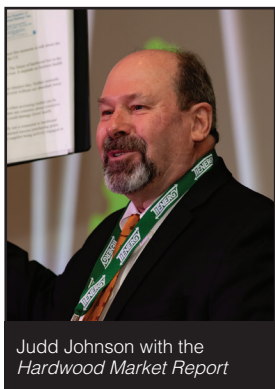
Jim Maltese with Eddie Horton



Pam and Kevin Hicks

# Thursday Sessions

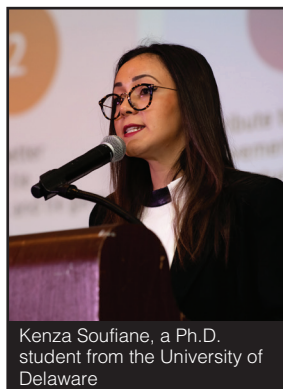
Conference attendees were treated to a full morning of business sessions that addressed new research and development initiatives, railroads' 2022 tie programs and updates from RTA producer members.



Judd Johnson with the *Hardwood Market Report*



Dr. Jeff Lloyd of Nisus Corporation



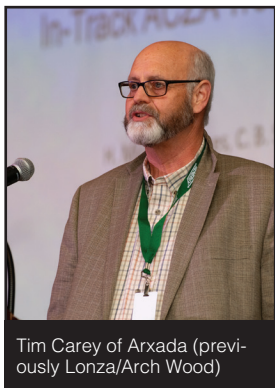
Kenza Soufiane, a Ph.D. student from the University of Delaware



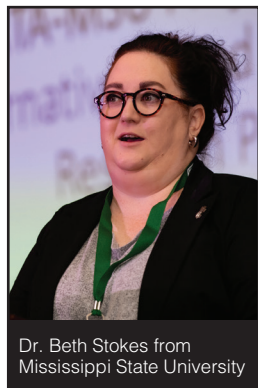
Dr. Mark Denavit from the University of Tennessee



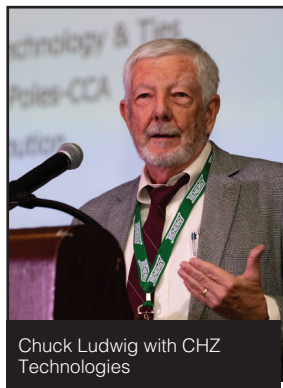
Steve Smith of Stephen Smith Consulting



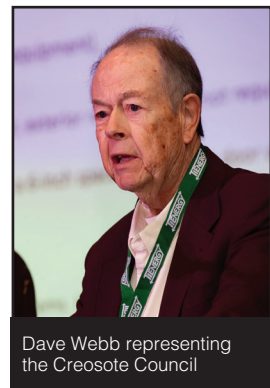
Tim Carey of Arxada (previously Lonza/Arch Wood)



Dr. Beth Stokes from Mississippi State University



Chuck Ludwig with CHZ Technologies



Dave Webb representing the Creosote Council



Dallin Brooks gives an update for Western Wood Preservers Institute

# Q N A P<sup>®</sup>

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Better science for a better world.

# THE EVOLUTION OF RAILROAD TIES

## WHY RAILROADS ARE SWITCHING TO QNAP<sup>®</sup> COPPER NAPHTHENATE FOR CROSSTIES.

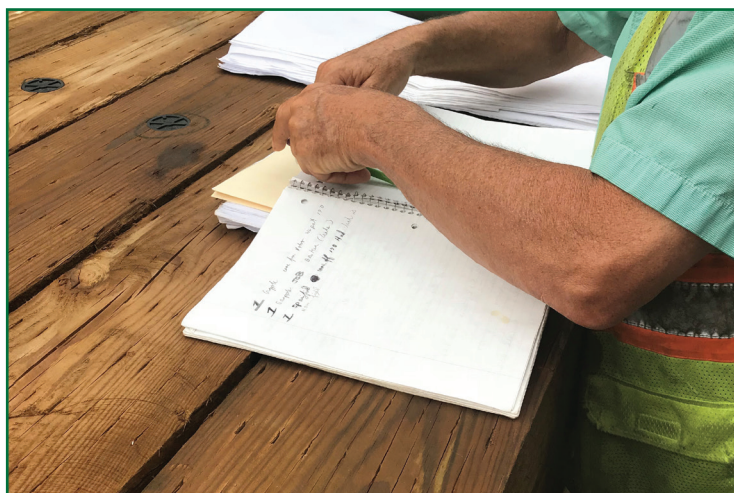
Like creosote, QNAP is a heavy duty oil-borne preservative, which means it can be used to treat hard refractory species like white oak and Douglas fir. QNAP is American Wood Protection Association (AWPA) standardized and has been standardized for use on ties, timbers and poles. Additionally, ready-to-use QNAP 2 is available to field treat end-cuts, daps and drill holes, eliminating treatment gaps. QNAP also reduces bleeding and drippage. QNAP ties have quickly become the #1 choice of Class I railroads for their bridges because it virtually eliminates the dripping from bridge ties onto roads, vehicles and waterways. With cleaner handling characteristics, QNAP ties are clean and easier to handle in the field.

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Kristine Storm of Genesee & Wyoming moderates the Purchasing Forum.



David Knopsnider of CSX Transportation



Anthony Weiss of BNSF



John Giallonardo of Koppers and George Caric of Stella-Jones kick off the new Producer Member Forum.



Bill Behan of Gross & Janes Co.



Doug Mellott of Mellott Wood Preserving



Mike McNail of Missouri Tie closes the last session of the conference.



Rick Gibson with John Giallonardo, the winner of the \$300 gift card sponsored by CP Rail



RTA President Rick Gibson closes the 103rd Annual Conference with a rap of the gavel.

## Exhibitors & Sponsors

The 103rd RTA Symposium & Technical Conference would not have been possible without the support of exhibiting vendors and sponsors.



Jason Thompson of Taylor Machine Works



Rick Embry with Embry Automation and Controls



Ken Laughlin and Jeff Thomas of Nisus Corporation



Michael Wickham and Lisa Roberts with Omaha Track



Nick Delmonico and Charlie Biggs with Encore Rail



Jeff Parrett and Dave Koch with Wheeler Lumber



Rob Underwood and Nick Mood with National Salvage & Service Corp.



Lindsey DiGangi with Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual

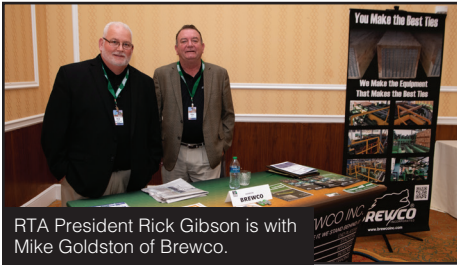


George Apostolou with Lewis Bolt & Nut Co.





Jeff Harris, Cory Burdick, Jose Mediavilla and William Gunn of Progress Rail



RTA President Rick Gibson is with Mike Goldston of Brewco.



Dr. Jeff Lloyd of Nisus Corp. is with Dr. Mark Denavit from the University of Tennessee.



Jim Renfro of Wood Care Systems



Cam Milliken and Rodney Hardison (center) in front of their display for Genics/B5



Tim Brake, left, is with Shae Koenke, right, of Railroad Service Express.

## A Big Shout Out To Our Sponsors & Marketplace Exhibitors

The 2021 RTA Virtual Conference would not have been possible without the support of our generous sponsors and marketplace exhibitors. We thank them for their contributions to this event and RTA's membership.

### LEGACY



### SUSTAINING



### IMPACT



### ADVOCATE



### SUPPORTING



### FRIEND OF RTA



### PARTNER EXHIBITS

- B5 Industries
- Brewco
- Embry Automation & Controls
- Encore Rail Systems
- Lewis Bolt & Nut
- National Salvage & Service Corp
- Nisus
- Omaha Track
- Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Co.
- Progress Rail
- Railroad Service Express
- Taylor Machine Works
- Wood Care Systems

### GOLD GOLF

- Asphalt/Lone Star
- Embry
- Koppers
- Nisus
- Omaha Track
- Somerville
- Tie Company
- Stella-Jones

### SILVER GOLF

- Appalachian Timber Services
- Embry Automation & Controls
- Gemini Forest Product
- Gross & Janes
- Rain Carbon

### BRONZE GOLF

- Eagle Metal
- MiTek
- Loram
- Missouri Tie

### SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The RTA team wishes to thank former Executive Director Jim Gaunt and his wife, Susan, for their work in advance planning and on-site efforts to make the 2021 Annual Conference a major success.

