

2026 RTA Grading Seminar - Fulton, KY - March 16-19

Host Plant: Stella Jones, Fulton, KY

Monday, March 16

5:00 PM Welcome Reception & Introductions

Tuesday, March 17

8:00 AM Welcome/Course overview/Safety Briefing

RTA Tie Grading App & RTA Website & RTA Events App (Course Evaluation Form)

8:15 AM Introduction to Crosstie Defects & Limitations

9:30 AM Break - 15 minutes

9:45 AM Engineering - Rail History, Components & Trackwork

11:15 AM Tie inspection Grading Booth Perspective & Grading 101- Tie grading station videos

11:45 AM Lunch

12:45 PM Grading Video

1:00 PM Reduced Speed Grading Station Quiz & Discussion (Test 1)

1:30 PM Break

1:45 PM Wood Identification Basics/Intro to RTA Species

3:30 PM Break - 15 minutes

3:45 PM Breakout 4 groups Cut Off >Species ID

4:00 PM Big Block Species ID test (groups=oak/hickory, mixed hardwoods, softwoods, excluded)

4:45 PM Review of Day 1>Driven by class needs

Wednesday, March 18

8:00 AM Tree to Track (Sustainability)

8:30 AM Insects, Fungi & Air-Drying Basics

9:00 AM Wood Treating & Treating Demonstration

10:00 AM Break - 15 minutes

10:15 AM Plant Operations Overview & Inspection Points

11:00 AM Review any Species & Defects/Grade Questions

11:30 AM Lunch then Drive to Plant

1:00 PM Facility Tour (1/2 Group)

1- 25 Ties>ID and Grade Practice (1/2 Group)

3:30 PM Answers for Practice ties

4:00 PM Drive back to Hotel

Thursday, March 19

8:00 AM Wood Tie & Timber Procurement/Specialty Products

8:30 AM Review Defects & Specification

9:00 AM Review Species Groupings

9:15 AM Drive to Plant

9:45 AM Instructions for Final Test - Final Questions

10:00 AM Final Test- Ties 26-50 -Grade and ID (1/2 Group)

Treated Tie Inspection (1/2 Group)

11:30 AM Lunch

Noon Answers/Awards/Certificates/Evals/Closing

Adjourn