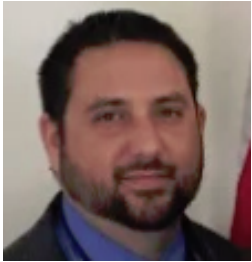




JAMES C. GAUNTT is Executive Director of the Railway Tie Association, a position he has held since 1995. He worked previously in the architectural millwork & building materials distribution business as Vice-President of Randall Brothers, Inc. Prior to this, he was Director of Codes and Product Acceptance for the Osmose Wood Preserving Co. He is responsible for publishing RTA's *Crossties* magazine, conducting training sessions on tie grading, and hosting the RTA Annual Symposium and Technical Conference. Gauntt is the published author of numerous articles, papers and publications on the subject of wood tie research and wood tie performance and a frequent speaker on wood preserving and tie industry subjects. He is a Cum Laude graduate of the University of Montevallo with a B.S. in biology and chemistry from the University of Montevallo.



BRAD CRAWFORD is the Forestry Specialist/Crosstie Inspector at Norfolk Southern. He grew up working in the family woodworking shop making everything from finished furniture to pallets. After graduation from the University of Kentucky with a B.S. in Forestry he became the Procurement Manager with Rail Works transitioning in that position with Tangent Rail and then Stella-Jones. His current duties include inspecting crossties, switch ties, bridge timbers, and miscellaneous other timbers used across the NS system for grade, quality, and proper treatment. He also inspects ties and timbers currently in track.



NATE IRBY, PhD, is currently Manager I in Strategic Sourcing at Union Pacific Railroad (UP). He serves as the primary developer and principal investigator for UP's forest products quality control program. During his tenure at UP, Nate has created a plethora of training, inspection and research and development initiatives to ensure UP gets high quality crossties and bridge timbers for class I railroad service. He also serves as Adjunct Faculty in the Mississippi State University Department of Sustainable Bioproducts (formerly Forest Products Department). His passion for forest products/wood science runs deep as he is third generation in the wood industry. His father retired from Anderson-Tully as V.P. hardwood lumber sales and grandfather enjoyed a long fulfilling management career with International Paper.



ROBERT PEARCE worked as an independent inspector and quality control consultant for 24 years (1991-2015) before joining Stella-Jones Corp as the Production Manager in their Goshen, VA crosstie facility (2015-2018). Since March of 2018, Robert has been responsible for quality control of Norfolk Southern products produced by Stella-Jones in 4 of their facilities. He first attended the RTA's Tie Grading Seminar several years ago and has since become a member of the Education Committee. Robert returned as a Tie Grading instructor in 2011.