

RTA Unveils Interactive Web Design & Association Management Platform

New Look & Functionality Combine To Enhance Member Experience

From Staff Reports

On July 30, the Railway Tie Association (RTA) announced its transition to a new cloud-based platform for managing member data and the association's activities. The move integrates a brand new look with significantly enhanced functionality on its website—www.rta.org.

"We have been working on this for about a year, and it finally came together in what we believe is a great new Web experience for the public and members alike," said RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt.

The new website and association management software approved in 2011 by RTA's Executive Committee brings exciting new possibilities for members. To begin with, the member login process has been streamlined and now takes just seconds to set-up.

"An email was sent to all members and non-members in RTA's email database on July 28 that provided new user names and temporary passwords," Gauntt said, adding that the communication explained how to reset the password and join communities inside the RTA website.

"It is a little like LinkedIn™ in that members can control and edit their own profiles, post their own profile picture, add photo albums, create groups to interact in, and keep in touch with committees they are a part of," he said, adding that the website will provide members with more networking options and control over their desired

RTA experience.

"We really want people to be logged in to the RTA website all the time, keep www.rta.org open in a separate browser, and stay in touch with all that's happening in the tie industry. When members are connected in the website, they can see who else is logged in at the same time. Then you can chat, share ideas, ask questions and generally be more 'connected' with one another."

Members who missed the announcement e-mail can go to the RTA homepage to begin to explore the new look. To access the login credentials members may e-mail ties@rta.org to obtain a temporary user ID and password. "Then, it's just a couple of mouse clicks to login and start flying through the public and member-only content," Gauntt said.

In addition, *Crossties* advertisers will see their companies' logos on RTA's web sponsorship sections. "For the time being, this service is complimentary as we further develop the program," he said.

"The more you advertise in *Crossties*, the less expensive the web sponsorship opportunities will be. It also means, in the meantime, that six-time-per-year *Crossties* advertisers for 2012 not only have the print and digital ads that go out to a combined audience approaching 10,000 but also have rotating web page recognition at no additional charge." Each web page sponsor's



logo is a hyperlink directly to their website, just as in the digital edition.

When asked how the new sponsorship program will work Gauntt said that the program would be introduced at the RTA conference. "Everyone will have some level of access to sponsorship, but our goals will be to provide *Crossties* advertisers significant discounts to the base rates established."

Non-members are also encouraged to explore what RTA has to offer. With the new platform, more and more content will be developed for members only. The new online member directory is not only searchable with simple and advanced search tools but also provides new ways to connect with people.

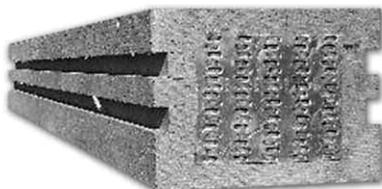
Gauntt was quick to add that, as always, sawmill contact data is securely protected from access, with the exception of those sawmills that have elected to become Direct Producer members.

"However, sawmills that are connected electronically with their own e-mail address in the RTA system will have full membership privileges and can access directories and all the website functionality as often as they want to."

Sawmill members that want to be engaged in the new system simply need to send their email address and a request for login credentials to ties@rta.org. "It is just that simple," he said. "The new RTA website promises to be the most interactive web platform in the wood products and railroad-ing industries, offering terrific new ways for members to communicate and connect." ■



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