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EPC Leadership Class tours Philadelphia market and port facilities

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The third Eastern Produce Council Leadership Class experienced key aspects of the produce logistics and distribution system with a tour of the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market and Holt Logistics on May 11. “In this first event of our current leadership program we were excited to engage this group of talented industry professionals with such crucial supply chain partners such as PWPM and Holt,” said Susan McAleavey Sarlund, EPC executive director.

The group started the day at PWPM with a presentation on the market’s history, evolution and current technology from John Vena of John Vena Inc., a former member of the PWPM Board of Directors and current “unofficial historian.” Vena explained how the PWPM traces its roots back to the days of William Penn and noted the current modern facility will celebrate its 10th anniversary this June. “Terminal markets have always played an important role in the distribution of produce,” he said. Participants had the opportunity to walk the fully enclosed and refrigerated concourse and meet with various market merchants.

“The tour reinforced the passion and dedication from all the merchants to offer the very best quality, and selection of fresh fruits and vegetables,” said Michael Harwood, sales representative for Yes! Apples Powered by New York Apple Sales. “What was interesting is the full refrigeration throughout the whole complex. This assures freshness and further expands product shelf life at home and at retail stores.”

In the afternoon, the class traveled to the Gloucester Marine Terminal in Gloucester City, NJ, where they were treated to lunch and a presentation on the Philadelphia port facilities by Leo Holt, president

of Holt Logistics Corp, and Sander (Sandy) Daniel, senior tropical marketing manager. “We are part of an ecosystem here which is important to understand,” said Holt, explaining the various docks, piers and facilities encompassing the Philadelphia entry point. “Philadelphia and the ports of the Delaware River have become a major produce entry point because we are so well situated and easy to move cargo through. There exists an incredible array of on-dock and inland warehouses which can provide warehousing, repacking and distribution throughout all the port’s hinterland.”

Harwood appreciated the wealth of knowledge provided by Holt and Daniel. “The services they offer from supply chain solutions to terminal operations is impressive,” he said. “And, they’re on the front end of technology such as the electric cranes.”

Daniel escorted the participants on a visit to some areas of the Gloucester City port including a tour of the DelMonte facility given by John McCann, vice president Northeast region for Del Monte Fresh Produce. McCann explained the company’s system of receiving, processing and shipping imported product and treated the class to samples of some of Del Monte’s newest and sweetest products.

The EPC’s respected program delivers a dual-medium learning environment and includes various tours and classroom learning activities throughout the year. “This event spearheads our goal to provide these selected participants with the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge from both classroom and field experience,” said McAleavey Sarlund.

The program chooses up to 20 up-and-coming produce professionals for each Leadership Class, a professional development experience for those with fewer than 10 years of experience in the industry. Participants selected for this year’s program include Rich Arduini of FreshPro Food Distributors; Kevin Carroll of Wonderful Citrus; Frank Ciammaruconi of Wakefern Food Corp.; Dylan Dembeck of Minkus Family Farms; Phu Din of FreshPro Food Distributors; Rachel Fabrizio of Four Seasons Produce; Michael Harwood of New York Apple Sales; Andrew Hernandez of LGS Specialty Sales; Brian Kenny of Wakefern Food Corp.; Justin Kerner of Ballard Spahr LLP; Mattie Leid of Hess Brothers Fruit Co.; Michael Paolino of Wakefern Food Corp.; Annie Pape of Frank Donio Inc.; Gabrielle Procacci of Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.; and Kelsey Rose of John Vena Inc.

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