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SEPC in full support of PMA-United Fresh union

May 20, 2021



David Sherrod

The Southeast Produce Council's Executive Committee convened in early May and expressed full support of the recently announced merger between the Produce Marketing Association and United Fresh Produce Association, which will consolidate to create a new global trade association.

Since its inception in 1999, SEPC's mission has remained steadfast in promoting the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, specifically in the 10 Southeastern states it represents. There are many solutions that are needed to advance our industry into the future, and the SEPC applauds PMA and United Fresh for joining forces to prioritize value for their member groups. The SEPC welcomes future opportunities to work together with this new association to drive value and meet industry needs through aligned efforts.



Harold Paivarinta

Over the years SEPC has become known for its intimate regional conferences where member companies make meaningful connections and create significant value to all industry stakeholders. The council is eager to work together with the new unified association to ensure that traditions are honored, events are non-competitive, and foundations are protected.

"As I listen to our members, the overall response to the proposed merger is tremendously positive for our industry," said SEPC President and CEO David Sherrod. "I think it will allow the strengths of each association to have a greater reach, focus, and impact for the combined membership. I also

believe it will allow regional associations, like the SEPC, to help drive the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables with our non-competing networking events. We are excited to work together to create a healthier world.”



Raina Nelson

SEPC Chairman of the Board Harold Paivarinta said, “We congratulate the PMA and United Fresh leadership teams on their merger. The foresight and courage of Cathy Burns and Tom Stenzel to reignite discussions resulting in the successful merger of our industry’s two largest associations was undoubtedly one of the most significant achievements we’ve seen to date. The new association will add tremendous value to its members and provide comprehensive and well-rounded programs to all stakeholders.”



Tim Graas

“I am very excited and optimistic about the merger between PMA and United Fresh. Trade associations have the responsibility to work together to expand sustainable business and drive consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables for a healthier world. We believe the best relationships are symbiotic, and the SEPC looks forward to future collaboration with the new global trade association,” said Raina Nelson, SEPC’s vice chair.



Mike Roberts

SEPC Secretary Tim Graas said, “The merger between United Fresh and PMA can only enhance an already awesome, yet ever-changing, industry. The combined resources will position the new organization very well for the future to tackle, head-on, the challenges on the horizon. I am sure the combined organizations will make the overall industry stronger, and I look forward to what the future holds.”

“The merger of the PMA and United Fresh will add value to its members and to the industry, increasing the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables along with education and awareness of all the great things produce has to offer. A very exciting time in our industry, and I look forward to seeing what this merger can accomplish in the years to come,” said Mike Roberts, SEPC’s treasurer.



Bobby Creel

“The homogenization of United Fresh and PMA should strengthen public policy, fresh agricultural advocacy and the global marketing of the fresh produce and floral business. Each brings their own unique strengths together to support their combined global reach goals,” said Bobby Creel, chairman of SEPC’s Board of Governors. “The SEPC applauds their merger decision — as we continue to vigorously support our core ideology of growing consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in the 10

Southeastern U.S. states that we steadfastly represent.”

The SEPC is focused on strategically delivering value and strengthening its trusted platform to stakeholders. The Executive Board, Board of Directors, and expansive committee network are all working hard to provide innovative solutions to business challenges, deliver impeccable and reimagined networking platforms, infuse and build talent into the industry, and nourish our communities through our deep charitable efforts. The council's future is vibrant and bright, and the SEPC is poised to maintain its position of the premier resource in the Southeast and beyond.

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