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## **FPAA evolves convention concept; SWIPE emerges**

By

Tim Linden

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On Nov. 2-4 at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, AZ, the [Fresh Produce Association of the Americas](#) will introduce the inaugural Southwest International Produce Expo.

For the first time in many decades, the association's annual event will feature an expo-type show with Nogales distributors highlighting their individual value proposition to the buyer community as well as to other industry partners. FPAA President Lance Jungmeyer said the launching of a new version of the annual meeting represents a change in focus for the event.

In the past, the November meeting was an opportunity to update the membership on the regulatory and governmental work the association had been doing that year. "SWIPE is designed to help our members promote themselves to the buyer community," he said. "We are highlighting a different side of FPAA."

Jungmeyer said it will be an intimate show limited to 50 booths and will also include educational and networking opportunities. The signature event provides an opportunity for buyers, growers, distributors, and allied industry partners to meet and network. He said the small size of the show will allow these Nogales distributors to showcase what they have to offer and engage in meaningful business discussions with customers and potential customers.

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The show will be held along with educational sessions, networking events, an awards reception, a golf tournament and other outdoor activities that take advantage of the ample sunshine and ideal temperatures of Southern Arizona in the fall. Jungmeyer said joining the golf tournament will be a tennis tourney, a bike ride, retail tours and a trip to the nearby Pima Air & Space Museum.

The Tucson museum is one of the world's largest non-government funded aerospace museums. It features a display of nearly 300 aircrafts spread over 80 acres on a campus occupying 127 acres.

"The SWIPE event is a great way to showcase our members and to bring together buyers, sellers, and growers in a beautiful location," said Jungmeyer.

The expo will be staged on Nov. 3 along with a culinary showcase produced by local high school and culinary students, who will be given an array of fresh produce and charged with creating some great dishes. Buyers and other industry members will have the chance to meet the entire fresh produce supply chain of the Southwest, make lasting connections and reconnect with peers at the new SWIPE event. As is the case with most other regional produce shows, FPAA will pay the expenses of retailers choosing to attend.

The convention will feature two separate events focused on networking. On Nov. 2, there will be a reception for VIPs and sponsors. The day concludes with an opening Fiesta & Networking Event where attendees have another opportunity to meet with buyers, growers, distributors, and industry partners. On Nov. 3, there will be a Sabino Canyon Tour to begin the day, followed by the educational sessions and concluding with the industry celebration.

The educational sessions will focus on the intersection of issues and opportunities for retail and foodservice buyers in selling Mexican fresh fruits and vegetables. Speakers will be announced in the coming months.

The Awards Reception will celebrate the fresh produce industry by featuring great food, as well as live entertainment. This event includes an awards presentation for the FPAA's 2023 "Pillar of the Industry" recipient.

The "Pillar of the Industry" is awarded to a member who has volunteered his or her time and effort to the industry as well as demonstrated innovation and integrity throughout their career.

[Tim Linden](#)

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## About Tim Linden |

Tim Linden grew up in a produce family as both his father and grandfather spent their business careers on the wholesale terminal markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Tim graduated from San Diego State University in 1974 with a degree in journalism. Shortly thereafter he began his career at The Packer where he stayed for eight years, leaving in 1983 to join Western Growers as editor of its monthly magazine. In 1986, Tim launched Champ Publishing as an agricultural publishing specialty company.

Today he is a contract publisher for several trade associations and writes extensively on all aspects of the produce business. He began writing for The Produce News in 1997, and currently wears the title of Editor at Large.

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