



## SEPC Membership Packet

### History of the SEPC

- In 1999, the Southeast Produce Council (SEPC) was formed by six members who had a vision for a Southeastern-based produce organization. The members met at the Atlanta Farmers Market in August 1999. The first formal meeting of the Southeast Produce Council was held in Charlotte, NC with 100 produce professionals from across all areas of the industry in attendance. An innovative produce organization emerged which has grown to over 2500 members and is continuing to grow at a steady pace. Today, the council stands behind its Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals...

### Our Vision

- To be the premier produce resource in the Southeast.

### Our Mission

- To provide **networking, innovative, community,** and **educational** opportunities while offering a platform for building professional relationships based on trust, integrity, and passion.

### Our Values

- Integrity  
Morals  
Passionate  
Accountable  
Charitable  
Teamwork

### Our Goals

- To promote the consumption of fresh fruits & vegetables in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia through good fellowship, cooperation, and mutual interest among its members.
- Instill a high sense of professionalism and loyalty to each other.
- Support charitable causes in the Southeastern communities.

## SEPC Contact Information

- Address
  - o 315 GA Highway 17 North, Millen, GA 30442
- Telephone
  - o 877-720-SEPC (7372)
- Fax
  - o 866-653-4479
- Email
  - o [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com)
- Connect
  - o Like us on Facebook
  - o Follow us on Twitter
  - o Join us on LinkedIn
  - o Follow us on Instagram

## Our Team

- Jennifer Pierce            Accounting
- Molly Edenfield        Member Relations
- Anna Burch             Marketing
- John Avola              Digital Marketing

## Board of Directors

David Sherrod	Executive Director	Southeast Produce Council
Teri Miller	President	The Fresh Market
Faye Westfall	Vice President	DiMare Fresh
Steve Pinkston	Secretary	Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
Brandon Parker	Treasurer	Shuman Produce
Dug Schwalls	Director	Southern Valley
Harold Paivarinta	Director	Red Sun Farms
Tim Forseth	Director	Robinson Fresh
Dave Lessard	Director	Ahold
Barb Anderson	Director	DNE World Fruit a division of Wonderful Citrus
Raina Nelson	Director	Renaissance Food Group
John Williams	Director	LG Herndon Jr. Farms
Daniel Klausner	Director	Apio, Inc.
Amanda Keefer	Director	Produce for Kids
Tim Graas	Director	AWG
Stephanie Hilton	Director	Tom Lange Family of Companies
Boyd West	Director	Mitchell Grocery
Frank Swanson	Director	US Foods

## Committees

- STARS
  - o Committee Chair: Raina Nelson
  - o This committee is in charge of the STARS Scholarship and works to accommodate the STARS students at Southern Exposure. Please email [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- Foodservice Committee
  - o Committee Chair: Frank Swanson
  - o This committee works on foodservice-related projects and programs to provide value-added services to the food service members. Please contact [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- Retail Committee
  - o Committee Chair: Dave Lessard
  - o This committee works on retail-related projects and programs to provide value-added services to retail membership. Please contact [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- STEP-UPP
  - o Committee Chair: Faye Westfall
  - o This committee works on setting up field tours and team-building events with each STEP-UPP class. Please email [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- Education
  - o Committee Chair: Harold Paivarinta
  - o This committee works to brainstorm and implement industry-relevant educational workshops and speakers for our events. Please contact [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- Attendance
  - o Committee Chair: Daniel Klausner
  - o This committee works to recruit all retail and foodservice members to attend our events. Please contact [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- Marketing/Membership
  - o Committee Chair: Amanda Keefer
  - o This committee works on marketing aspects for each event and ways to bolster SEPC Membership. Please contact [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- Sponsorship
  - o Committee Chair: Teri Miller
  - o This committee works to offer sponsorship opportunities to all of our members. Please contact [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.
- Scholarship
  - o Committee Chair: Tim Forseth
  - o This committee works on the implementation and awarding of the Member Scholarship Funds. Please contact [info@seproduceouncil.com](mailto:info@seproduceouncil.com) for more information.

- Terry L. Vorhees Vision Scholarship
  - o Committee Chair: Dug Schwalls
  - o This committee works on the implementation and selection of the Vorhees Vision Scholarship each year. Please contact [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com) for more information.
- Paul Anderson Youth Home
  - o Committee Chair: Brandon Parker
  - o This committee work with PAYH to coordinate efforts with the Goodness Garden. Please contact [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com) for more information.
- RAMP
  - o Committee Chair: Barb Anderson
  - o This committee works with Rockin' Appalachian Mom Project to coordinate food deliveries to Kentucky to help feed the hungry. Please contact [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com) for more information.
- CHOA
  - o Committee Chair: John Williams
  - o This committee works with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta on programs and events to fight childhood obesity. Please contact [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com) for more information.
- APH
  - o Committee Chair: TBD
  - o This committee works with Arnold Palmer Hospital to help coordinate programs and events to aid children with life-threatening diseases. Please contact [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com) for more information.
- SoSA
  - o Committee Chair: TBD
  - o This committee works with Society of St. Andrew to help glean our food show and other projects to help feed the hungry.

## Networking

- **Southern Exposure**
  - Southern Exposure is the premier produce networking event in the industry. It provides the most intimate setting with the largest retail and foodservice audience attendance in the industry today. It is a 3-day event that includes educational, networking, and charitable events which promote the produce industry in the Southeast.
- **Southern Innovations Organics and Foodservice Expo**
  - With organic and foodservice markets taking produce to a whole new level, the Southeast Produce Council is at the forefront providing an all-new trade show platform, Southern Innovations Organics and Foodservice Expo. This industry-setting event will provide retail and foodservice professionals with the best of organics and foodservice that produce has to offer.

## Innovation

- **SEPC Economic Development Collaboration**
  - The SEPC will be working with other agencies and economic development companies to promote the Southeast as a prominent place to open or relocate ag related businesses.

## Community

The SEPC is proud to support non-profit organizations that help children and families in need across the Southeast. With the help of our members, we are able to contribute volunteer hours, product donations, and financial support year-round to help make a difference in the lives of local children and families. We thank all of our members who are actively involved in our community outreach efforts and invite anyone who is interested to get involved!

- **Children's Healthcare of Atlanta**
  - In the SEPC's continuing effort to help fight childhood obesity and educate the public about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, we are proud to partner with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Strong4Life program, a wellness movement designed to ignite societal change and reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity and its associated diseases in Georgia. Strong4Life reaches families through public awareness, policy change efforts, school programs, healthcare provider programs, community partnerships, and more, with a goal of improving family nutrition, making physical activity habits fun, and providing parents and caregivers the support they need to accomplish their goals.
  - The SEPC supports the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life Superhero Sprint and Strong Legs Runs each year in June and November in Atlanta through the donation of volunteer hours, products, and fundraising. We are always in need of products for our tent, hands on help at the event, and participants/fundraisers!

- **Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children**
  - Located in Orlando, FL, Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children is a sanctuary of hope and healing. The most advanced technology coupled with compassion and dedication have made Arnold Palmer Hospital one of the most trusted names in children's healthcare worldwide. With 158 pediatric beds, careful attention has been paid to creating a cheerful, comforting environment to minimize stress and generate smiles. The SEPC is proud to provide funding each year to help make sure those visiting this hospital get the best care possible.
- **Paul Anderson Youth Home**
  - The Paul Anderson Youth Home is home to Paul Anderson Ministries, existing to serve troubled youth between the ages of 16 – 21 from all over the country by providing a Christian home environment in which they can rebuild their broken lives through Recovery, Restoration, and Redemption. The SEPC has been able to help donate funds and bring projects like the Goodness Garden to life to help supply fresh fruits and vegetables and teach the boys about horticulture and the basic care and nurturing needed to grow produce. We have also provided resources and man hours to build a chicken coop for the boys and continue to support the solid foundation and life education PAYH is instilling in each and every one of those young men.
- **Society of St. Andrew**
  - Through our partnership with Society of St. Andrew we are able do our part to help feed America's hungry. As the premier food rescue and distribution ministry, the Society of St. Andrew believes that all of us working together can eliminate world hunger, beginning by ending hunger in America. In addition to financial support, the SEPC is honored to work with the Society of St. Andrew to provide truckloads of food to one of our other benefitting charities, RAMP in rural Appalachia, as well as donate all leftover food from Southern Exposure each year to help those who are hungry in the Southeast. To date, the SEPC has become the largest distributor of fresh fruits and vegetables to the needy in the Tampa and Orlando areas, feeding over 300 families!
- **RAMP**
  - Martin County, Kentucky lies in the heart of rural Appalachia, home to some of the most impoverished people in the United States. To this day, access to healthy food and economic opportunity in Martin County is scarce. Moreover, Martin County's isolation makes it difficult to access federal and other assistance programs: currently there are little to no human or social services available in the area.
  - RAMP (Rockin' Appalachian Mom Project) works to identify critical needs and create solutions focusing on nutrition, economic development, and emergency relief intervention with a special focus on children and families in Martin County. Providing access to healthy food and economic opportunity in Martin County is scarce, but through our partnership with RAMP, the Society of St. Andrew, and very dedicated and giving members of the SEPC, we are able to provide fresh produce to this undernourished area a few times a year. If your company is interested in donating fresh produce for a RAMP delivery, please contact us at [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com).

## Education

- **STARS (Southeast Top Agricultural Recruits Scholarship)** is the Southeast Produce Council's scholarship program available to outstanding students who are agriculture majors in Southeast-based land grant universities. The goal of STARS is to recruit top students and to introduce them to job opportunities in the produce industry.
  - o Application Process
    - Ideal candidates are rising seniors in undergraduate majors related to the growing and marketing of produce and related products. Minimum 3.2 GPA or higher. Additionally, it is preferred that students have demonstrated an interest in growing and/or marketing of produce.
    - Majors include:
      - Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Agricultural Education and Communication, Agricultural Operations Management, Botany (Plant Biologist), Entomology and Nematology, Environmental Management in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Food and Resource Economics, Horticultural Science, Plant Science, Soil and Water Science, and Food Science and Human Nutrition
    - Scholarship recipients will be expected to attend the Southeast Produce Council's Southern Exposure Conference & Expo. The Southeast Produce Council will cover travel expenses to this event. The scholarship recipients will have the opportunity to meet with over two hundred produce industry grower/shippers as well as the nation's leading retailers and foodservice distributors.
- **STEP-UPP** provides an enriched learning experience for high potential retail and food service produce professionals. Candidates develop a greater understanding of the industry through strategic orientation, personal leadership, and hands on field experience. Ten (10) individuals are selected through an application and interview process based on leadership experience and interest in developing a career in fresh produce. Potential candidates must be active members of SEPC.
  - o Strategic Orientation
    - Business growth occurs through strategic planning and partnerships. This program will broaden the participants' strategic view of the fresh produce industry through supply chain overviews, collaborative business planning, category development, and key performance indicator discussions.
  - o Personal Leadership & Networking
    - The success of all good leaders depends on personal development and relationship building. Education may include leadership styles, managing for performance, and negotiation strategy. Each program segment will also include opportunities to meet and interact with other SEPC industry members and make important networking connections.
  - o Field Experience
    - Application is an important part of all education. The final emphasis on learning will be participation in field and plant tours along with a short course in produce inspection. The emphasis in this area will be to gain an understanding of how to partner with growers more effectively to build mutually beneficial relationships.

- **Southern Roots** is a new leadership program for women in produce.
  - The program, chaired by board member Teri Miller of The Fresh Market, is designed to make meaningful connections among women working in the produce industry through events, education, and mentoring. By sharing values, contributions, and experiences, participants will have an opportunity to improve leadership skills individually and collectively — and will then positively affect organizational effectiveness at all levels.
  - Southern Roots meets annually at Southern Exposure, Southern Innovations, and other industry events throughout the year.
  - Connect with the ladies of Southern Roots on Facebook and LinkedIn, and download the Everyme app to your iPhone or Android to join the group for the latest updates. If you are interested in becoming involved with Southern Roots, please contact us at [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com).
  
- **Produce Inspection Training Program** is a two day course intended for quality control personnel, produce buyers, produce inventory control personnel, and other company associates involved in the receiving, handling, buying, and shipping of fresh produce.
  - A certificate of completion will be awarded to each attendee who completes both the spring and fall courses. Mr. Tom Yawman of International Produce Training (IPT) will conduct the training.
  - Please note that this class is limited to 20 attendees. Registration is on a first-come first-serve basis and priority will be given to SEPC members.



## Member Benefits

We invite anyone working in the produce industry to join the regional council leading the industry in networking, innovative, charitable, and educational opportunities. We offer a variety of benefits that will help you and your company grow professionally and personally.

- **Networking**
  - SEPC members from ten states in the Southeast will enjoy unique opportunities to network and tap into invaluable sources of professional ideas. Regularly scheduled events like Southern Exposure – our annual retail and foodservice conference and expo (early March) and Southern Innovations (late-September) provide excellent networking and learning opportunities.
- **Innovation**
  - The SEPC is leading the industry with programs that foster innovative ideas and techniques to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables in the Southeast.
- **Community**
  - The SEPC is most proud of being able to allocate a percentage of funds generated from our events, sponsorships, and memberships to support charitable causes in the Southeastern communities. We also invite our members to experience the invaluable feeling of giving back by volunteering and donating products to the charities we support.
- **Education**
  - We offer numerous educational seminars at our conferences and throughout the year that address major industry issues & trends. Membership provides admission to all educational workshops. Can't make it to a conference? Don't worry, we'll post the content from our sessions in the Members section of our website so you don't miss a thing!

## Membership Options

- **Corporate Membership**
  - Corporate memberships are available for 1-5 members, 6-10 members, or 11-15 members based on your company's needs. Membership fees per level are outlined below. Those listed on the corporate membership are entitled to all the membership benefits of the council.
  - Annual Membership
    - 1-5 Members: \$750
    - 6-10 Members: \$1500
    - 11-15 Members: \$2,250
  - Additional Corporate Member Benefits
    - Booth Space at Southern Exposure: As a corporate member, companies are entitled to apply for a booth space on our waitlist at our annual Southern Exposure tradeshow.  
\*Please note as of March 2015, individual members must upgrade to a corporate membership to retain any existing booth space at Southern Exposure.

- Member Scholarship Program: Corporate members that are in good standing are eligible to apply for our annual member scholarship program. Eligible applicants must have a parent or grandparent that is a corporate member of the SEPC and is in good standing. That member has to have attended at least one (1) SEPC event in the last year. We currently award 36 \$2,000.00 scholarships each July.
- STEP-UPP: Our retail and foodservice members are eligible to participate in our industry training program, STEP-UPP in February – September.

- **Individual Membership**

- Entitles an individual member access to SEPC events. Some program exclusions may apply.
  - Annual Membership
    - 1 Member: \$175

### **Information for our Retail and Foodservice Attendees**

Our Retail and Foodservice members with “active corporate membership” will receive the following:

- Complimentary hotel stay for each event (Must attend SEPC functions to validate)
- Complimentary airfare for each event (Change fees will be paid by attendee)
- Complimentary registration for each event
- Complimentary Golf and/or Fishing for each event (if still available)
- Allowed to participate in the Member Scholarship Program (does not apply to members with “active individual membership”)
- Allowed to register for Produce Inspection Training (if slots remain)
- Allowed to participate in the Step-Upp Program (Application process)

### **Information for our Growers and Shippers**

Our Grower/Shipper members with “active corporate membership” will receive the following:

- Allowed access to both Southern Exposure and Southern Innovations at published member prices
- Allowed to participate in the Member Scholarship Program (does not apply to members with “active individual membership”)
- Allowed to become a Sponsor with benefits
- Allowed to be added to the Booth Lottery for Southern Exposure each year (if not currently exhibiting as a Bronze Level or above sponsor)

### **Information for our Service Company Members:**

Our Service Company Members with “active corporate membership” will receive the following:

- Allowed access to both Southern Exposure and Southern Innovations at published member prices
- Allowed to become a Sponsor with benefits
- Allowed to participate in the Member Scholarship Program (does not apply to members with “active individual membership”)
- Allowed to be added to the Booth Lottery for Southern Exposure each year (if not currently exhibiting as a Bronze Level or above sponsor)