

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
- 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
- Sarah Sherrod Graphic Design

Board of Directors

David Sherrod	President & CEO	Southeast Produce Council
Brandon Parker	Chairman	Shuman Farms
Harold Paivarinta	Vice Chairman	Red Sun Farms
Raina Nelson	Secretary	Renaissance Food Group
Tim Graas	Treasurer	AWG
Mike Roberts	Director	Harp's Food Stores
Blair Greenhill	Director	Nickey Gregory Company
Jon Schwalls	Director	Southern Valley Produce Company
Kristin Yerecic Scott	Director	Yerecic Label
Don Fox	Director	Walmart Stores
Duke Lane	Director	Genuine Georgia
Sloan Lott	Director	Bland Farm
Gary Baker	Director	MDI
Chris Dove	Director	Food Lion

Sabrina Pokomandy	Director	Highline Mushrooms
Clark Roper	Director	Piggly Wiggly
Stanley Trout	Director	Idaho Potato Commission

Committees

- Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children
 - o Committee Co-Chair: Amanda Keefer
 - o Committee Co-Chair: Kevin Dunleavy
 - o This committee works with Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children to help coordinate programs and events to aid children with life-threatening diseases.
- Attendance/Membership Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Blair Greenhill
 - o This committee works to recruit all retail and foodservice members to attend our events. They also work to recruit new members for the council.
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Blair Greenhill
 - o This committee works with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta on programs and events to fight childhood obesity, including the Strong4Life Superhero Sprint each year in June in Atlanta.
- Education Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Harold Paivarinta
 - o This committee works to brainstorm and implement industry-relevant educational sessions and speakers for our events.
- Foodservice Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Frank Swanson
 - o This committee works on foodservice-related projects and programs to provide value-added services to the foodservice members.
- Palmer Home for Children Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Kristin Scott
 - o This committee works with Palmer Home for Children to coordinate efforts to provide for children in need, including the annual Palmer Home Radiothon and Ag Literacy Programs.
- Paul Anderson Youth Home Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Brandon Parker
 - o This committee work with Paul Anderson Youth Home to coordinate efforts with the Goodness Garden and annual PAYH Bike Ride and PAYH Golf Tournament.

- 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.
- Scholarship Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Jon Schwalls
 - o This committee works on the implementation and awarding of all SEPC Scholarship Funds, including Member Scholarship, Vorhees Vision Scholarship, and Nolan Foundation Scholarship.
- Society of St. Andrew Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Duke Lane
 - o This committee works with Society of St. Andrew to help glean our food shows and other projects to help feed the hungry.
- Southern Roots Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Stephanie Hilton
 - o This committee works to create programs that promote women in the produce industry, including programs at both Southern Exposure and Southern Innovations, which encourage meaningful connections through events, education, and mentoring.
- Sponsorship Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Mike Roberts
 - o This committee works to offer sponsorship opportunities to all of our members.
- STARS Committee
 - o Committee Chair: Raina Nelson
 - o This committee is in charge of the STARS and works to accommodate the STARS students at Southern Exposure.
- STEP-UPP Committee
 - o Committee Co-Chair: Mike Roberts
 - o Committee Co-Chair: Faye Westfall
 - o This committee works on setting up field tours and team-building events with each STEP-UPP class.

Please email info@seproducecouncil.com for more information.

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. This 3-day event includes networking, innovative, community, and educational opportunities which promote the produce industry in the Southeast.

- **Southern Innovations**
 - Southern Innovations is the SEPC's newest trade show platform. This groundbreaking event for our retail and foodservice members showcases the most innovative products within the produce industry while still maintaining the intimate setting that our members have grown to appreciate. From data-centric educational sessions to engaging keynote speakers, Southern Innovations offers members abundant opportunities to make meaningful connections while pursuing our passion in produce.

- **Southern Roots**
 - Southern Roots is our leadership program for women in produce. This program 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 and Southern Innovations Organics & Foodservice Expo.

Innovation

An innovative spirit has always been present within the SEPC that is constantly evolving to provide fresh ideas for our industry. Innovation is at the heart of all that we do at the SEPC, and we strive to ensure this innovative spirit exists within all four of the SEPC pillars.

- **Networking**
 - The SEPC leads the industry in ensuring that a trade show is more than just an event, it is an experience. We were the first to provide this enriching experience for participants where meaningful relationships are created, nurtured, and solidified year after year.

- **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

- including its STARS, STEP-UPP, and LINKS programs which seek to educate not only its current members but also future generations of the produce industry. We also award select members who have made an impact in the industry with the Next Generation Award as well as the Terry Vorhees Lifetime Achievement Award.

- **Community**

- A priority at the SEPC is to support organizations that promote the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. The SEPC currently supports 5 charitable organizations and has given over \$1 million in charitable donations to date.

- **Education**

- The SEPC has always provided and will continue to provide exceptional, out-of-the-box educational sessions, ensuring that our members receive quality education about the produce industry as well as other best practices for produce companies. The SEPC provides multiple scholarship opportunities each year and has awarded a total of \$777,500 in scholarships to date.

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 each year in June 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.
- **Palmer Home for Children**
 - Palmer Home for Children provides family and community to children in need regardless of race, gender, or background. Serving individual children and sibling groups, Palmer Home provides superior residential care for children while introducing the love of God through their service to each individual child. Children receive care through a residential model on one of Palmer Home for Children's two campuses located in Columbus and Hernando, Mississippi. Palmer Home staff use the Whole Child Initiative's approach to caregiving, offering a comprehensive approach to working with children that recognizes and addresses the multi-dimensional aspects of their lives: physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual.
- **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 the Society of St. Andrew we are able do our part to help feed America's hungry. In addition to financial support as well as disaster relief donations, the SEPC is honored to work with the Society of St. Andrew to donate all leftover food from Southern Exposure and Southern Innovations 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!

- **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.
 - 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 (Southeast Training Education Program for Upcoming Produce Professionals)** 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. Twelve (12) 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, negotiation strategy, and opportunities to connect with other SEPC members.
 - o Field Experience
 - Application is an important part of all education. The emphasis in this area will be to gain an understanding of how to partner with growers more effectively to build mutually beneficial relationships.

- The **PIT (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. 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-served basis and priority will be given to SEPC members.

- **LINKS (Learning, Interaction, and Networking with Key Players in the Supply Chain)** is an educational leadership program where exceptional, qualified individuals in the Grower/Shipper community connect with Retail/Foodservice providers in the Southeast. Taking place during Southern Exposure, LINKS is designed to create a non-competitive environment to facilitate exchange of ideas, learning, interaction, networking, and enhanced understanding of the retail supply chain to achieve the overall goals to better service consumers and drive consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in the Southeast. Exhibiting Grower/Shippers will be invited upon request of participating Retail/Foodservice members. Upon selection, both parties will then be assigned a location and time in which their meeting will take place at Southern Exposure.

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**
 - o 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) and Southern Innovations (our annual organics and foodservice conference and expo) provide excellent networking and learning opportunities
- **Innovation**
 - o 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**
 - o The SEPC is 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 immeasurable 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 sessions and access to scholarship opportunities. (does not apply to members with “active individual membership”)

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. Corporate members are entitled to all membership benefits provided by 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 enter the booth lottery for an exhibit space at our annual Southern Exposure trade show. Please note as of March 2015, individual members must upgrade to a corporate membership to retain any existing booth space at Southern Exposure.
 - Booth Space at Southern Innovations: As a corporate member, companies are entitled to a first-come, first-choice opportunity to obtain a booth, depending on your company’s sponsorship level.
 - Member Scholarship Program: Corporate members that are in good standing are eligible to apply for our annual member scholarship program. Eligible applicants must be/have a spouse, parent, or grandparent that is a corporate member with good standing status. Good standing status includes members that have been on the SEPC membership roster for at least 12 months and have attended at least one SEPC event (Southern Exposure and/or Southern Innovations) in the last fiscal year. If selected, recipients will receive a \$2,000 scholarship payable to the accredited university/school of his/her choice.
 - STEP-UPP: Our Retail and Foodservice members are eligible to participate in our industry training STEP-UPP program.
 - LINKS: Our Grower and Shipper members are eligible to participate

in our industry training LINKS program upon Retailer/Foodservice invitation.

- **Individual Membership**

- Entitles an individual member access to SEPC events. Some program exclusions may apply.
 - Annual Membership
 - 1 Member: \$250

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 recreational activities for each event (based on venue availability)
- Access to the Member Scholarship Program (does not apply to members with “active individual membership”)
- Access to Produce Inspection Training (maximum class size 20)
- Access to the Step-Upp Program (application and acceptance required)

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
- Access to the Member Scholarship Program (does not apply to members with “active individual membership”)
- Sponsorship opportunities
- Yearly entry into the booth lottery for Southern Exposure (if not currently exhibiting as a Bronze Level or above sponsor)
- Yearly access to booth availability for Southern Innovations (as booth space permits)
- Access to the LINKS Program (upon Retailer/Foodservice invitation)

Information for our Service Company Members:

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

following:

- Access to both Southern Exposure and Southern Innovations at published member prices
- Access to the Member Scholarship Program (does not apply to members with “active individual membership”)
- Sponsorship opportunities
- Yearly entry into the Booth Lottery for Southern Exposure each year (if not currently exhibiting as a Bronze Level or above sponsor)