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For Immediate Release

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May 13, 2016

FPAA Members Name Sabrina Hallman as Member of the Year

Nogales, AZ — During the annual meeting of the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA), the association’s president, Lance Jungmeyer, presented the FPAA Member of the Year Award. The Member of the Year is nominated by FPAA members and is someone who goes above and beyond in working for the betterment of the industry and its membership.

This year’s recipient is Sabrina Hallman, president and CEO of Sierra Seed Company, an agricultural seed distributing company and greenhouse operation providing services to commercial growers in North America.

“Sabrina has been a huge asset in telling the stories of our industry, whether it’s meeting with government officials or speaking with the media,” said Jungmeyer. “Her voice is helping make a difference.”

Hallman has been a familiar presence in meetings in Washington, DC, Phoenix, Tucson, Nogales and beyond. She works closely with politicians and government agencies to tell the story about how industry issues affect local businesses, job creation, and socio-economic progress. In particular, Sabrina has been very vocal in bringing attention to banking regulations, access to banking services, and the Federal government’s impacts on businesses in relation to banking. Her efforts in bringing attention to these issues have helped increase traction on Capitol Hill.

Sabrina has been on the FPAA board of directors since 2011, and she was also appointed by the board to be the current chair of the FPAA’s building committee. In announcing the winner, Lance quoted one observer as stating, “She is always looking for ways to bring people together and be inclusive. She jumps right in. She views FPAA as an organization where you get more out of it than what you put in.”

“She has worked hard and selflessly on behalf of the association. She was clearly surprised, and it was a wonderful moment,” said Alejandro Canelos of Apache Produce Imports and the FPAA’s outgoing past-chairman when speaking about the event.

Indeed many colleagues give high praise when speaking about Hallman's commitment to the industry.

"She was so gracious in accepting her award, claiming that she is just telling our story. The reality is that she is putting in a lot of hard work in bringing attention to some of our industry's issue," said Gonzalo Avila, the FPAA's chairman.

"First and foremost, I am deeply honored to have received this recognition. The FPAA is made up of a dynamic group of business persons who truly advocate for the betterment of the industry and the City of Nogales. To be awarded Member of the Year from so many very worthy people humbles me and again, I thank my father for continuing to create opportunities for me," said Hallman.

"The FPAA is more than just distributors. Our strength is working as a collective group of associated industries on issues that impact all of us. We depend on companies such as Sierra Seed Company and others, to actively promote our shared border trade opportunities and achievements," said Scott Vandervoet, the FPAA's incoming chairman-elect. "I congratulate Sabrina on her well-deserved award."

In addition to her tireless efforts at the FPAA, Hallman's hard work has resulted in the continued growth and expansion of her own business and has garnered other awards such as the 2012 Arizona Small Business Success award for its economic impact in the state of Arizona and the 2013 SBA Arizona Award winner of the Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year.

Hallman is also active in local civic groups, from women's business groups, such as the Women's Presidents Organization and the Zonta Club of Nogales to the Santa Cruz Community Foundation, a group that supports local non-profits and charitable initiatives.

Jungmeyer concluded his remarks by saying, "We need her support and influence to keep the association strong."

Each year's honoree is presented with a custom metal sculpture made by Tucson artist Matt Harper. Prior honorees of the FPAA Member of the Year Award include:

2014-15 - Scott Vandervoet of Vandervoet & Associates
2013-14 - Walter Ram of The Giumarra Companies
2012-13 - Jaime Chamberlain of JC Distributing
2011-12 - Terry Shannon of Shannon Brokerage
2010-11- Chuck Thomas of Thomas Produce

About the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas:

The FPAA is a nonprofit trade association headquartered in Nogales, Arizona, that represents over 120 U.S. member companies involved in growing, packing, sales and transportation of fresh fruits and vegetables grown in Mexico. The FPAA leverages the

efforts of private companies and partner-associations to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetable from Mexico.

Photo: Sabrina Hallman and Lance Jungmeyer