

NEWS RELEASE

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Chelan Fresh and Borton Fruit Combine to Offer Year-Round Supply of Most Sought-After Apple Varieties

Total Sales Volume Increases by 47 percent

Chelan, Wash. (May 2, 2017) – Chelan Fresh of Chelan, Wash., already one of the largest and most versatile apple, cherry and pear suppliers in the world, is merging with Borton Fruit of Yakima, Washington. The merger brings together two industry leading companies and 5 generations of farmers. Borton Fruit’s diverse production and innovative style joins the dynamic supplier base of Gebbers Farms, Crane & Crane and Chelan Fruit Cooperative in the marketing group. The addition of Borton Fruit brings an immediate 47 percent volume expansion to Chelan Fresh’s sales and marketing portfolio, including organic offerings, early-season cherries, innovative plantings and new proprietary apple varieties.

The partners in Chelan Fresh boast new and efficient production facilities and orchards. Together, the group has recently invested more than \$235 million dollars in state-of-the-art packing facilities and technologies, new storage facilities, and production efficiencies. These investments, combined with more than 13,000 acres planted in young, high-density orchards with modern trellis systems, will drive innovation on a large scale. In addition, the group will become an industry leading producer of Honeycrisp apples.

Chelan Fresh will market the majority of the new fruit under the globally-recognized *Trout* label, which has long been associated with high-quality apples, pears and cherries. This marks the label’s largest brand expansion since the *Trout* label was first marketed in 1923. Chelan Fresh also markets the *Cascade Crest Organic* and the *Chelan Fresh* labels.

“Customers want a one-stop-buying experience and shoppers want a wide selection of high-quality apples, pears and cherries all year long,” said, Tom Riggan, CEO of Chelan Fresh. “With the increase in volume and varieties, we can support any size program twelve months out of the year.”

The combined marketing company will retain the Chelan Fresh name and operate from both Chelan and Yakima, Washington. Although the venture will officially begin on September 1, the sales and marketing teams are already working closely to bring immediate benefits to buyers.

Comments from the Chelan Fresh Board of Directors

“The next generation of our family is determined to be positioned as industry leaders in the market place for the future in the fruit business,” says **John Borton**, CEO of Borton Fruit. “That means servicing retail accounts from a large volume base, from modern orchards, state-of-the art packing lines, and with exciting new varieties year-round. This partnership greatly enhances our ability to serve our customers.”

Bill Borton, president of Borton Fruit, says, "We are excited to partner with another firm that prides itself on growing high-quality fruit and cutting-edge varieties. With farms in different growing regions throughout the Pacific Northwest, the group can supply customers with great fruit from the very front-end of harvest through the end of the year.”

“There is no doubt that this new partnership leverages volume and scale to provide high-quality fruit and excellent year-around customer service, but the most rewarding part to me will be working day in and day out with all of the Chelan Fresh partners,” said **Reggie Collins**, CEO of Chelan Fruit Cooperative. “Together, we’re all building one of the most modern, innovative companies in the business on the foundation of family, friends and a passion for farming.”

Cass Gebbers, president of Gebbers Farms says, “Our companies’ upcoming fourth and fifth-generation family leaders are now in their 30’s. They’ve played ball on the same teams since they were kids and John (Borton) and I coached them together in national tournaments. They are as energetic in farming as they were on the basketball court.”

“Borton (Fruit) brings more than 100 years of expertise to our team. The company brings unique strengths and fresh perspectives, which will benefit customers. We are pleased to be joining forces with such a strong and innovative partner,” added **Riggan**.

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