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## Transportation Corner By Chris Johnson

### ***This week's Transportation News!***

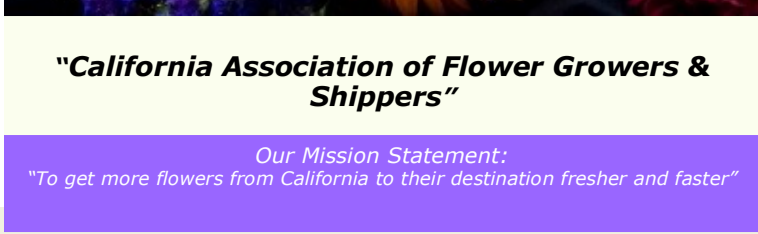
- In FedEx news, on January 30, 2011 FedEx National LTL and FedEx Freight will be merging. This consolidation will bring simplicity and improvements to the Freight division which consists typically of larger, heavier items. Look for more details on this development and how it can benefit members in next week's NORCAL News!
- Just a reminder to the Membership that NORCAL now has a page on the popular social networking website, Facebook. Just [Click here](#) and you can view our new page. Once on our page, you can click on the "Like" button at the top and be added to our fan page. We have posted photos, events and much more. We hope you enjoy our page and if you have events that you would like us to add, please let us know.
- We also want to remind shippers that automated dimming scanners used by carriers such as FedEx and OnTrac are very accurate. Any box that is not square or has any protrusions will most likely be measured at a larger size that could affect your expected shipping costs. Carriers are reluctant to adjust invoices where these issues are present. For more information on this topic, please contact me at 760-533-5580 or at [chris@cafgs.org](mailto:chris@cafgs.org)

#### **NORCAL**

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***"We are on a mission to get more flowers from California to their destination fresher and faster".***

# NORCAL NEWS

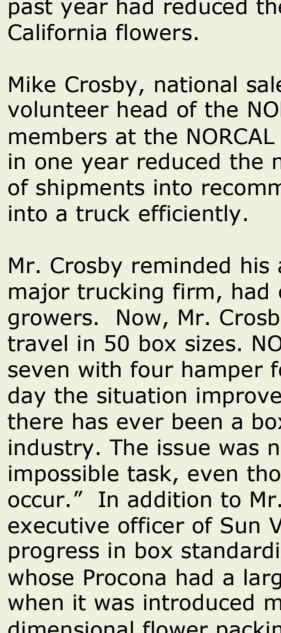


## **"California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers"**

*Our Mission Statement:  
"To get more flowers from California to their destination fresher and faster"*

### **Box size project thought to be a first for the floral industry**

**BY JOHN S. NIBLOCK**



past year had reduced the number of box sizes used to ship California flowers.

Mike Crosby, national sales representative for Sun Valley Group and volunteer head of the NORCAL box standardization project, told members at the NORCAL annual meeting Aug. 10 that the project has in one year reduced the number of box sizes and shifted about a third of shipments into recommended box sizes that fit on a pallet and load into a truck efficiently.

Mr. Crosby reminded his audience of about 120 that Prime Inc., a major trucking firm, had counted 1,524 box sizes used by California growers. Now, Mr. Crosby said, 80 percent of the flowers shipped travel in 50 box sizes. NORCAL hopes to bring that number down to seven with four hamper footprints in five heights, he added. "Every day the situation improves," he told *The Produce News*. "I don't think there has ever been a box standardization initiative in our domestic industry. The issue was never addressed because it was felt it was an impossible task, even though everyone agreed standardization should occur." In addition to Mr. DeVries, who is president and chief executive officer of Sun Valley Group, Mr. Crosby gave credit for the progress in box standardization to Jan Pagter of Pagter Innovations, whose Procona had a large impact on the domestic flower industry when it was introduced more than a decade ago as a pallet-based dimensional flower packing system.

"The 40-inch Solution" was the title of Mr. Crosby's remarks, and he used that box size to demonstrate savings in shipping and handling. "I don't need to tell you that if you can pack the same or more stems per cube and waste less space on the trailer during shipment that your flowers will land at lower cost," he said. "I believe the numbers are compelling. I would urge all growers and shippers to adopt the standardized boxes and especially the 40-inch boxes over the 44-inch boxes," he concluded. A new initiative for the project will be creating a NORCAL "Pallet Friendly" logo for newly designed generic "California" boxes in recommended sizes that also meet or exceed NORCAL standards for strength.

Mr. Crosby, who began his career in floral as a route driver for an east Texas floral wholesaler, served on the NORCAL board in 1995-96, as president from 1997-2000, and now again is a board member. The NORCAL annual meeting was held at the La Costa Resort & Spa in Carlsbad, CA.

## **Save the Date !**

**Mark your calendar for  
the 2011 California Floral  
Convention July 20-23 at  
the La Costa Resort and  
Spa in beautiful Carlsbad  
California.**