

# Antonini Celebrates 75 Years in Trucking Industry

By Andrew J. Wuellner

**H**eritage is one of the core values of all strong families. Traditions are passed from parent to child with the pride of knowing that the family is strengthened by the experience, knowledge and wisdom of each generation.

The Antonini Family is celebrating 75 years in the trucking business. "Prompt and efficient service" was one of the traditions passed down which became the standard of doing business and the company motto.

It has been more than 75 years since Virgilio

"Vic" Antonini started the first trucking company to haul agricultural products from the Central Valley to the San Francisco Bay Area. He loaded up a truck in Stockton with produce from his and other Stockton area farms and drove over Vasco Road to deliver to the Bay Area wholesale markets.

From that simple origin, an Antonini family tradition was sprung that is still going strong today.

Vic Antonini immigrated to California from a small northern Italian town and started a farm near Stockton.

However, it soon became clear that trucking was his calling. And it was to be the calling of his children and grandchildren.

From that single truck operation in 1926, Antonini Fruit Express grew. Vic's sons Louis, Jack and Rudy formed Antonini Bros. Inc. and further expanded the operation.

The trucking business evolved as the agricultural industry evolved.

"We switched from hauling fresh fruits and vegetables, which were going to Bay Area wholesale produce markets, to hauling bulk tomatoes, peaches, etc. to food processors and canneries throughout California," recalled Rudy Antonini. "We also worked to meet other needs of the farmers by selling herbicide, insecticide and fertilizers to them."

Currently, Antonini Fruit Express hauls agricul-

tural commodities, from tomato transplants to peaches, wheat, apricots, corn, rice, walnuts and cannery tomatoes. The wide variety enables seasonal drivers to keep busy for an eight- to nine-month period.



Rudy Antonini is in the driver's seat, but has handed over the operation of the family business to the third generation of Antonini truckers; Mark Antonini (left), Joe Antonini and Karen Wuellner.

Over the years the Antonini family has been innovative and resourceful in trying to provide services demanded by the marketplace. Today, the third generation of Antoninis are continuing this tradition of innovation through the leadership of brothers Joe and Mark Antonini and sister Karen Wuellner.

"Our vision is to be a premier transportation provider," said President Joe Antonini. "We want to provide the highest level of transportation services for our customers."

Antonini Freight Express Inc. was formed to provide freight service to meet the demands of a wide variety of customer needs. Curtain vans, dry vans, roller vans, flatbeds, and drop decks fill out the freight trailer fleet to haul everything from lumber and building materials to corrugated fiber and canned goods. Altogether the Antonini Family operates approximately 125 company-owned tractors with about 450 sets of trailers.

The family atmosphere extends throughout the staff of each company. And the Antoninis are the first to recognize the source of their strength.

"It is truly our employees that make the difference," said Joe Antonini. "Over the years, we have been fortunate to have many wonderful individuals work for our family and that has been the true measurement of our success".

