Walk the streets of any city in Russia and many cities throughout Europe on March 8, and you’ll likely see people carrying bouquets of flowers, bound for a female recipient. SAF is hoping those same scenes will play out on U.S. streets as well, and is providing florists the tools to help make it happen.

Women’s Day was started in 1909 in the U.S., as National Women’s Day, and then it migrated around the globe, where it’s widely known as International Women’s Day. More than 100 nations recognize Women’s Day (35 declared it a national holiday), with thousands of events held by organizations, governments, charities, educational institutions, women’s groups, corporations and the media.

The purpose of the holiday: to raise political and social awareness of the struggles of women. People give flowers and other small gifts to their mothers, wives, grandmothers and daughters, as well as coworkers, teachers and friends to show their respect, appreciation and love.

Observance of the holiday in the U.S. is growing. In 2013, more than 260 events were held nationwide. Lane DeVries, president of Sun Valley Floral Farms, has for the past two years offered in-store Women’s Day promotional materials to mass market retailers.

According to Produce News, Women’s Day has gained traction at stores that serve immigrant groups who celebrated the holiday in their homeland.

As a member of the SAF board of directors (his term expired in 2013), DeVries proposed the idea of an SAF-led effort to build Women’s Day sales shortly after the 2013 holiday.

“I’ve seen a YouTube clip showing a flower shop in Moscow, where people are lined up around the block to buy their flowers,” said DeVries. “I see this holiday as a great opportunity for flower growers, wholesalers and retailers to take advantage of a new tradition that has roots in the past.”
This year, a global multi-venue benefit concert broadcasting live on March 8 from the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and from Toronto with satellite links to celebrations around the world, promises to generate more buzz for Women’s Day.

Capitalizing on the momentum, SAF is using social media to promote flowers for celebrating Women’s Day and providing members with an online resource center with ideas and materials to build visibility locally.

DeVries is certain that with a bit of effort on florists’ part, they can leverage the holiday to build sales in what is otherwise a slow period. “It’s the perfect bridge between Valentine’s Day and Easter,” he said.

Among the promotional tools SAF members can access from safnow.org/WomensDay:
- Facebook shareable graphics with matching Facebook cover photos
- Web banner ads
- Print ads
- Suggested Facebook posts
- Suggested Tweets
- Color fliers
- Press release
- Ideas and advice for promoting the holiday

Try This
Some ideas to put into place immediately:
- **Capture Orders Early.** When customers place their Valentine’s Day orders, tell them about Women’s Day and ask if they would like to order flowers for Women’s Day, too. Consider offering a special for customers ordering Valentine’s Day and Women’s Day gifts at the same time.
- **Get involved.** Many localities and colleges hold Women’s Day events. Find out where the events are in your community by Googling “Women’s Day events” and your city and state, and then contact the organizers to participate.
- **Colorful handouts.** Print the Women’s Day fliers in color and add your shop information to the bottom. Hand them out at bridal shows, include them in invoices, tack them to bulletin boards at gyms and beauty salons and keep a stack by your cash register.
- **Follow Online.** Stay connected to International Women’s Day by liking Facebook.com/Internationalwomensday and following Twitter.com/womensday.

Going Social with Women’s Day
In an effort to promote flowers for the occasion to consumers, SAF will launch a social media campaign, featuring a blog on AboutFlowersBlog.com, sharable Facebook graphics, strategically placed Facebook posts and Tweets, and outreach to lifestyle and mommy bloggers.

SAF’s Retail Council and Consumer Marketing Committee provided guidance in promoting the holiday.

“Due to the proximity of Women’s Day to Valentine’s Day, volunteer leaders suggested a strategy of promoting women giving to women,” said Jennifer Sparks, SAF’s vice president of marketing. “This makes good strategic sense for women who want to show admiration and respect to everyday heroes: the moms, sisters, co-workers and friends in their lives.”

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