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Contact: Laurel Riek, Environmental Health Specialist, 406-447-8361
Gayle Shirley, Communications Manager, 406-457-8908

50 Local Eateries Honored for Commitment to Food Safety

Public health officials recognized 50 local food establishments Thursday for their exceptional efforts to make, serve, and sell safe food to the public.

Environmental health specialists with Lewis and Clark Public Health presented 15 Gold and 35 Silver Fork Awards during a ceremony before the City-County Board of Health. The winning establishments are listed below.

The health department has been offering the awards since 2011. This year set a record for the most Gold Fork winners.

“The number of Gold Fork Award winners has been growing every year,” said Laurel Riek, supervisor of the food-facility inspection program. “These are establishments that have demonstrated an effective food-safety system that reduces or eliminates the risk of foodborne illness.”

To be eligible for an award, a food establishment must offer sit-down dining and have been open for at least a year. The awards are based on the results of unannounced inspections conducted in 2016 by environmental health specialists from the health department. This year, 221 facilities were eligible for awards.

To win a Gold Fork Award, a food establishment must have a documented food-safety system, Riek said. This includes having:

- On-site managers who demonstrate knowledge of food safety and take corrective action when necessary;
- Food-safety training for all staff;
- Procedures to maintain safe food temperatures; and
- Employee health policies.

To win a Silver Fork Award, an establishment must demonstrate elements of at least three of these four components of an effective food-safety system.

“The purpose of these awards is to publicly recognize facilities that are working hard to develop food-safety systems that protect their customers,” Riek said. “It’s hard work to get and maintain this award.”
Riek noted that inspections are a snapshot in time, not necessarily a reflection of how an establishment does business on a day-to-day basis. That’s why the awards focus on having systems and processes in place.

“If you have a system and you use it consistently,” Riek said, “you’re much more likely to have excellent food-safety practices. And good practices significantly reduce the risk of anyone getting sick.”

For more information, contact the health department at 457-8900 or publichealth@lccountymt.gov

**Gold Fork Awards Winners:**

- Augusta Public Schools
- Broadwater School
- Burger King, 2820 Prospect Ave.
- Capital High Sodexo
- CR Anderson Middle School
- East Valley Middle School, East Helena
- Eastgate School, East Helena
- Four Georgians School
- Helena High School
- Lincoln School District 38
- Pizza Hut, 3267 N. Montana Ave.
- Radley School, East Helena
- Smith School
- Warren School
- Wendy’s, 1900 Prospect Ave.

**Silver Fork Award Winners:**

- Applebee’s
- Arby’s
- Benny’s Bistro
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Burger King, 3130 N. Sanders St.
- C Bar N Mission, Augusta
- Capital High School Cafeteria
- Carroll College Dining Services
- Central/Lincoln School
- Chili’s Grill & Bar
- Costco
- Dairy Queen Grill & Chill, 1700 Prospect Ave.
- Days Inn Helena
- Hardee’s, 1919 E. Custer Ave.
- Hardee’s, 320 Euclid Ave.
- Hawthorne School
- Helena Middle School
• Intermountain Children’s Home
• Jim Darcy School
• Lattes and Sundaes
• Lazy B Bar and Café, Augusta
• Los Cazadores, East Helena
• Masonic Home of Montana
• Panda Express
• Qdoba Mexican Grill
• Ray Bjork Learning Center
• Real Food Store & Deli
• Rossiter School
• Starbucks, 1300 Prospect Ave.
• Steve’s Café, 1225 E. Custer Ave.
• Taco Del Sol
• Taco John’s, 2301 N. Montana Ave.
• Target Food Avenue Express
• Village Inn Pizza Parlor
• Wolf Creek School Lunch Program