For immediate release  
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**Record Number of Local Eateries Take Home Gold for Safety**

Lewis and Clark Public Health recognized 55 local food establishments Thursday for their exceptional efforts to make, serve, and sell safe food to the public.

Staff of the health department’s Licensed Establishment Program presented 21 Gold and 34 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. These are establishments that have an effective food-safety system that reduces or eliminates the risk of foodborne illnesses.

“The number of Gold Fork Award winners has been growing every year,” said Laurel Riek, supervisor of the food-facility inspection program. “That demonstrates the dedication of these facilities to do everything possible to keep the public safe.”

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 2017 by environmental health specialists from the health department. This year, 195 facilities met the award criteria.

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 difficult to receive and maintain this award.”

Riek noted that inspections are a snapshot in time, which is why the awards focus on having effective systems in place.

“If a facility has a food-safety system in place and uses it consistently, the risk of a foodborne illness is significantly reduced,” Riek said.

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

Gold Fork Awards Winners:

• Applebee’s Grill and Bar
• Buffalo Wild Wings
• Burger King (3130 N. Sanders St.)
• Capital High School
• Capital High Sodexo
• Costco Wholesale
• CR Anderson Middle School
• East Valley Middle School, East Helena
• Eastgate School, East Helena
• Four Georgians School
• Hawthorne School
• Helena Dinner Club, Neighborhood Center
• Helena Middle School
• Jefferson School
• Lincoln School, Lincoln
• Panda Express
• Pizza Hut (3267 N. Montana Ave.)
• Radley School, East Helena
• Target Food Avenue Express
• Warren School
• Wendy’s

Silver Fork Award Winners:

• Apple-Rehab West (Cooney Home)
• Arby’s
• Augusta Dinner Club, Augusta
• Augusta Public Schools
• Broadwater School
• Bryant School
• Burger King (2820 Prospect Ave.)
• C Bar N Mission, Augusta
• Central-Linc. School
- Dairy Queen Grill & Chill (1700 Prospect Ave.)
- Green Meadow Country Club
- Hardee’s (1919 E. Custer Ave.)
- Hardee’s (320 Euclid Ave.)
- Intermountain Children’s Home
- Jim Darcy School
- Kessler School
- Lazy B Bar and Café, Augusta
- Lincoln Pit Stop, Lincoln
- Lucca’s
- Masonic Home of Montana
- McDonald’s (1901 Prospect Ave.)
- Montana Club
- Montana Law Enforcement Academy
- Moose Junction
- Papa John’s Pizza
- Qdoba Mexican Grill
- Ray Bjork Learning Center
- Real Food Store & Deli
- Rossiter School
- Shodair Residential Treatment Center
- Smith School
- Starbucks (1300 Prospect Ave.)
- Taco John’s (2301 N. Montana Ave.)
- Wolf Creek School Lunch Program