



News Release

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Health Department Launches New Food Inspection Website

Instant access, up-to-date information help restaurant goers make informed choices

(Salt Lake County) – A new feature on the Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) website now allows consumers to get instant and up-to-date information on any Salt Lake County food service establishment; searchable by name and location. The site can be accessed from the health department home page at www.slvhealth.org.

While results of the SLVHD's restaurant inspections are public record and restaurant closures have been posted online for several years, this new online feature allows instant access to more complete data, including specific information about any violations that were found and an explanation of inspection criteria and inspection scores. The site includes data obtained from January 1, 2008 to the present and will ultimately make up to four years of inspections available for viewing.

“This new website feature improves the ability of Salt Lake County residents and visitors to make informed choices when they and their families dine out or purchase food on the go,” said Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon. “It exemplifies the health department's commitment to providing our citizens with useful health information, and the County's commitment to open, accessible government.”

One of the roles of public health is to help assure the safety of food served to the public. This is accomplished in part by a system of unannounced inspections to ensure that standard food safety practices are being used. Salt Lake County has nearly 3,900 permitted food service facilities that, depending on the complexity of their menu and preparation processes, receive one to three unannounced inspections per year.

“We appreciate everything food establishments are doing to properly store, handle, prepare, and serve food to keep people safe,” said Royal DeLegge, Environmental Health Director. “This website will provide added safeguards by encouraging preventive actions by both the food industry and consumers to protect public and personal health.”

The inspection reports available online include routine inspections, follow-up inspections and critical item inspections. The most recent routine inspection score is used to rank and rate establishments.

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Individual restaurants are rated with a four-star quartile ranking system with the top 25% of restaurants receiving 4 stars, the next best 25% receiving 3 stars and so on for 2 and 1 star rankings. Each restaurant also has a numerical score to let consumers know their percentile rank when compared to other restaurants.

Creation of the new website took approximately 18 months. Over the past six months, health department staff worked closely with various industry and user groups, such as the Utah Restaurant Association (URA) and the Utah Food Industry Association (UFIA), to ensure the site best met the needs of the public. Both the URA and the UFIA have applauded the final product.

"The Utah Restaurant Association fully supports this new resource for both the public *and* food establishment operators," said Melva Sine, URA executive director. "The site is easy to use and a great way to make sure the dining public is well-informed about the restaurants they visit."

In addition to conducting food establishment inspections, SLVHD environmental health staff review construction plans for new and remodeled food preparation areas to ensure they conform to food safety standards, provide required safe food handling classes to establishment employees, conduct institution and school facility inspections, respond to citizen complaints regarding food handling practices and investigate suspected cases of food borne illness.

The new food establishment website can be accessed at www.slvhealth.org.

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