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# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HEALTH DISTRICT HONORS FOOD SAFETY**

### *Ten Southwest Idaho Restaurants Chosen as Food Merit Award Winners*

According to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, each year one in six people in the U. S. gets sick, 128,000 go to the hospital, and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food. To promote food safety, Southwest District Health officials announced the Southwest Idaho Food Merit Award Winners for calendar year 2010. The ten winners are chosen from an average of 1285 full-time food establishments inspected within Southwest Idaho, from which thirty-four were nominated and judged for these awards.

Since 1999, Southwest District Health has presented annual merit awards to recognize those in the restaurant and foodservice industry whose owners and managers are committed to clean and safe food handling practices, to guard against food contamination and food borne illnesses.

Southwest Idaho Food Merit Award winners include Taco Bell (medium risk) and Tacos El Rey (high risk) in Caldwell; Panda Express (medium risk) and Golden Corral (high risk) in Nampa; Bistro 2 Fifteen in Parma for rural Canyon County; The Turning Point (A & W Restaurant) in New Meadows for Adams County; The Pizza Factory in Emmett for Gem County; Murphy General Store in Owyhee County; Jimbo Restaurant in Payette; and Jeb's Corner in Weiser for Washington County.

“Southwest District Health has been presenting the food merit awards for the last twelve years to the best of the best in food service within our health district,” said Bruce Krosch, District Director for Southwest District Health. “These winners have shown excellent food safety practices to prevent food borne illness and should be proud of this achievement,” he said.

These restaurants follow good safety practices in reducing risk factors that contribute to food poisoning in their daily activities. Five major risk factors are judged including holding temperatures; personal hygiene; adequate cooking; cleanliness of equipment; and food sources.

Food Merit Awards are presented to one food establishment each in Adams, Washington, Payette, Gem, Owyhee Counties, and rural Canyon County. Four establishments are chosen from Caldwell and Nampa—two for medium risk and two for high risk establishments.

Some menus are more complex and the food preparation is more extensive, so Canyon County facilities are ranked as medium risk or high risk establishments.

“There are more establishments in Canyon County than the other five counties, so we wanted to more equitably judge similar establishments,” said. “Since there are so many more food establishments in Canyon County, we compare high risk establishments to other higher risk establishments, and medium risk establishments with other medium risk establishments, to more equitably judge and give more opportunity to highlight the hard standards to which these restaurants adhere,” said David Loper, Environmental Health Services Director for Southwest District Health.

Medium Risk Establishments are defined as having a limited menu of 1 or 2 main items; pre-packaged raw ingredients cooked or prepared to order; most products are cooked or prepared and served immediately; and hot and cold holding of potentially hazardous foods is restricted to single meal service. In turn, a High Risk Establishment has extensive handling of raw ingredients; preparation processes that include cooking, cooling, and reheating of potentially hazardous foods; and a variety of hot and cold holding of potentially hazardous foods.

Every food establishment operating in the six-county area of southwest Idaho is inspected at least once yearly for food safety and sanitation by Environmental Health Specialists from Southwest District Health. Once nominees have been chosen for this award, they agree to additional inspections as part of the scoring process.

To promote food safety practices while providing information to consumers, Southwest District Health posts food inspection results at <http://www.swdh.org>.

**###**



Adams County: Turning Point (A & W Restaurant)  
New Meadows



Washington County: Jeb's Corner – Weiser



Caldwell (High Risk): Tacos El Rey #1



Caldwell (Medium Risk): Taco Bell



Nampa (High Risk): Golden Corral



Nampa (Medium Risk): Panda Express #1509



Rural Canyon County: Bistro 2 Fifteen (Parma)



Gem County: Pizza Factory – Emmett



Owyhee County: Murphy General Store—Murphy



Jimbo Restaurant – Payette

**Also Nominated:**

**Adams County:** Brown's Mountain Market (New Meadows) and Queen's Castle Subway (New Meadows)

**Canyon County:** Caldwell (High Risk)-- Garcia's Tex Mex Grill, Orphan Annie's Grill, and Sage Café

Caldwell (Medium Risk)—Dairy Queen and Little Caesars Pizza

Nampa (High Risk)—Brick 29, Outback Steakhouse, T.G.I.Fridays

Nampa (Medium Risk)—Burger King, Carl's Jr., and Taco Time

Rural Canyon County—Apple Lucy's (Parma), Farmboy Drive-In (Middleton), and Subway of Middleton

**Gem County:** Blue Ribbon Bakery & Sonic Drive-In

**Owyhee County:** Gus's Gas (Grand View), Riddle Mercantile (Riddle), & Owyhee Ice Cream Company (Homedale)

**Payette County:** Grandma's Kitchen (Payette)

**Washington Cty:** Weiser Classic Candies and Weiser Subway