

**Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Board of Health Issues Certificates of Excellence**

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's Board of Health released its list of "**Certificates of Excellence**" in foodservice for the year 2011. Restaurants that met the revised guidelines adopted by the Board of Health in October, 2010, were eligible to receive a certificate from the department. The revised guidelines specified the following criteria:

- The food service facility must be free of critical items citations for the award period.
- The food service facility must have received no more than three noncritical item citations during their annual food inspections.
- The food service facility must employ a certified food safety manager, as required by Michigan law (effective June 30, 2009).
- The food service facility must be compliant with Michigan's smoke-free law, (effective May 1, 2010).
- The food service facility must be at a fixed location and operate at least 12 days per month and perform food preparation at the facility.
- The food service facility cannot have been implicated in a foodborne illness outbreak.

- The food service facility cannot have investigated and confirmed complaints lodged against them;
- The food service facility cannot have an enforcement action issued against them.

According to Rebecca Burns, Environmental Health Director, “The revised guidelines better reflect recent changes in laws that govern food establishments, such as complying with Michigan’s Smoke Free Law and employing a certified food safety manager. As a result of these changes, we feel that the food establishments who were able to meet the more stringent criteria are quite deserving of this award.” Eighty-nine tri-county food service establishments, including restaurants, bars, catering kitchens, and schools, received this year’s award.

Food service inspections are normally performed twice in a year. The Environmental Health Division inspects all food service establishments in the tri-county area to assure proper food handling and sanitation for food served to the public. Additionally, restaurant managers are offered food service training by the department each year to train food service workers in proper food handling and preparation.

The Branch-Hillsdale St. Joseph Community Health Environmental Health Division has been accredited with Commendation by the Michigan Department of Agriculture in the delivery of this food inspection program, assuring consistent and high quality inspections for all restaurants. A copy of [restaurants recognized for the year 2011 and prior years 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005 and 2004](#), along with the revised [Guidelines for the Certificate of Excellence Award for Foodservice Establishments](#) can be found on the Community Health Agency Website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).

**Summer Safety!** - In addition to inspections of permanent fixed food establishments, Environmental Health Food Inspection personnel also inspect summer food service vendors at local festivals and events to assure proper food handling and safety for summer festivals and other public events held outside the traditional restaurant setting.

To find out more about the food inspection program, or other Environmental Health Programs, visit our web site and select Environmental Health. [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org)

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