

2011 Submission for CCDEH  
Excellence in Environmental Health Award

City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services  
Bureau of Environmental Health

National Food Safety Education Month Outreach

**Overview**

In 2006, the City of Long Beach Environmental Health Bureau (LB EH) explored new and innovative ways to provide outreach and education to the public, the food service industry, other organizations, and government agencies regarding our Food Facility Inspection Program and food safety principals in general. In order to implement this outreach, LB EH decided to dedicate staff and resources, by forming a standing committee, to implement various annual events every September during National Food Safety Education Month (NFSEM). National Food Safety Education Month was created in 1994 to heighten the awareness and importance of food safety education. It is an annual campaign sponsored by the National Restaurant Association and supported by federal, state and local agencies, the food industry and consumer organizations.

Each year, the LB EH NFSEM committee has implemented a wide variety of outreach and educational activities including producing food safety videos and posting them on YouTube, hosting a food safety vendor fair, receiving a NFSEM proclamation from the Mayor, launching an internet web campaign, and offering food safety classes, weekly City employees quizzes, hand washing demonstrations, food safety games for children, and educational displays.

**Project Description**

Various marketing strategies were evaluated by the committee to find new and innovative methods to outreach and educate various groups on our program and food safety principles. The NFSEM committee is composed of EH inspection and clerical staff, interns, and supervisory and management staff. In this age of electronic and social media, the committee decided to implement various activities using the intranet, internet, and YouTube which would reach a wide variety of audiences. Also, activities were planned targeting our food facility operators specifically. In addition, activities were developed to target educating our own City staff and officials regarding our EH Food Inspection Program functions so they could better understand our role in protecting public health and relate it to their daily business activities. And finally, more traditional activities, like classroom trainings, children's activities, and display boards were developed to reach another segment of the population who visited various City locations.

Details regarding these various outreach activities are provided on the following pages and appendices.

### **1). Food Safety Videos Released in 2010**

In 2010, our most ambitious and rewarding NFSEM project to date was the development of five food safety videos. These videos were developed entirely in-house by LB EH Food Program staff who did everything from script writing to filming to editing and creating original music for the videos. Each video is approximately five to seven minutes in length and address the following subjects:

1. Avoid Purchasing from Unsafe Sources
2. Clean and Sanitize Correctly
3. Prevent Cross Contamination
4. Avoid Time-Temperature Abuse, Parts 1 & 2
5. Practice Good Personal Hygiene

EH Food Inspection staff were filmed at various restaurants, commissaries, and food warehouses for the videos using two hand held digital video cameras (Sony and Panasonic) with built in microphones. Editing was done using two laptops with Sony Vegas video editing software. Food Program staff wanted to be in the videos to lend a personal and identifiable feel to the videos, so that food facility operators could say “Hey, there is my inspector!” Knowing we had a limited budget, the videos had to be made as economically as possible, and staff utilized work time to write scripts, set up filming locations, conduct limited rehearsals, film on location, and edit film. All five videos were written, filmed, and edited over a 3 month period. The first three videos were posted to YouTube in September 2010 for NFSEM, and the additional two videos were posted in November 2010 to YouTube. Limited numbers of CDs containing the videos were distributed to industry representatives however additional copies are being reproduced for distribution to all 2200 permitted food facilities in September 2011. The videos can be viewed at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F4MJ7W1\\_UA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F4MJ7W1_UA)

### **See Appendix 1**

#### ***Outcomes and Achievements-Food Safety Videos***

*The food safety videos have been a resounding success! Everyone from Health Dept staff to management, from industry representatives to the public, and from City employees to elected officials, have all complimented the videos and agreed they are a valuable outreach and educational tool as well as training tool. Several food facility operators have already expressed an interest in using these videos to supplement their staff training programs. The total number of man-hours invested in this project was approximately 480 hours at the estimated cost of \$14,400 which is a considerable cost savings as compared to a similar video project costing \$45,000 (done by a consultant/professional film crew). The number of hits/views received for the videos is 237 to date for the 7-9 months they have been on YouTube. We anticipate that with additional marketing and*

*distribution, we will see a marked increase in YouTube activity. An added benefit to making the videos in house was the increased teamwork, pride, and empowerment felt by EH staff resulting from working together on this project.*

## **2). Program E-mail Address Implemented in 2010**

Additionally in Sept 2010, the LB EH Food Facility Inspection Program implemented a separate e-mail address to address food safety specific questions from the public and industry. The address is [foodinspectors@longbeach.gov](mailto:foodinspectors@longbeach.gov). This e-mail is used in all NFSEM project advertising and activities, as well as year round for other Food Facility Inspection Program matters.

### ***Outcomes and Achievements-Program E-mail***

*Previously in order to contact LB EH via e-mail, a message was routed thru the City webmaster, then to the Health Department, then to the appropriate Bureau, and finally to the applicable EH Program. Timely responses to customer and operator questions or complaints were delayed somewhat due to this process. With our own Program specific e-mail address, we are quicker to respond to these inquires, and responses are usually the same day as compared with the previous 3-4 day response time.*

## **3). Food Safety Web Campaign Continued in 2010**

Also for NFSEM in September 2010, five web based food safety educational activities were posted weekly on the City's intranet site, which reached 5000 City employees daily and the City's internet site which reaches tens of thousands of people daily. Weekly prizes were awarded to first and second place winners for correctly answering and participating in the various food safety quizzes with the following themes:

- Recognizing high risk customers
- Children and Food Safety Risks
- High Risk Customers: Foods to Avoid
- Serving High Risk Customers Safely: Minimum Internal Cooking Temperatures
- Five Food Safety Risk Factors

In addition, these same activities were posted on the City's internet site inviting participation from industry and the public. Prizes were donated by various vendors, as well as purchased by LB EH. This web campaign was originally designed and implemented for NFSEM 2009.

**See Appendix 2**

### ***Outcomes and Achievements-Web Campaign 2010***

*We received numerous responses from City employees, as well as industry, to the online web activities. City employees from departments including Parks, Recreation, and*

*Marine, Human Resources, Water Department, Fire Department, Community Development, Health and Human Services, and others participated in these activities and were eager to win digital thermometers. Many City employees commented that they did not know about our Environmental Health Bureau and they learned a lot from the online food safety activities.*

#### **4). NFSEM Proclamation by Mayor Presented in 2009**

Mayor Foster and City Council presented the Bureau of Environmental Health with a proclamation in celebration of National Food Safety Education Month on September 4, 2009. The proclamation commended the Department's Bureau of Environmental Health for its outstanding commitment in promoting food safety awareness in the food service industry and protecting public health through education, permitting, inspection, and enforcement activities. The proclamation also detailed the CDC food borne illness stats, and recognized the educational and outreach activities planned by LB EH.

#### ***Outcomes and Achievements-Proclamation***

*This recognition by the Mayor and City Council was celebrated by Health Department management and staff, and in particular EH management and staff! Many of the Council Members are strong supporters of the Health Department but this special recognition was a show of additional support for our EH Bureau, Programs, and activities.*

#### **See Appendix 3**

#### **5). Food Safety Web Campaign Launched in 2009**

In 2009, five web based food safety educational activities were developed and posted weekly on the City's intranet site, which reached 5000 City employees daily. Weekly prizes were awarded to first and second place winners for correctly answering and participating in the various food safety quizzes. In addition, these same activities were posted on the City's internet site inviting participation from industry and the public. Prizes were donated by various vendors, as well as purchased by LB EH for participating in these activities related to the following issues:

- Avoid Purchasing food from Unsafe Sources
- Clean and Sanitize Utensils Correctly
- Prevent Cross Contamination of foods and utensils
- Avoid Time-Temperature Abuse of foods
- Practice Good Personal Hygiene

### ***Outcomes and Achievements-Web Campaign Launched***

*Launching this web based outreach campaign was a lesson in internet technology and patience. It took approximately six weeks to meet with the appropriate City IT personnel to work out the details of the internet and intranet postings and to get the appropriate approvals, but it was worth the effort as it yielded excellent results (similar to the 2010 results detailed above). Many City employees now recognize September as NFSEM and look forward to the food safety outreach.*

### **6). Food Safety Vendor Fair Held in 2009**

In 2008, our second most ambitious NFSEM project was to plan and implement a successful food safety vendor fair during the month of September. The subcommittee polled industry, who indicated an interest in a vendor fair, and 20 vendors were recruited to participate. The vendors included pest control companies, government agencies, sanitizer/cleaning chemical companies, refrigeration/gasket companies, food equipment suppliers, and food consultants. LB EH Food Staff also manned an “Ask the Inspector” booth, which was very popular with food operators. Concurrent with the vendor fair, free seminars on food safety and pasteurized eggs were offered by food consultants and companies. All exhibitors were asked to donate raffle prizes and attendees won a wide variety of food safety equipment including thermocouples and certificates to free Food Manager Trainings. LB EH Food Staff were involved in planning and coordinating all the logistics of this event from arranging for a sound system, advertising, setting up of booths and tents, and obtaining all necessary City permits.

**See Appendix 4 and 5**

### ***Outcomes and Achievements-Vendor Fair***

*The food safety vendor fair went off without a hitch, was enjoyed by many, and came in under budget. We had over 350 attendees and the event was deemed a success by those who attended. We had budgeted \$5,000 for the event, and even though we encountered expenses not identified earlier, we spent \$4, 140. We had one food facility operator who was so excited about the event he brought 12 of his employees, and we were pleased at the number of “Mom & Pop” operators who were able to attend. By hosting the event out in front of the Health Department, we also attracted other staff and clients visiting the clinics. We also received some local press, as a reporter came to the event and took photos for the Beachcomber newspaper. Student interns and students from CSULB and LBCC also attended the event to learn more about environmental health.*

## **In Conclusion**

While many Health Department EH Programs may hold occasional events for NSFEM, Long Beach EH takes pride in planning unique and innovative annual outreach and educational events for the public, food facility operators, other organizations and agencies, and City of LB Department employees, management, and officials. Even though budgets are lean, we still challenge ourselves to come up with ways to bring food safety to the forefront of everyone's agenda.

## **Program Contact**

Nelson Kerr, Director  
Bureau of Environmental Health  
City of Long Beach Dept of Health & Human Services  
2525 Grand Avenue, Rm 220  
Long Beach, CA 90815  
562-570-4190  
Nelson.kerr@longbeach.gov