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County of Santa Clara Wins 2003 Crumbine Award for Excellence in Food Protection

SAN JOSE, CALIF. —The County of Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health has been selected as the recipient of the 2003 *Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award for Excellence in Food Protection*. A jury of leading environmental health officials and public health sanitarians presents the Crumbine Award, named for one of the United States most renowned public health sanitarians, to a local public health agency. The Crumbine Award is the most prestigious recognition that a public health agency can receive. Agencies that win the Crumbine serve as models for other public health and safety programs across the nation.

The County’s Consumer Protection Division (Food Safety Program), operated by the Department of Environmental Health, monitors retail food facilities countywide, including restaurants, markets, bakeries, bars, food vehicles, farmers’ markets, street fairs and festivals; and investigates complaints of food-borne illness, conducts food safety training classes, and carries out food product recalls.

“The innovative ideas that have been implemented in Santa Clara County’s program were extremely impressive,” said Colin Thacker, Director of Environmental Health at the Lake County, Ill., Health Department and chair of the 2003 Crumbine jury. “Innovation is one of the most important elements in an Award-winning program because we recognize that departments throughout the country will look to incorporate these ideas within their own programs.”

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The jurors considered the County’s initiatives to create uniform inspection standards for food service establishments, address its multicultural populace, partner with food safety advocates and incorporate the use of technology.

“We appreciate the recognition,” said Supervisor Blanca Alvarado, Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors. “The jurors cited the County’s strategic planning initiatives, particularly our proactive approach to public health and reaching out to inform the public about food safety.”

Ben Gale, Santa Clara’s Director of the Department of Environmental Health, said, "Winning the Crumbine Award is like accepting an Oscar® or Emmy for environmental health programs on a national level. The department is extremely proud to be the 2003 winner. Acknowledgment and recognition goes to each employee who, through their individual efforts on a daily basis, made it possible – they are the real stars!"

Santa Clara will receive the Crumbine Award at the Annual Education Conference of the National Environmental Health Association on June 8 in Reno. Award presentations will also be made at the annual meetings of the International Association for Food Protection annual meeting in August in New Orleans and the National Association of County and City Health Officials to be held in Phoenix in September.

The Crumbine Award is supported by the Conference for Food Protection, in cooperation with the American Academy of Sanitarians, American Public Health Association, Association of Food & Drug Officials, Foodservice & Packaging Institute Inc., International Association for Food Protection, International Food Safety Council, National Association of County and City Health Officials, National Environmental Health Association, National Sanitation Foundation International, and Underwriters Laboratories Inc.

A copy of Santa Clara’s award-winning application can be found under hot items on the County of Santa Clara website www.sccgov.org.

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