

Health *Edina*

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Edina Health Division

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Renneke Brings Additional Experience to Health Division

By Hannah Watkins

The newest addition to the City of Edina's Health Division has worked in nearly every aspect of the food industry.

Hired in May 2014, Lee Renneke brings to the position of Environmental Health Specialist a variety of experience, having managed popular restaurants such as Good Earth, Annie's Parlour and Convention Grill. He has also operated his own restaurants and has experience working for food service contract management companies that oversee corporate cafeterias, college food service and golf course banquets.

Renneke, who holds a degree in Food Science and Nutrition from the University of Minnesota, started his career with the City's Health Division as an intern during the summer of 2013. Before rejoining the team last spring, he worked a short stint for the Minnesota Department of Health.

"Lee has such a varied experience in the industry and brings a lot of knowledge to his position," said Community Health Administrator Jeff Brown. "We're really fortunate to have him on our team."

Renneke is happy to be back in Edina as well.

"I look forward to continuing to bring my experience and background to the regulatory world of inspections," said Renneke. "I hope to be a resource for the locations we license, too."

Renneke is trained in a variety of areas of Environmental Health, including conducting regulatory food, swimming pool and lodging inspections. He and others in the Health Division investigate public health nuisance complaints as well.



Lee Renneke



Jeff Brown



Solvei Wilmot

Renneke is one of two Environmental Health Specialists

who work for the City. The other, Solvei Wilmot, holds a degree in Biology from Augustana College and has worked for the City for more than 29 years. She worked for the Parks & Recreation Department until 1997 when she took a Recycling Coordinator/Sanitarian position with the Health Division. Wilmot became an Environmental Health Specialist in 2001.

"Working for the Health Division has been an opportunity for varied experience. The to-do list is different every single day," said Wilmot.

With a small staff, it is vital that each member of the Health Division is trained in each area of environmental health. This range of knowledge is vital when one person is unavailable for an extended time or when all three need to work together to take care of an issue.

As a result of this cross-training, licensed food, pools or lodging establishments may be inspected by any of the Health Division staff members, so don't be surprised if you see a new face conducting your next inspection!

For more information, call 952-826-0370 or visit www.EdinaMN.gov/Health.

NEW NEWSLETTER!

To increase communication and outreach to Edina residents, businesses and licensed facilities, the City of Edina's Health Division has begun publication of this newsletter, HealthEdina. Which will be published twice per year.

As the majority of facilities licensed by the Health Division are food, pools and lodging establishments, much of the newsletter content will be focused in those areas. However, the Health Division also manages neighborhood nuisance complaints, public health nuisances, underground parking garage inspections, residential recycling program, noise complaints, indoor air quality questions and requests for information on a variety of other topics. We will include current or upcoming events in the City related to the Health Division and may solicit guest articles from our licensed facilities on relevant topics.

The newsletter will also be available online at www.EdinaMN.gov/Health.

ARE YOU A MINNESOTA-CERTIFIED FOOD MANAGER OR JUST THINK YOU ARE?

Most Minnesota restaurants are required to employ a Minnesota Certified Food Manager as the lead food safety person in the establishment. However, many employees are not aware that obtaining this certification is a two-step process. As there are thousands of Minnesota food workers who need to get this certification, and thousands more who need to renew their certification every three years, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) cannot provide enough classes to meet this demand. To solve this issue, the MDH has approved outside contractors to teach food safety classes and administer approved exams. These are sometimes taught by a corporate staff member, local health department, vendor representative or someone who has become a certified exam proctor. As a result, taking the class and passing the exam is not the only step needed to get your Certified Food Manager Certificate. The MDH needs proof that you passed the exam before issuing your official certificate, which is provided by the exam proctor. This certificate, along with an application and fee, is then submitted to the MDH and your official Certified Food Manager Certificate is mailed to you. For more information about this process, visit www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/fmc.



PROTECT YOUR CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES FROM NOROVIRUS

We've all heard someone talk about having the "stomach flu," but there's no such thing as the stomach flu! Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus that attacks the nose, throat and lungs. It has nothing to do with the common symptoms of foodborne illness, which are vomiting and diarrhea.

Foodborne illness is the general term used for bacterial or viral illnesses that are commonly associated with food products. Most of us have heard of Salmonella and E. coli, but the most common illness from food is caused by Norovirus. Noroviruses are a group of viruses that can cause gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and intestines. Noroviruses are very contagious and are found in the stool (feces) or vomit of infected people. From there, Noroviruses are transferred to food, water or surfaces by the hands of infected people who have not washed well after using the bathroom. Norovirus can produce illness in any location where poor personal hygiene, close personal contact or food preparation take place, including schools, restaurants, daycares and workplaces.

The best preventions for Norovirus are good hand-washing practices and staying home from work - especially if you work in foodservice - when you are ill with vomiting or diarrhea. Norovirus fact sheets are available in English and Spanish online at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/norovirus/index.html.

