

Placer County easing food truck regulations

Placer County is adapting its rules to make it easier for food truck owners to operate, while ensuring their food products are safely prepared.

“It’s not just greasy food anymore,” said Jim Sweet, co-owner of JJ’s Smoke ‘N’ BBQ out of Loomis. “People are really doing unique items on the menu. Here on our truck, everything is pretty much made from scratch.”

Earlier this month, in an effort to make the required health and safety inspection process easier and more accessible, the environmental health division of Placer’s health and human services department had its first “food truck roundup.” The county invited food trucks to line up for inspection at a parking lot at Sierra College in Rocklin, where they can pass a health checkup and receive their yearly health permit. Previously, a much less efficient practice had the truck owners make individual appointments at county offices in Auburn.

Environmental health staff conduct their inspections, checking to make sure food is stored at proper temperatures, basic sanitation practices are followed and commercial-grade equipment meets standards, among other items. Then, the trucks are permitted for another year.

The county has explored other innovative ways of making the regulatory process more convenient for food truck operators, such as working with neighboring environmental health departments at nearby counties to honor a food truck’s last inspection report without imposing additional fees, so they don’t need go through another full inspection in Placer County. If the initial check of a new food truck’s build and

equipment has been approved by a neighboring county, then they are good to go.