



**Dean A. Lerner, Director**

### **State Takes Over Inspection of Jackson County Restaurants**

DES MOINES, IOWA (October 30, 2009) – Beginning Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, all restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores, and hotels and motels in Jackson County will be inspected and licensed by state employees from the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA). The Department has the statutory responsibility to oversee and conduct these inspections around the state but contracts with various local health departments to assume this function with DIA contractual performance oversight.

DIA assumed the inspection of all food service and lodging establishments in Jackson County following the decision earlier this year by the County Board of Health to terminate its contract with the Department. Under its contract with DIA, the Jackson County Health Department inspected approximately 160 establishments for compliance with the Iowa Food Code (Iowa Code chapter 137F) and the Iowa Sanitation Code. Licensing fees collected by the County were used to help offset the costs associated with the local inspection program.

As a result of Jackson County's termination of its contract, DIA will reassign one of its 13 state inspectors to cover the eastern Iowa area. Currently, DIA staff inspects and licenses nearly 6,500 establishments in the 23 counties under state jurisdiction.

As a result of Jackson County's termination of the inspection program, all existing food and lodging establishments located in the County will need to apply to DIA for license renewals. New businesses, too, must contact the department for licensing applications and pre-opening inspections. Staff in the Department's Food and Consumer Safety Bureau can be reached by telephone at (515) 281-6538.