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LAS VEGAS

Rats cause closure at Cafe Moda, plus Roberto's Taco Shop and El Pollo Mobile on Dirty Dining

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LAS VEGAS (KTNV) — Many would consider rats at a restaurant the ultimate health hazard.

But Cafe Moda owner Bill Carney says in his case it's not as big a deal as it seems on the health inspection that temporarily shut him down.

"I don't really have a concern at all about our pest control procedures," Carney said.

Cafe Moda, a karaoke bar that specializes in Filipino food, has been in business on Jones Boulevard and Desert Inn Road for 17 years.

It was shut down on Jan. 27 for a rodent infestation even though Carney told inspectors they'd had pest control service the day before.

"However, they already made the decision, because they didn't know whether there was an active infestation or not, to close in a protective way for the health of the public," he said. "Which I support."

He says they have stepped up their rodent pest control over the past few months.

"Nobody saw rats or mice scurrying around in here," noted Darcy Spears. "But according to the health report, there was plenty of evidence that they were there. Their list is fairly extensive of where they found droppings and urine: in a bus tub, on clean glasses, on shelving, next to plastic cups and utensils, on the floor under equipment on the hot line, along the back wall in the dry storage room, in the liquor storage room, behind the hot water heater and behind the washer and dryer. So that's a lot!"

"It's a lot," Carney agreed, "although, many of those items are in the same area," which he says is not part of their daily cleaning regimen.

"And the other thing which I take a little bit of exception to, the report made it sound as though we had glassware that had droppings on it. We haven't had a banquet in nearly a year and those were banquet goblets that were stored on a shelf in the back, so they were clean but they weren't used for a long period of time so that was not a recent problem."

Inspectors say rats had free access to Cafe Moda through multiple holes in walls and around pipes, as well as through missing drywall and ceiling tiles.

Other violations aside from the rodent issues included raw beef stored overcooked pork and raw chicken over calamari and beef.

Cooked pork, ground chicken, intestines, shrimp paste and rice were not date-labeled.

And employees' open water bottle and food sat above customer food.

"Those are some pretty basic kitchen operation things," said Spears. "What did you tell your staff about those violations?"

"Well, I reinforced it," Carney said. "And personally, I have a zero-tolerance for these types of things, which I think is due to employees wanting their convenience rather than recognizing the health and cross-contamination issues that can come up with that."