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WHITE CASTLE'S NEW CASTLE CLEAN WEBSITE DISPLAYS HEALTH SCORES

Founder Billy Ingram was transparent in food safety and White Castle still embraces that vision

COLUMBUS, Ohio – White Castle, America's first hamburger chain, today announced the launch of WhiteCastleClean.com. This website is dedicated to promoting food safety, cleanliness and transparency by providing county health scores for all White Castle restaurants. White Castle is the first quick service restaurant chain to create a website specifically designed to share health inspection scores with the public.

"The commitment to food safety, cleanliness and total transparency in our efforts are critical aspects of serving our customers and are the foundation upon which founder Billy Ingram built our family owned business," said Jamie Richardson, vice president of White Castle. "As we celebrate our 95th birthday, we are reaffirming our commitment to these values and I can think of no greater commitment than to be the first restaurant to offer our health scores online."

In the 1920s, American hamburgers were not considered the iconic all-American meal they are today. There was a substantial culinary bias against the hamburger after Upton Sinclair published his landmark muckraking journalistic book, *The Jungle*, which detailed health violations and unsanitary practices in the American meatpacking industry. The public viewed hamburgers as inferior food. Ingram faced a significant challenge in changing the public's perception. The Original Slider® made of 100% USDA Grade A beef and steam grilled on a bed of onions was one of the four original menu items, and instantly became a hit.

When Ingram launched White Castle, he strategically named his restaurant to help combat the public's negative perception of the hamburger. "White" represented cleanliness, and "Castle" was a symbol of strength.

Through the years, White Castle has been an innovator and leading advocate for food safety and cleanliness initiatives in the restaurant industry. This leadership position is because Ingram wasn't content to simply state his restaurant was clean and safe; he took additional steps to ensure that every restaurant embodied this image. His stainless steel counters in the Castles were an innovation at the time and eventually became an industry standard. He was among the first to establish uniform and hygiene standards for his employees.

Those efforts led White Castle to establish its own bakeries and meat processing plants, as well as plants that assemble and package the retail product sold in grocery and convenience stores across the United States.

In launching the new Castle Clean website, White Castle is bringing a 21st century presentation to the transparency Ingram embraced with his original food safety and cleanliness initiatives.

"Online health scores are common for most but not all counties and cities," said Richardson. "Restaurant inspection and health scores are handled at a county and municipal level. So while there is a semblance of a universal standard; there are unique differences in how the scores are assigned at each county across the United States. Unfortunately, budget challenges have forced some counties to abandon their health score websites. In the spirit of Billy's transparency, we wanted to create a place where our Cravers could go to view their local Castles' health scores."

The site will be updated biannually and the most recent scores will be included on the site.

For more information about White Castle's food safety and cleanliness initiatives, visit whitecastle.com.

About White Castle®

White Castle, America's first fast-food hamburger chain based in Columbus, Ohio, is celebrating 95 years as a family-owned business. The company was founded in Wichita, Kansas, in 1921 serving The Original Slider® which was named the most influential burger of all time in 2014 by *Time*. All White Castle Sliders are made from 100 percent USDA inspected beef. Today White Castle owns and operates nearly 400 restaurants in 13 states and has two dedicated Crave Mobiles that attended hundreds of events in 2015. White Castle's commitment to maintaining the highest quality products extends to the company owning and operating its own meat processing plants and bakeries as well as three frozen food processing plants. The retail division markets White Castle signature products in grocery, warehouse and convenience stores across the United States and in a growing number of international locations, including military PX's around the world.

White Castle.com is a culture center for Cravers, the chain's loyal and passionate fan base, connecting like-minded Slider enthusiasts from around the globe in a social media setting. For more information on White Castle and to see the Craver Hall of Fame, visit whitecastle.com.

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