

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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November 20, 2015

## “Eating from a Food Truck for Dine Small Weekend”



Arcadio Zepeda and his brother, Ebodio (shown in top photo), serve authentic Mexican food from their food truck, Tu Casa. The Small Business Resource Team encourages people to Dine Small the Saturday after Thanksgiving which would include ordering food from a food truck.

Food trucks are a fairly new way to dine in the Norfolk area. Members of the Small Business Resource Team are encouraging shoppers to Dine Small at a small business the Saturday after Thanksgiving and stopping at a food truck may be just the place to start.

Eight years ago, Arcadio Zepeda wanted to start his own restaurant. He had been working at Michael's Cantina since 1997 and knew how to make food that people would enjoy eating.

Zepeda set up a canopy at the Norfolk soccer fields for Sunday league play in the summers and people enjoyed the food that he learned to cook growing up in Guadalajara, Mexico. His brother had operated food trucks in California for years so he knew that was an option. With the assistance of one of the Small Business Resource Team members in Norfolk – Juan Sandoval of the Rural Enterprise Assistance Project- Zepeda purchased a food truck from a Florida company and opened “Tu Casa”.

“I was a kitchen manager but wanted to do something more. I like a challenge and am always looking for something else,” Zepeda said.

He started making and selling Mexican food from the truck that sat on a lot in Madison but at the request of his many customers who were driving down from Norfolk to eat there, this summer he moved the truck to a lot in Norfolk near the 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Norfolk Avenue intersection.

Zepeda and his brother, Ebodio, now serve 15 menu items of authentic Mexican food from their

truck Thursdays 11 am to 11 pm; Fridays 11 am to 1 am; and Saturdays 4 pm to 1 am. Their most popular item? A two pound Mega Burrito.

Zepeda said he's enjoying the flexibility of taking his food truck to other venues like the Madison County Fair, Big Bang Boom, Tilden Prairie Days and even some private parties.

"People ask if food trucks have to be inspected. Yes, we do. In fact, every time we got to a different event, we have to be inspected again. The food inspector is at our food truck the same if not more than at sit down restaurants," Zepeda said. He posts permits from the City of Norfolk and the State of Nebraska near the serving window of his truck where his clientele can see them.

According to Sandoval, local restaurants make up a key portion of small businesses, with nine out of 10 restaurants having fewer than 50 employees.

"It's estimated that 80 percent of restaurant owners start their careers in entry-level positions. The Dine Small movement is a way to support our local entrepreneurs and the people they employ," said Sandoval.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has partnered with the National Restaurant Association to encourage families to dine at local restaurants on Thanksgiving weekend. The Small Business Resource Team is a group of 12 different area economic development entities working together to provide assistance to owners of small businesses. For more information about Small Business Saturday, Dine Small or the Small Business Resource Team, email [grow@ci.norfolk.ne.us](mailto:grow@ci.norfolk.ne.us) or call 402-844-2260.