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RON CURRY
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Immediate Release

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Environment Department and Santa Fe County to Provide Free Domestic Water Well Testing in the Old Las Vegas Highway Area

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and Santa Fe County will test private domestic water wells in the Old Las Vegas Highway area during June and July. The water testing is part of a statewide groundwater quality assessment. Tests will include electrical conductivity, pH, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, iron and fluoride. The testing area is from Glorieta to the eastern Santa Fe metropolitan area, and includes Eldorado, Lamy, and Galisteo.

The testing is free, and participation is voluntary. If people agree to allow NMED to test their well, well owners will be provided with the results and an NMED expert will be available to answer any questions about water quality.

People wishing to have their water tested should contact Katherine Noble at katherine.noble@state.nm.us, or by calling (505) 476-8610. Residents not at home at the time of testing may authorize technicians to collect a water sample from an outside faucet and to determine the coordinates of wellheads with a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.

NMED will not be testing water supplied by public drinking water systems, as those supplies are routinely tested pursuant to the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. If you are supplied by a public system, you should receive a Consumer Confidence Report each year from the system operator that summarizes test results. For additional information on public drinking water systems visit www.safewater.state.nm.us to review NMED's online database of public drinking water systems.

Previous testing by NMED has detected nitrate contamination in several wells this area, and fractured bedrock terrain increases aquifer vulnerability at some locations. Nitrate contamination can be caused by septic tank effluents, fertilizers, animal waste, and by natural geologic sources. For more information about nitrate contamination, visit the NMED Web site, <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/Technical%20resources/haniteng.html>.

For additional information, contact Dennis McQuillan, NMED Environmental Health Manager, at (505) 476-8607, or Karen Torres, Santa Fe County Hydrologist at (505) 992-9871. For media inquiries, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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