



NEWS RELEASE

March 30, 2015

Media Contacts:

Allison Scott Majure (NMED) 505-231-8800, allison.majure@state.nm.us

Kenny Vigil (DOH) 505-470-2290, kennyc.vigil@state.nm.us

Free Water Tests for Private Well Owners

Santa Fe – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) are hosting a free Domestic Well Water Testing station in Portales on April 10 - 11 at the Roosevelt County Fairgrounds. Although well owners are encouraged to independently test their drinking water on a regular basis, such tests can be costly, starting at \$150.

This money-saving opportunity is the chance for Roosevelt County households to check pH; specific conductance; and the levels of fluoride, iron, sulfate, nitrate, and manganese in their well water. These constituents may be naturally occurring or result from sources including fertilizer, animal waste, septic tanks, and refuse dumps. Drinking water with high levels of nitrate can be dangerous to pregnant women and infants, while other contaminants may lead to aesthetic nuisances and other health problems.

Additionally well owners will be able to check the arsenic level in their water, which is not commonly included in general testing. Arsenic is naturally occurring and has been measured in water from private wells throughout the state at concentrations that exceed recommended drinking water quality health standards.

“Drinking water with high levels of arsenic over many years can cause health problems in some people,” said Health Secretary Retta Ward, MPH. “This is an example of why well owners are encouraged to know and understand the quality of the water they are drinking and this is an opportunity to do that.”

About 20 percent of New Mexicans receive their water from private wells, which are not monitored routinely. To support well owners, the Health Department offers information about various well water topics at <https://nmtracking.org/water>.

“The Environment Department is committed to providing communities with the support and resources they need for clean drinking water,” said Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn. “These no-cost water fairs held in communities around the state are a great opportunity for collaboration between NMED and residents who rely on private, domestic well water, to ensure water quality.”

The testing station will be at the Roosevelt County Fairgrounds, Jake Lopez Building, 705 East Lime Street, Portales, NM 88130 from 12 noon – 6 p.m. on April 10th and from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. on April 11th. These free tests will be offered on a first-come first-served basis while supplies

(more)

are available. Test results will be mailed to participating citizens' households following the event.

To have water tested, residents need to bring a sample of their water to the station during the event. The departments suggest these tips:

- Use a clean glass or plastic container that holds at least a quart of water (such as in a 1-liter soda bottle or gallon milk jug). The container should not have a strong odor (avoid pickle jars and vinegar bottles).
- Collect the water before it runs through any water treatment/filters such as a reverse osmosis system or a water softener. (If the home has a whole house filtration system, collect the water at the well head).
- Let the water run for a couple of minutes before filling the bottle/container.
- Fill the bottle with the water as close to the time of testing as possible (right before coming to the expo).
- Label the bottle with your name, phone number, and address.

Along with the water sample, residents should include basic information known about the well such as: well depth, depth to water, well casing material (such as steel or PVC), well latitude/longitude, and distance from well to the nearest septic tank/leachfield system. A sample form for gathering this useful information is available at: https://nmtracking.org/media/cms_page_media/160/Well.Test.Form.1.pdf.

If well owners are unable to attend the event but would like to have their water tested, they may have their sample brought to the water test station by a family member or neighbor as long as the bottle is clearly labeled with their name, phone number, and address and information about the well is attached.

The station will only test water that comes from homes that rely on private wells for drinking water. Water from households that are connected to a city, community, or public water system is periodically tested and those results are available at: https://nmtracking.org/en/data_query/, https://nmtracking.org/en/environ_exposure/water-qual/community-drinking-water-data/ and <https://dww.water.net.env.nm.gov/DWW/>.

For further information about this free water testing opportunity, contact the New Mexico Environment Department at 505-827-1046.

###