



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

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Environment Department to offer 100 free domestic water well tests at Mountainair Sunflower Festival

MOUNTAINAIR – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is hosting a free domestic well water testing event at the Sunflower Festival in Mountainair on August 26, 2023.

Free testing will be available 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturday, August 26 at the Mountainair Sunflower Festival, 101 East Broadway, Mountainair, New Mexico 87036.

Well water tests typically cost about \$150 but will be free to the first 100 participants or while supplies last. Test results will be mailed to the households following the event.

“Safe drinking water is a fundamental public health issue,” said **Ground Water Quality Bureau Chief Justin Ball**. “This water fair provides residents in Mountainair easy and affordable access to information about the quality of their private well water that they would otherwise need to pay for.”

To have water tested, residents need to bring a sample of their water to the event. Use these guidelines to ensure the sample is collected correctly:

- Let the water run for 2-3 minutes before collecting the sample.
- Fill a clean glass or plastic container without any odors with at least a quart or liter of your well water.
- If the home has a whole house filtration system, collect the water at the well head prior to any filtration or softener systems if possible.
- Fill the container with water as close to the time of testing as possible.

Along with the water sample, residents should bring basic information known about the well such as well depth, depth to water, well casing material (i.e., steel, PVC), well latitude and longitude and distance from the well to the nearest septic tank or leachfield system.

If well owners are unable to attend the event but would like to have their water tested, they may have a sample brought to the event by a family member or neighbor, provided the bottle is clearly labeled and has the owner's name, phone number, address and well information attached. Only water that comes from homes that rely on private wells for drinking water will be tested.

The state's “water fairs” provide an opportunity for well owners to measure pH, specific conductance and levels of nitrates in their water. These constituents may be naturally occurring or result from sources including fertilizer, animal waste and septic tanks. Drinking water with high levels of nitrate can be

dangerous to pregnant women and infants. Other contaminants may lead to other health problems and aesthetic nuisances. [Learn more about the water fair program.](#)

Water will also be tested for arsenic levels. Arsenic is naturally occurring and has been measured in water from private wells throughout the state, sometimes at concentrations that exceed drinking water quality health standards.

While the state's Environment and Health Departments conduct water fairs to help educate private well owners about drinking water and well maintenance, these state agencies do not have jurisdiction over private wells.

Since July 1, 2022, NMED tested 141 private drinking water wells over seven water fairs providing \$21,150 in value to communities in New Mexico. NMED tracks its investments in communities as part of its performance measures and targeted [investing \\$65 million](#) throughout the state in fiscal year 2023.

Water from public water systems (i.e., local water utilities) is tested periodically and results are available on the [Drinking Water Watch website](#).

For more information about upcoming water fairs, please visit [NMED's event calendar](#) or contact the Environment Department at 505-827-2900.

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