



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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Free private well water testing available to Catron County residents *Environment and Health Departments to offer 100 free domestic water well tests at Pie Town Pie Festival*

CATRON COUNTY – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) are hosting a free domestic well water testing event at the 2022 Pie Festival in Pie Town, New Mexico on September 10, 2022.

Free testing will be available 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 10 at Jackson Park, 9 Custard Junction, Pie Town New Mexico 87827.

“Our free water testing events provide a valuable opportunity for residents on private wells to ensure that their drinking water is clean and safe,” said NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney. “I encourage Catron County residents to bring your private well drinking water samples to this year’s Pie Festival.”

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.

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 strong 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 is 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.

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, 2021, NMED has tested 291 private drinking water wells over seven water fairs providing \$43,650 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 2022.

Water from public water systems (i.e., local water utilities) is tested periodically and those results are available [here](#).

More information about the water fair program is available [here](#).

More information about wells, water quality and safety is available [here](#).

For more information about these water fairs, please contact the Environment Department at 505-827-2900. Visit NMED's calendar, [here](#), to find out about future water fairs and other events.

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