

# Stanfield celebrates Independence Day weekend



Photos by Yasser Marte/Hermiston Herald

Locals dined on barbecue and cake at Bard Park in Stanfield on Sunday, June 3, 2022, to help raise funds for fireworks and kick off the July Fourth weekend. Proceeds from the event went toward the community's July 4 fireworks show. The band *Hired Guns* (pictured at top right) kicked off Sunday's festivities, and volunteer firefighters grilled burgers (bottom right).

## Water

Continued from A1

In person, she further confirmed the safety of the drinking water. She said she, herself, drinks the city's water and has done so for years. Pettigrew added she does not filter the water she receives from the tap.

Things were different, she said, when she was living "in the county." Back then, she bought and consumed bottled water, according to the city manager.

"This isn't a new issue for us," she said.

Pettigrew said city water is on a quarterly testing schedule. Last tested January 20, the city's water tested 4.77 parts per million, she said.

According to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, nitrate levels above 10 ppm "may present a serious health concern for infants and pregnant or nursing women."

Pettigrew said many people do not know the facts about their drinking water, however. Some people, she stated, believe mistruths that have been popularized on social media.

### FACTS FROM THE SOURCE

Over at Sam Boardman Elementary, workers have been filling up water containers from a fire hydrant. This water, sourced from the city of Boardman, is safe to drink, they said.

Zaira Sanchez, director of community organizing for Oregon Rural Action, was among the helpers at the school.

"We're here, ready to distribute water to the community for people who have private wells, who might have water contaminated by nitrates," she said.

She added she and other people at the school are providing water to people who are unsure about whether their water is contaminated, perhaps as they wait for a test result.

This issue, she said, is meaningful to her.

"I work here in Morrow County," Sanchez said, "know-



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

From left, Ana Maria Rodriguez, Zaira Sanchez and Ana Pineryo provide clean drinking water June 24, 2022, at Sam Boardman Elementary.



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Nancy Garcia, a human resources specialist, accepts water samples at Boardman Foods on June 24, 2022.

ing that our community's affected by this concerns me."

Sanchez said she identifies as Latinx. This group, she said, "hasn't largely known about this issue" and has not been fully informed.

Fluent in English and Spanish, she said she can communicate with people who only know a single language.

Ana Maria Rodriguez, community organizer, agreed with the importance of communi-

cating facts in multiple languages. Working at the Sam Boardman site with Sanchez, she said she has encountered several people who only know Spanish.

"It's most of them," she said of the people she has met at the site, and if not for her help, and the assistance of other Spanish speakers, these people would not be provided with information.

Ana Pineyro, Morrow

bad for other people, too, especially if the nitrates are consumed in high quantities over a long period of time.

### HELPING PEOPLE AT BOARDMAN FOODS

Deanna Camp, Boardman Foods safety and training manager, is helping people, too. At her company, she meets people, gives them bottles for collecting their drinking water and then instructs them to gather their water and bring it back to her company.

Camp said she often clears up misconceptions. Often, she said, people don't know about proper water collection.

Drinking water, she said, should be collected from the same taps from which people drink.

"We're looking for water samples from the kitchen sink," she said.

Camp stated she has had to correct people who have thought they should be getting samples directly from their wells.

She said, too, that it doesn't

take much water to create a sample. According to Camp, a lab can detect nitrate levels in 4 ounces of water.

They do, however, need to process the sample quickly, according to Camp.

"The lab has to test it within 48 hours," she said.

Once people bring samples to Boardman Foods, Camp said, the samples are sent to Kuo Testing Laboratories, whose nearest office is in Umatilla.

Results can take a week or more, Camp said.

She said she has received tests back already, and some nitrate results are more than 40 ppm.

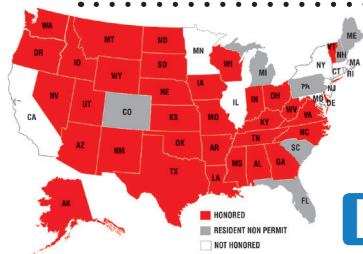
Given the level of some of these tests, Camp said it is important for people to have full understanding of their well water. Knowledge, however, is just one step, she said; there must be action, too.

Anyone who discovers high nitrate levels should contact Morrow County Public Health at 541-481-4200 or email apineyro@co.morrow.or.us.

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