

Guard aids with food distribution at Fairfield school

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FAIRFIELD – Shared Harvest Foodbank is moving Saturday's monthly food distribution to Fairfield Senior High School.

The move is being done in anticipation of an exponential increase in the number of families needing assistance, said Terry Perdue, the foodbank's executive director.

Last weekend Perdue said the foodbank planned to distribute 1,015 boxes of food at its Piqua site – more than triple the 301 households it served in February.

"Forty-two households were turned away," Perdue said. "After seeing what happened last weekend, there was no way we could accommodate the potential increase here or the traffic."

The Ohio Army National Guard is preparing food boxes for 2,000 families at the pantry. In the past year, the highest number of families served from the foodbank's Ohio 4 warehouse distribution site was 408 families.

That distribution backed up traffic on



Cars lined up last week for the Shared Harvest Foodbank's Piqua distribution. Food boxes will be distributed Saturday from Fairfield Senior High School from 10 a.m. to noon, instead of the foodbank's Ohio 4 warehouse. PROVIDED PHOTO

Ohio 4 to Jungle Jim's International Market, more than a mile away.

The move to the high school was arranged through the Ohio Army National Guard in cooperation with the Fairfield

City Schools.

"It's another good opportunity to reach out to our community and provided the resources that are needed," said Jeff Madden, director of student ser-

vices. "Shared Harvest has been a supporting organization for our kids for a number of years through the backpack program."

About 100 pounds of food is included in each box – enough to last a family of four for five days, Perdue said. In addition to the box, each family will get a bag of frozen meat products and produce – mostly apples and oranges.

Altogether, Perdue estimates about 200,000 pounds of food will be distributed Saturday.

The distribution will be drive-through and conducted in the front parking lot at the school, from 10 a.m. to noon, with national guardsmen and Ohio Reserve Guardsmen directing traffic and loading the food into vehicles.

Typically, each family receiving food has to fill out a form, produce photo identification, provide residency verification, and sign a form. Those requirements have been waived.

Anyone picking up food has to give their name, address and number of people in their household. If they are preregistered at a local pantry, the card given to them from the pantry will be scanned.