"Because Not All Radio Stations Are Created Equal"

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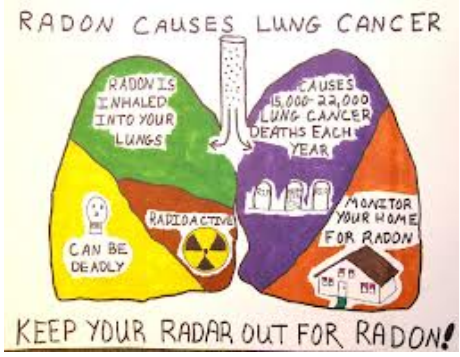
(Regional)-Public Called On To Check For Radon Gas During Awareness Month



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 01/03/2013 08:14 AM

(REGIONAL)-January is Radon Action Month. Health agencies throughout the United States have joined forces to promote awareness of the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers. The American Lung Association, Centers for Disease Control, and National Cancer Institutes all agree that radon is a national health problem and encourage radon testing during the awareness drive in January.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, and odorless radioactive gas. It is estimated that one in 15 American homes contains high levels of radon. Millions of Americans are unknowingly exposed to this dangerous gas. In fact, a recent study by HarvardUniversity ranks radon as America's #1 in-home hazard. Radon gas is not isolated to certain geographical areas or home types. Radon problems have been detected in homes in every county of the U.S. It caused more American fatalities last year than carbon monoxide, fires, and handguns combined.

If a home hasn't been tested for radon in the past two years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Surgeon General urge individuals to take action. By taking simple steps to test a home for radon and fix the problem if necessary, this health hazard can be avoided.

For residents living in the Nebraska Panhandle, free short-term radon test kits are available by contacting Tabi Prochazka (Pro-KA-Ska) with the Panhandle Public Health District at 308-487-3600, ext. 107 or toll-free at 866-701-7173, ext. 107. She can also be e-mailed at tprochazka@pphd.org. Office manager Sara Sulzbach says short-term test kits take approximately three to seven days. The kit then is mailed to a laboratory, which reports back its findings. If the test comes back positive for high levels of radon, Sulzbach says the PPHD recommends a long-term test, which takes approximately three months to a year, before mitigation efforts. Sulzbach says a mitigation system is much easier and cheaper to install in a new home as it is being constructed than it is to add

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later.

The EPA and other governmental agencies have focused efforts on radon reduction and mitigation in homes, especially those of low-income families, many of whom do not have the resources to make the fixes necessary to protect their homes and loved ones. Learn more about the Federal Radon Action Plan at radonplan.org.

Sulzbach says it is important for people to test their homes, particularly in the Dawes/Sioux County area, as previous results from this region have shown higher levels of radon than seen elsewhere in the Panhandle.

Last year, the federal consortium met with key leaders in the public health, environmental, and private sectors to launch the federal radon action plan that includes both immediate and long-term steps to reduce radon exposure. Learn more about National Radon Action Month at radonmonth.org.

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