

Radon grants presented to cities, counties and extension services

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment issued 14 indoor radon grants totaling \$139,814 to local entities this fall, including cities, county health departments, university extension services, a research center and a teacher training program.

Phillips County Commissioners were a recipient representing Phillips, Kit Carson, Sedgwick, Logan, Washington, Morgan and Yuma counties.

The funds originate from an Environmental Protection Agency Indoor Radon Grant and are passed through to local communities to conduct community outreach and education on radon issues.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment urges residents to test their homes for radon, a radioactive gas contributing to as many as 500 Colorado lung cancer deaths each year. The colorless, odorless, tasteless gas enters homes through cracks in the floor or spaces around utility pipes and accumulates unless properly vented. Long-term radon exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in smokers.

The winter months are an ideal time to test the home for radon, because short-term tests require closed windows and doors. Testing is easy, and it's the only way to know for certain if health is at risk, and to make the home safe to prevent harm to the occupants and loved ones.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment provides coupons for reduced-cost radon test kits at www.coloradoradon.info. The Web site also lists contractors certified by the National Environmental Health Association to install systems to remove or mitigate radon.

"The Environmental Protection Agency recommends installing a mitigation system if a home tests above four picocuries per liter of air," explained Chrystine Kelley, radon program coordinator in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division.

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“Qualified contractors can seal cracks and install ventilation systems to prevent radon from collecting in your home.”

Radon comes from the radioactive decay of uranium, which occurs naturally in soil. Due to Colorado’s geologic makeup, 52 of the state’s 64 counties are at high risk for radon. The gas moves unpredictably through soil, so it’s possible for radon to collect in one home, but not in a home next door.

Colorado residents can call the state’s Radon Hotline at 1-800-846-3986 or check with their local health department, county extension office or public health nurse for radon information.