

UNCE offering free radon education class

By Susan Howe
UNCE Radon Educator

In recognition of National Radon Action Month, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Radon Education Program will offer a free radon education program Jan. 22 at the Mineral County Cooperative Extension, 205 S. A St. at 6 p.m. Free radon test kits will be offered at the presentation.

Radon is a radioactive, colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that comes from the ground and accumulates in homes and buildings. It is the leading cause of lung cancer for nonsmokers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates 21,000 Americans die each year from radon-induced lung cancer, killing more people than secondhand smoke, drunk driving, falls in the home, drowning or house fires.

Elevated radon levels may be in your home, as this is a prevalent problem in Nevada.

Statewide test results show that one in four homes have radon levels at or above the EPA Action Level of 4 picocuries, a very small unit of measure of the intensity of radiation, per liter of air (pCi/l).

Homes that test below 4 pCi/l aren't 100 percent safe from the health risk either, because according to experts, living in a home with an average radon level of 4 pCi/l poses a risk of getting lung cancer comparable to smoking half a pack of cigarettes a day.

In Mineral County, 31 percent of the homes tested have radon levels at or above 4 pCi/l. In Hawthorne zip code 89415, 33 percent of homes tested had elevated radon levels.

Houses suck radon out of the ground because of the lower internal pressure in homes, especially during the winter heating months. Radon can then accu-



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Susan Howe, radon program director; and Jamie Roice-Gomes, radon education coordinator; with University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, give a radon test kit to an attendee at a community event.

mulate to dangerous levels.

The only way to know if your home has elevated levels of radon is to test.

Testing is easy, and if elevated radon concentrations are detected, there are fairly easy, inexpensive ways to reduce the radon exposure to safer levels.

Cooperative Extension, the EPA and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health urge all Nevadans to get their homes tested for radon. Free radon test kits are available through Feb. 28 at the Mineral County Cooperative Extension office, as well as at Cooperative Extension offices statewide.

For more information, visit the Nevada Radon Education Program website at www.RadonNV.com, call the Radon Hotline at 888-RADON10 (888-723-6610), or contact Nevada Radon Education Program Director Susan Howe at robertss@unce.unr.edu or at 775-336-0248.