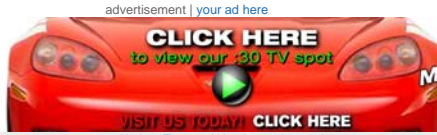


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**Cooperative extension contest: Test your home for radon**

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Tuesday, December 7, 2010

Submitted by UNCE

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January is National Radon Action Month and the Nevada Radon Education Program at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) is sponsoring a "Test Your Home for Radon and Win Contest" for residents of Douglas, Carson City and Washoe counties.

The "Test Your Home for Radon and Win Contest" will provide two Carson City, Douglas or Washoe county homeowners with a \$1,500 credit towards the installation of a radon mitigation system.

"We hope the contest encourages more homeowners to test their homes for radon," said Susan Howe, Nevada Radon Education Program director. "We're adding the incentive of winning two \$1,500 credits toward two radon mitigation systems to increase awareness of the importance of mitigating homes with elevated radon levels."

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from the decay of uranium in rocks and soil. It has no smell or taste and you can't see it, but this gas can accumulate to harmful levels when trapped indoors. If you haven't tested your home for it, you could be exposing your family to a known carcinogen that can cause lung cancer over time. In fact, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers and kills more people than secondhand smoke, drunken driving, falls in the home, drowning or home fires. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates 21,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer caused by indoor radon exposure. The American Lung Association, American Medical Association, American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control, National Cancer Institute and the World Health Organization all recognize radon as a serious national health problem.

Radon can be a problem in any type of home, old or new, tightly sealed or drafty, as well as any type of foundation such as a basement, crawl space or slab. Because radon is a gas, any building with contact to the soil -- including your home, school or office building -- is at risk.

"Of course, not everyone exposed to radon will develop lung cancer, but the higher the level of radon and the longer the exposure, the greater the risk," Howe said. "But it is a preventable risk, and one that your family can easily test for."

Short-term test kits are offered at no cost at Carson City, Douglas and Washoe County Cooperative Extension offices, as well as several partner locations. For a complete list of locations offering test kits, visit the radon program website, [www.RadonNV.com](http://www.RadonNV.com), or call the Radon Hot Line at 1-888-RADON10 (1-888-723-6610).

A short-term radon test kit will give you an accurate, easy snapshot of the radon level in your home. These screening kits are placed in your home for about three days to take an air sample. You send the kit to the lab for the test results. The kit includes detailed instructions, the test, a postage-paid mailer and all of the lab fees.

"Radon test results collected since 1989 show that the potential for having elevated radon levels in Carson City, Douglas and Washoe county homes is high," said Howe. "Of the 2,076-plus homes tested in Douglas County, 41 percent had elevated radon levels. Carson City is not far behind, with 37 percent of 700 homes, and Washoe County has nearly 20 percent of 3,539 homes tested having elevated radon levels."

Since September 2007, UNCE - working with Nevada State Health Division - has distributed more than 17,000 radon test kits. The results of these tests provide a good indication of radon potential throughout Nevada, with 12 counties showing a high potential for elevated radon. The data from more than 8,533 tests show that homes in 13 counties (Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Lyon, Mineral, Pershing, Washoe and White Pine counties) have greater than 10 percent probability of having elevated levels of radon, and 25.8 percent of all homes tested in Nevada have levels higher than the action level established by the EPA.

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"It is important to realize that testing a house for radon is a preventative step towards protecting your family against this naturally occurring health risk," Howe said. "The tests are simple to perform and completely free, so why not test?"

To qualify for the contest, homeowners must complete a radon test between Dec. 1, 2010 and Feb. 28, 2011, using a radon test kit provided by the Nevada Radon Education Program. Two winning entries will be chosen from tests having a radon level of 4 pCi/l or greater from tests completed in Carson City, Douglas and Washoe counties.

"The EPA recommends mitigating homes that have radon levels at 4 pCi/l or greater," said Howe. "The higher the radon level in your home, the faster you should take action to reduce your exposure. The EPA and the Nevada State Health Division believe that you should try to reduce your radon levels as much as possible. A certified mitigator can install a radon-reduction system, which is very effective in reducing radon levels and most homes can be reduced to under 4.0 pCi/L."

The Test Your Home for Radon and Win Contest is offered to Nevada residents. To win, the homeowner must be a legal resident of the United States, be 18 years of age or older. The house must be located in Carson City, Douglas or Washoe counties and must be the homeowner's primary residence.

Preliminary winning homeowners will be notified by mail by March 21 with a notification letter outlining contest Terms and Conditions. In addition, a second, confirming radon test will be required to finalize the process. Complete contest details can be seen on the Radon in Nevada website at [www.RadonNV.com](http://www.RadonNV.com).

The final winners will be announced by April 30, 2011, with the mitigations taking place by May 31, 2011.

"Two homeowners will receive a \$1,500 credit for a radon system to be installed by certified mitigator Derrick Carpenter of Dependable Home Solutions of Gardnerville who has volunteered his services. Professional Discount Supply of Colorado Springs, CO, is donating the fans," said Howe. "The credit could cover the complete cost of mitigating most slab or basement homes and would be a significant savings on a crawl space home."


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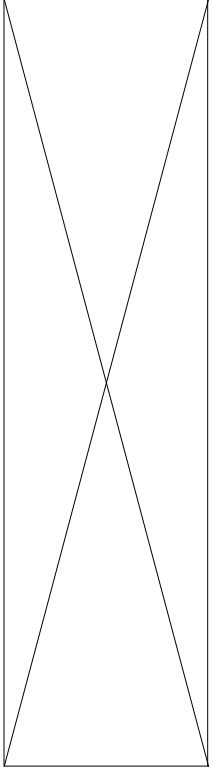
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