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Radon testing for Nevada

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With new test results showing one out of four homes in Nevada with elevated levels of radon, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension officials are urging all homeowners to have their homes tested for the cancer-causing gas.

As of June 30, 2009, in Clark County, 43 homes showed elevated levels of radon out of the 559 tested.

Susan Howe, program director for UNCE's Radon Education Program, said more than 4,000 homes were tested in Nevada last year thanks to the more than 11,500 free testing kits distributed by UNCE and the Nevada State Health Division since September 2007.

Kit distribution efforts have resulted in thousands of additional tests.

The data from those more than 5,268 tests shows radon contamination can be found in homes in 14 of Nevada's 17 counties, and that 25.2 percent of all homes tested have levels higher than what's considered safe by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Radon is an odorless, colorless, radioactive gas emanating naturally from the soil. It enters a home through foundation cracks, plumbing and utility openings, and becomes a health risk when trapped inside.

The EPA has established an "action level" of 4 picoCuries per liter of air. Homes that exceed that level can be retrofitted with an inexpensive ventilation system by a qualified contractor to correct the problem.

Howe said she is hoping more Nevadans will have their homes tested. The best time to test is when the weather is cool and windows in the house are closed. Oct. 18-24 is Radon Action Week.

UNCE's Radon Education Program offers educational programs, literature and radon test kits to Nevadans to educate citizens about the radon health risk.

For more information, visit the UNCE Web site, www.unce.unr.edu/radon. If your group would like a program presentation, contact Megan Long at the Radon Hot Line, 1-888-RADON10, to reserve a date.

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