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Radon detected in two-thirds of Stateline homes

January 6, 2010 • Kurt Hildebrand, Tahoe Daily Tribune



GARDNERVILLE, Nev. — With the exception of a small sliver along Jacks Valley Road representing Genoa's ZIP Code, Douglas County's elevated radon results extend from Lake Tahoe to the Pine Nuts.

Radon, a radioactive gas that is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers, is being detected in an average of 67.6 percent of Stateline homes tested. Zephyr Cover comes in a close second at 66.3 percent of homes tested.

Third place for the county is Gardnerville's 89460 ZIP code, which extends from the Gardnerville Ranchos to Sheridan Acres and Mottsville, one of the county's most populous regions, where 210 of 383 homes tested had elevated results.

Scientists make the point that any home in the county could have elevated levels of radon, even if a home next door doesn't.

Radon is formed by the decay of uranium in the soil. It is a tasteless, odorless gas that seeps into homes, where it can gather in still places and give off radioactive particles as it decays.

Radon is a class A carcinogen that must be vented from the foundation into the open air, according to scientists.

Thanks to session's like one last January in Sheridan Acres where 255 free radon tests were given out, the county has had one of the highest response rates in the state, with 1,256 valid tests. It also has the highest single number of results higher than the Environmental Protection Agency's action level, with 514 in locations all over the county.

In an effort to spread the word about radon, Douglas County commissioners have proclaimed January to be Radon Action Month.

The Cooperative Extension will host two sessions in Douglas County. One will be 6:30 p.m. Jan. 11 at the Sheridan Acres Volunteer Fire Department. The other will be 6:30 p.m. Jan. 14 at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency offices, 128 Market St. in Stateline.

Douglas County residents can receive a free test kit by going to the Douglas County Cooperative Extension Office at 1329 Waterloo in Gardnerville.

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

For more information, visit the UNCE web site, www.unce.unr.edu/radon. Groups seeking a program presentation should contact Megan Long at the Radon Hot Line, 1-888-RADON10 to reserve a date.

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