

Douglas radon session this week

by Susan Howe

Radon Education Program Director

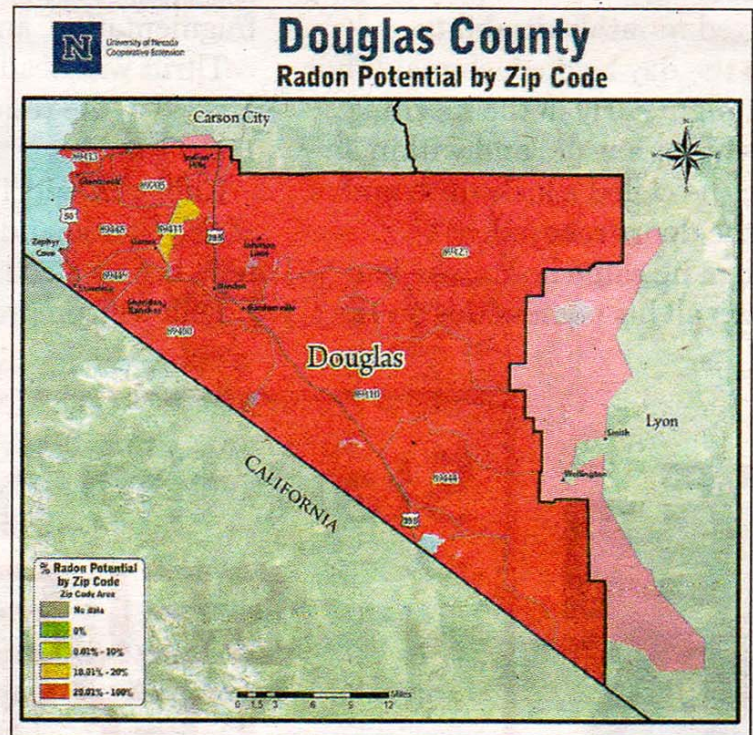
In recognition of National Radon Action Month, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Radon Education Program will offer two radon education programs in Douglas County. The first program will be 6 p.m. Monday at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market St., in Stateline. The second program will be 6 p.m. Wednesday, at the CVIC Hall, 1604 Esmeralda Ave., in Minden. Free radon test kits will be offered at the presentations.

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 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 comparable to smoking half a pack of cigarettes a day.

In Douglas County, 40 percent of valid test results had radon levels at or above 4 pCi/l. Stateline had 70 percent of valid test results having elevated radon levels; Gardnerville, 34 percent, Glenbrook, 62 percent, Zephyr Cove, 58 percent, and Minden, 24 percent.

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



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then accumulate to dangerous levels.

The only way to know if your home has elevated levels of radon is to test. Testing is easy, and if radon is 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 to Nevada residents through Feb. 28 at the Douglas County Cooperative Extension office, 1325 Waterloo, in Gardnerville, the Nevada Tahoe Conservation District, 400 Dorla Ct., in Zephyr Cove, and at TRPA, 128 Market St., in Stateline, 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.