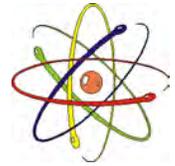




Radon Bulletin



Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc.

March 2008

National Awards Ceremony

By Debbie Gilley (FL), CRCPD Chairperson CRCPD



I attended a meeting with the Radon and Indoor Air staff at EPA on January 9, 2008. EPA also hosted a meeting with CRCPD and the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (AARST) to discuss ideas to further the "Saving Lives Campaign" that began in September at the Radon Meeting in Jacksonville, Florida. A joint Radon Portal was discussed that would:

- Link EPA, CRCPD and AARST together,
- Revise the radon in school information (it is 10 years old), and
- Develop a workbook base product that could be a companion document for IAQ in schools or could stand alone.

Two other initiatives were discussed:

- The need to develop a voluntary checklist for builders on radon resistant new construction (RRNC), and
- Evaluate radon in multifamily buildings.

CRCPD Radon Hero Award presented

On Thursday, January 10th, I presented the CRCPD Radon Hero Award at the Radon Awards and Recognition Ceremony. The winner of the award was Kevin Stewart from the Pennsylvania American Lung Association. Mike Pyles from the Pennsylvania program nominated Kevin. Other presenters for awards included the Minnesota Department of Health and AARST.

Radon Poster winners recognized

The National Radon Poster Contest Winners were also recognized. I was pleased that two of the winners were from Florida. Kudos to Clark Eldredge, Administrator of the Radon Rangers in Florida for his support. The meeting was standing room only. The emphasis was to continue the momentum to save lives through testing and mitigation of radon. This year the focus was on the RRNC building code.

Building code discussed

After the awards ceremony about 25 participants traveled to Johns Hopkins School of Public Health for a round table discussion on the building code. CRCPD was represented by Mike Pyles (PA), Clark Eldredge (FL), Dale Dorschner (MN) and myself. The opportunity to sit down with builders, AARST, and the regulatory community—both State and Federal—may have been a first.

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National Awards Ceremony *[Continued]*

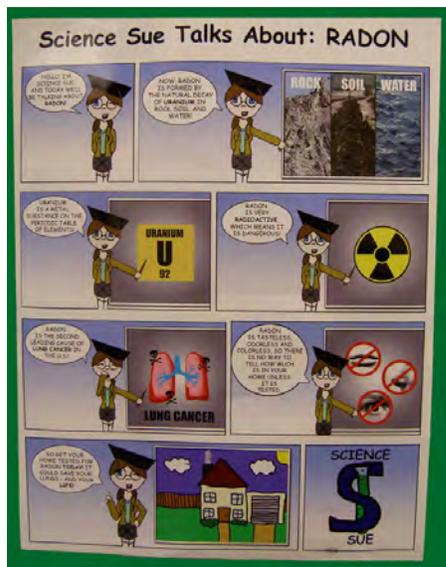
- How to champion the new building code ⇒ Some of the discussion was how to champion the new building code to make homes safer. One comment from a builder was that when they speak about radon, many future home buyers are turned off and go elsewhere to purchase a home. Some thought should be given to change the emphasis from radon resistant new construction to the construction of new healthy homes.
- Should RRNC be voluntary or mandatory ⇒ The fact that there are only a few states with statewide building codes is also a problem, and those with statewide building codes have to convince building departments that the new construction standards are necessary and economically feasible. Should the RRNC be voluntary or should dollars be spent to make it mandatory. There is some thought that there is a shift in perception and that the passing of codes is likely with the current “green” initiatives.
- Mandatory code would pay for itself ⇒ CRCPD and the radon regulatory community have several opportunities to promote the new code. One philosophical comment was that the American people are ready for “good government” and that the small increase in cost (\$300-\$2,000) from a mandatory code would easily pay for itself with the reduction of deaths from exposure to radon.



National Radon Poster Contest

By Kristin Lolmaugh, National Safety Council

Awards Ceremony, RRNC, and Radon Poster Contest ⇒



First Place-Sara (13) Florida

The Radon Awards and Recognition Ceremony was held on January 10, 2008, to recognize leaders in radon-resistant new construction and to celebrate the 2008 winners of the children’s National Radon Poster Contest. State representatives, radon professionals, community groups, and non-profit organizations joined together to celebrate their accomplishments at EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

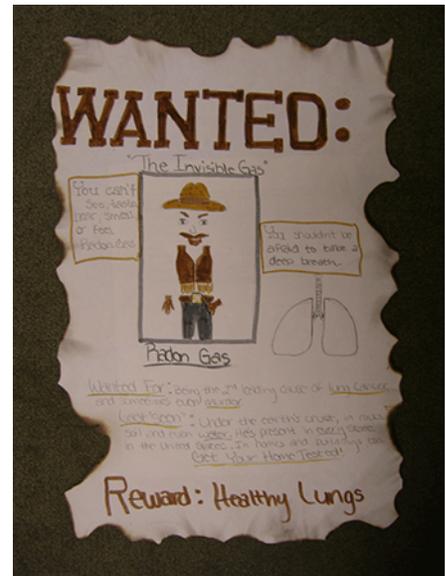
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National Radon Poster Contest

[Continued]



Second Place-Daniel (11) Florida



Third Place-Jill (13) Oklahoma



National Radon Action Month (NRAM) Activities

Minnesota Department of Health News Release

By Heather Kehn, Principal Planner, Indoor Air Unit, Minnesota Department of Health

30% of Minnesota homes have elevated radon levels

January is an ideal time to test homes for radon, health officials said. About one in three Minnesota homes have potentially harmful levels of radon gas, the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. The only way to know for sure if your home has it is to test for it, say Minnesota health officials, and January is an ideal time to do it.

Start of new year a good time to test

“The start of a new year is a time when many of us do regular home maintenance tasks that can help protect our health and safety, such as replacing smoke alarm or carbon monoxide alarm batteries,” said Commissioner Sanne Magnan of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). “If you’ve never tested your home for radon before, now is the best time to do it. This time of year, our homes are generally closed up more tightly because of the weather, so we’re more likely to have a build-up of radon gas or to be exposed to it for extended periods of time.”

Activities planned for Radon Action Month

January is National Radon Action Month and communities across the nation have planned activities and special events to increase awareness of the health effects of radon exposure and to promote radon testing, mitigation and radon-resistant new construction.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty proclaimed January as Radon Action Month in Minnesota. MDH and its partners are conducting radon awareness events and promoting testing throughout the state.

March 2008

NRAM Activities

[Continued]

- 2007 law requires ⇒ new homes to have radon systems installed
- 11,008 short-term ⇒ tests used & about 1,007 homes mitigated in 2007
- More homes in ⇒ Minnesota have elevated radon levels
- People ignore dangers ⇒ “Despite these known risks, people tend to minimize the health effects of radon and ignore the possibility that it might exist at elevated levels in their homes because they can’t see it or smell it,” said Dale Dorschner, MDH indoor air unit supervisor. MDH, EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General recommend all homeowners test for radon. “Any home in Minnesota may have elevated levels of radon, even if other homes in the same neighborhood do not,” said Dorschner. “The age or type of home does not matter; each home needs to be tested.”
- Test kits are ⇒ readily available
- Radon problems ⇒ easily fixed by qualified contractors
- Potential ⇒ radon problems can be built out of homes
- Minnesota** *[Continued]*
- MDH and Rep. Kim Norton of Rochester were recognized recently by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for an initiative that will help to reduce radon levels in new homes. A new law passed in 2007 requires radon ventilation systems to be installed in all new homes built in Minnesota. However, new homes can still have elevated levels of radon, so MDH recommends that all homes be tested.
- In 2007, the department and its partners reported that 11,008 short-term test kits were used to test for radon in Minnesota homes. At least 1,007 homes were mitigated for radon and approximately 145 new homes were built with radon-reducing features.
- Radon is found at elevated levels in one in 15 homes across the U.S., but in Minnesota one in three homes have elevated radon levels. Major studies have indicated that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans. A National Academy of Sciences report in February 1998 confirmed that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. A more recent EPA report released in June 2003 states that radon causes an estimated 20,000 lung cancer deaths each year.
- Using simple and inexpensive kits, homeowners can test for the presence of radon in their homes and, if it is present, take steps to fix the problem. Radon test kits are available at city and county health departments, or directly from a laboratory (<http://mn.radon.com/>). Most are priced under \$20. Additional information on how to purchase a radon detector is available from MDH and the radon Web site (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/index.html>).
- Radon problems can be easily fixed by qualified contractors. A list of qualified contractors can be obtained by contacting the MDH indoor air unit or visiting the MDH radon Web site (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/mitigation.html>).
- Potential radon problems can be built out of homes by taking a few inexpensive steps during the construction process. At an estimated cost of between \$500 - \$1,500 dollars, MDH has seen home builders significantly reduce radon levels while saving their new homeowners hundreds of dollars and lowering their risk to lung cancer, the deadliest of all cancers.

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NRAM Activities

[Continued]

Straightforward →
solution
to health hazard

Minnesota [Continued]

“Radon is a serious public health hazard, but it has a straightforward solution,” Dorschner said. “Test your home, and if necessary, take action to keep radon out. If you are building a new home, require that your builder use radon resistant techniques to help protect the long-term health and safety of your family.”

For →
more
information

For more information on radon, radon testing, radon mitigation and building new homes that are radon resistant, call MDH at 651-201-4601 or 800-798-9050 or visit the MDH radon Web site (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/index.html>).

Other activities →

Other activities include:

- Stakeholders Event: The Minnesota State Indoor Radon Workshop was hosted by the Minnesota Department of Health. There were over 90 participants including State and local public health representatives and grantees; industry, including mitigators and builders; medical professionals; academic representatives and a legislator. Awards presented from the State of Minnesota were the Achievement Award to Representative Kim Norton and the Local Hero Award to the local public health director of Olmsted County, Rich Peter.
- The Governor of Minnesota issued a Radon Action Month Proclamation for January 2008.
- A Community Radon Presentation was made to Park Nicollet Health Services and North Memorial Hospital.
- Media coverage included a Minnesota Department of Health press release.
- Radio interviews were conducted with KTLK/KOOL 108, WCCO Radio, MN News Network, and Minnesota Public Radio.
- A television interview was done with WCCO/CBS.

New York Radon Action Month Activities

By Nik Webster, New York State Department of Health

Radon awareness →
promoted in doctors’
offices

For January 2008 (National Radon Action Month), the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Environmental Radiation instituted a new project to help promote radon awareness through physicians in targeted radon counties of New York State. As it is estimated that each year exposure to indoor radon gas causes over 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States, it was postulated doctors can play a vital role in informing the public about the risk of radon, since the public views physicians as advisors on health and prevention of disease.

Packets →
prepared

Packets were prepared that included the US EPA’s “Radon, A Physician’s Guide.” This booklet contains information concerning radon and practical advice about radon testing and mitigation. Also included was “Protect Your Family From Radon: A Guide for New York State Residents,” which

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NRAM Activities

[Continued]

New York Radon Action Month Activities *[Continued]*

is a compact pamphlet with information about radon in New York State, along with an application for a radon detector. As part of this project, we would be supplying the doctors' offices with copies of this pamphlet and asking them to make the information available to their patients.

It is hoped physicians will have a further positive impact on the health of New Yorkers by encouraging radon testing and mitigation, which in turn can help reduce the likelihood of radon induced lung cancer. Participation is voluntary.

1,200 family
physicians
& pediatricians
contacted;

We initially contacted roughly 1,200 New York family physicians and pediatricians in high radon counties and have been continuously receiving requests for application packets. As of January 16, 2008, we have mailed out over 2,500 pamphlets, with applications already being processed in the office. We will continue to monitor this project.



Partners Really Do Make a Difference

By Sue Hendershott (MI)

MI radon program
no longer gets State
funds

With Michigan's economy in a deep dark hole, it's been kind of tough working in the radon program lately. As of Fiscal Year 2006, the program no longer gets state funding, which means the budget has been cut in half. (The SIRG match now comes solely from in-kind contributions from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters, and you can't "spend" in-kind contributions. However, it is a terrific arrangement, and would be recommended for all states, but that's another story.)

Staff and programs
cut

The budget cuts mean program cuts and generally making do with less, so to stretch the Federal dollar, one of the two staff positions was eliminated, as were the real estate and new construction workshops, the radon training for public service personnel, and all travel funds.

Cuts didn't balance
budget

While it was tough to make those cuts, they barely made a dent in balancing the budget, and some even tougher decisions had to be made – decisions that would affect our partners and could potentially be devastating to the program.

State partnered with
LDHs with SIRG

The Michigan Radon Program has had a long-standing relationship with the 46 local health departments (LHDs) that serve the State's 83 counties, beginning with the statewide residential radon survey in the late 1980s, before the SIRG program even existed. With the advent of the SIRG program, the State partnered with the LHDs to conduct a school survey, and then began communicating more frequently with these agencies, offering literature for distribution, along with the occasional opportunity for training.

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Partners Really Do Make A Difference Activities *[Continued]*

- Test kits given free to LDHs ⇒ In 1993, the State began purchasing test kits in bulk, providing them free of charge to LHDs. They were encouraged to sell the kits at a fair market price, keeping the fee as nominal reimbursement for their time and effort. This also ensured that there was at least one known source of test kits in each county of the state.
- Radon minigrants given ⇒ A few years later the State began offering “radon minigrants” to the LHDs, though there was no grant application or request process. Instead, each agency was allocated a set amount of money (initially ranging from \$500 to \$3,000, for a total of just under \$90,000), and at the end of the year, they documented their outreach efforts and were reimbursed up to the amount of their allocation. Like the test kits, the minigrants provided a not-too-complicated way to provide the LHDs with nominal reimbursement for their outreach activities, and since literature had always been offered free of charge, most of the minigrant funding went toward salary/fringe.
- Minigrants had to be eliminated ⇒ The minigrants were gradually adjusted to better reflect the amount of time and effort each agency was contributing, and in more recent years, the allocations ranged from \$500 to just under \$17,000, for a total of \$216,690. Unfortunately, with the State budget crisis and the subsequent program budget reduction, that dollar figure proved to be an unaffordable burden (it would eat up nearly two-thirds of the available funding), and thus the minigrants were eliminated.
- Continued offering outreach tools ⇒ It was, of course, feared that if the State no longer offered the funding, the LHDs would no longer do the outreach, but when evaluating all other options, it seemed to be the only choice. Since many local agencies were undergoing some belt tightening of their own, most understood the decision, and only a few grumbled about it. Meanwhile, we kept up our regular communications with them, offering the outreach tools (test kits, literature, and promotional materials) as usual, but with each memo or e-mail we feared a reply that would say “We’re not distributing test kits anymore. Remove us from your list.”
- Partner relationships are still strong ⇒ Luckily, and surprisingly, nearly two and a half years later, all 46 of our local health departments are still at least nominally involved with radon. Some are more proactive than others, issuing press releases, participating in health fairs and home shows, making school or community presentations, etc., but ALL are still serving as a source of test kits and literature within their jurisdictions. In addition, several extension offices, tribes, and other non-profit agencies and organizations have also continued to partner with us on radon, even though they don’t (and haven’t) received funding from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Radon Program.

Partners Really Do Make A Difference Activities *[Continued]*

Radon program is regressing instead of progressing →

The State budget cuts have meant that the Radon Program is regressing rather than progressing (instead of continuing important activities and expanding into new and innovative outreach techniques, we're back to an almost bare bones program), but the local partners are still getting results. In the last two years, their efforts have garnered approximately 11,000 short-term radon test results each year, an increase over the previous two years, which were approximately 8,500 results each year.

Bribes help generate reports! →

Admittedly, it is sometimes necessary to cajole or beg them to report their information for our "Local Project Highlights," and bribery was required (the offer of a free Radon Ranger T-shirt) to get them to enter their activities on the EPA NRAM site, but the few minutes it takes to draft and send another reminder memo or mail out a T-shirt is a small price to pay for the work they're doing!

Commitment signals hope for the future →

Times are tough here in Michigan, and the budget cuts have definitely had a negative impact on the program's progress, but the commitment of the local partners signals hope for the future.



CRCPD Radon Hero Award

By Michael A. Pyles, Chief, Pennsylvania Radon Division

Mr. Kevin Stewart, Director of Environmental Health for the American Lung Association of Pennsylvania (ALAPA), was chosen to receive the CRCPD Radon Hero Award this year. Kevin was presented a certificate of recognition at the awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., January 10th. He will receive the official award at the National Radon Conference in September.



Kevin Stewart

Kevin began in 1987 →

Kevin's work with radon issues started in September of 1987 when he was hired by the American Lung Association of Pennsylvania to oversee the radon issues in the ALAPA office, covering Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, which was then expanded to the Berks/Lancaster Counties of Pennsylvania. During that time, Kevin worked with numerous local programs such as the Junior League of Lancaster, local schools and fire departments, etc., to distribute radon brochures, educate the communities on radon issues via public talks and radon information booths, and distribute over 13,000 radon detectors over-the-counter and through local organizations between 1988 and 1998.

All Pennsylvania lung association districts were consolidated; Kevin became the Director →

In late 1999, the lung associations in Pennsylvania reorganized and consolidated all of the Pennsylvania districts under one central office in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, and in 2000, Kevin became the director of Environmental Health for the ALAPA to direct, coordinate and oversee the activities in the eight ALA district offices across Pennsylvania.

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CRCPD Radon Hero *[Continued]*

- Increased from one to eight district offices ⇒ He expanded the radon outreach campaigns from one district office to eight district offices across Pennsylvania via grants from both EPA and the Pennsylvania Radon Division. Under this direction, radon outreach, distribution of test kits, and coordination of a unified message to test and mitigate for indoor radon to the citizens of Pennsylvania through school-based programs and web-based test kit distributions greatly expanded.
- Unified outreach plan ⇒ This also streamlined the contracting issue by having only one grant contract that covered all district offices with a unified outreach plan vs. writing multiple grants to only those districts that wanted to do radon outreach projects. With individual minigrants, there were varying approaches and degrees of success, and they only reached a fragmented portion of Pennsylvania.
- Kevin responsible for distribution of about 86,000 radon test kits ⇒ Since this time, the number of radon test kits distributed by or under the direction of Kevin Stewart has increased to about 10,000 to 11,000 kits/year, or greater than 76,000 kits. Thus, Kevin is responsible for the distribution of more than 86,000 radon test kits. It is estimated that those test kits resulted in about 4,800 mitigations. This does not include homeowners that acted on their own through outreach campaigns via ALAPA TV, radio, print spots, etc.
- Online request system successful ⇒ The ALAPA, under Kevin Stewart's direction, is now in its seventh year of work under an omnibus contract with the Pennsylvania Radon Division. Last year the ALAPA conducted another successful program that distributed over 11,000 radon test kits, 6,600 of which were distributed via an on-line request system targeting areas of Pennsylvania that historically have lower occurrence rates of testing and mitigation.
- School based programs involved science teachers ⇒ The remaining kits were chiefly distributed through programs conducted in 42 schools through work at the eight local districts. The school-based programs involve presentations and working with science teachers to incorporate radon into science lessons and conducting testing of local communities, classes or even the school itself, via science projects.
- Other areas also targeted ⇒ In addition to schools, outreach efforts were conducted at area senior citizens centers, assistance offices, libraries and other public places. Working with the Survey Research Center of the Social Science Research Institute of Pennsylvania State University, the Pennsylvania American Lung Association also carried out a survey program approaching school districts across Pennsylvania to assess the extent to which they have tested their buildings for radon and the extent to which they addressed any problems. This same Institute will be utilized to conduct a survey of local municipalities and builders that are using RRNC codes and techniques in their jurisdictions. This will aid in our targeting of municipalities in Pennsylvania to adopt Appendix F of the Pennsylvania Statewide Building Code.

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CRCPD Radon Hero *[Continued]*

Kevin's son is ⇒
following in
his footsteps

Kevin is also active in addressing topics and issues that arise on the EPA and University of Iowa's Radon Serve List. In addition to his lengthy service to radon issues, collaborating with local organizations, and encouraging schools and communities to test and mitigate for radon, he has transferred much of his knowledge and commitment to his son Henry, who has conducted numerous radon surveys as part of high school science projects.

Youngest person ⇒
to present
a paper
at National
Radon Conference

In fact, Henry's latest project and paper, "A Study of Radon and Thoron in House Basements," was presented at this past National Radon Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, as a Poster Paper; he is the youngest person to present a poster paper at any Radon Conference. He used the side-by-side E-PERM system to evaluate Rn/Th in 30 basements, and did a speculative dose calculation. He is now working with Dr. Dan Steck of Minnesota Radon Project evaluating Rn/Th gas/progeny short/long term in 20 of these houses. So far, his testing has motivated two of the basement owners to undertake mitigation (one is being done now so it no longer qualified for Henry's new criteria; the other is to be started soon).

The above summary is only a slice of the efforts Kevin Stewart has contributed to the radon cause.



18th National Radon Conference

By Curt Hopkins (OED)

Sept. 14-17, 2008 ⇒
Tuscany Suites
Las Vegas, Nevada



The 18th National Radon Conference will be held September 14-17, 2008, at the Tuscany Suites and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. The hotel is only about two blocks off the Strip, so you will be about in the middle of everything after a short walk.

The night out will be at the Imperial Palace Hotel Auto Collection. The Auto Collection is home to a rotating display of more than 300 classic cars, including racing cars, muscle cars, touring roadsters and many others.

E-25 meets ⇒
in April
to finalize
everything

The agenda for the meeting is basically set, and the E-25 Committee will be finalizing everything at their next meeting April 1-3, in Manchester, New Hampshire. The agenda and other information will be posted to the CRCPD website <www.crcpd.org> by May 1.

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18th National Radon Conference *[Continued]*

The contract for the 2009 meeting is being negotiated at this time and the meeting will probably be held September 20-23, 2009, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel (next to the train station) in St. Louis, Missouri. There are a lot of things to do in St. Louis, and this should be a very nice venue.

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