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January is Kansas Radon Action Month KDHE urges you to have your home and school tested

TOPEKA – Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D. with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) proclaimed January 2019 “Kansas Radon Action Month” to help educate Kansans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage actions to identify and address radon problems.

“Radon risk comes from prolonged exposure to elevated levels,” said KDHE Environmental Specialist Mark Ungerer. “Mitigation is a small cost compared to the risk posed by living in a home with elevated radon and can be easily accomplished in most cases. KDHE recommends everyone test their homes and encourage their school boards and superintendents to test their schools to have the most complete information about their radon exposure.”

Radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas found in soils across Kansas. Outdoors, radon is diluted to low concentrations, but once inside a building, radon can accumulate, exposing the occupants to elevated levels. Radon is the first leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause in smokers.

The only way to know if radon is elevated in a building is to test. KDHE encourages all Kansans to test their homes for radon to make sure they are not being exposed to elevated levels. KDHE maintains a list of certified radon professionals who can perform radon measurements. Do-it-yourself radon test kits can also be purchased at local hardware and builder’s supply stores, as well as from county extension offices throughout Kansas. Elevated radon levels have been found across Kansas with about one in four measurements being high (above 4 picoCuries per liter).

Protect and Improve the Health and Environment of all Kansans

While the majority of radon exposure comes from the home, Kansans should also be aware of potential radon exposure in other places where they, or their children, may be exposed. Children have smaller lungs and a more rapid breathing rate and are thought to be more susceptible to the risks presented by exposure to elevated radon levels. Kansas law does not require that schools be tested for radon, but Kansans are encouraged to contact their school board or district superintendent to find out if their local school has been tested.

Elevated radon levels can be fixed or reduced through mitigation. Homeowners are encouraged to contact a certified radon professional if their radon test has a result of over 4 pCi/l. Additional information about radon and a list of certified radon contractors is available at www.KansasRadonProgram.org or by calling the Kansas Radon Hotline at 800-693-KDHE (800-693-5343).

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