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January is Radon Action Month

Because of its odorless, tasteless and colorless ways, radon can be a silent killer and unfortunately, it's fairly prevalent in Kansas soils. The radioactive gas that occurs naturally in some soils is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. It claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans every year, according to the EPA. But there are ways to test for it and mitigate it. To help raise awareness and encourage people to have their homes tested, the EPA has deemed January National Radon Action Month.

The Kansas Radon Program encourages all homeowners to test for radon. Test kits can be obtained from your Wildcat Extension District office for a reduced fee, which includes a lab analysis and return postage. Kits can also be ordered online at www.sosradon.org at retail price.

More than 112,000 radon measurements have been reported in Kansas, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The agency indicates that the statewide average indoor radon level in Kansas is 4.9 picocuries of radon per liter (pCi/L), which is above the EPA threshold of 4.0.

For homeowners who test and find elevated radon levels in their homes, the most common technique to reduce it is called Active Soil Depressurization. An ASD mitigation system is a permanently-installed pipe-and-fan system that places a direct constant vacuum on the soil beneath the home's foundation, so the amount of radon that can penetrate into the living space is reduced.

More information about radon, testing and mitigation is available at kansasradonprogram.org/home or by calling the Kansas Radon Hotline at 1-800-693-5343.

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