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## News Release

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### **Oklahomans Encouraged to Test Homes for Radon**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated January as National Radon Action Month. The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is working with EPA in a nationwide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage citizens to take action to protect their homes and families.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that comes from the breakdown of uranium inside the earth. Radon is dispersed in outdoor air, but can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming evidence that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

EPA estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. EPA estimates that 1 in every 15 homes nationwide has a high radon level at or above the recommended radon action level of 4 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. To view the statistical results from tests that have been conducted in your county, city, or zip code, visit the DEQ Radon Web pages at [www.deq.state.ok.us/radon](http://www.deq.state.ok.us/radon).

DEQ encourages Oklahomans to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. Radon test kits, including laboratory analysis and total postage, may be purchased from DEQ for \$27.00. To order a test kit, call (405) 702-1152. For more information about radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction in Oklahoma, call DEQ at (405) 702-5100 or visit the DEQ Radon Web pages at: [www.deq.state.ok.us/radon](http://www.deq.state.ok.us/radon).

On another note, a Guthrie Junior High School student is being recognized with a first place prize for promoting radon awareness. Alec Johnson created a poster that placed first in the 2010 National Radon Poster Contest. Johnson's poster was chosen first out of 2,862 posters submitted from 36 states, one U.S. Territory, and seven tribal nations. The contest is sponsored by Kansas State University (KSU), EPA and DEQ. Winners of the National Poster Contest, along with a parent and teacher, will receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., to attend the national award ceremony on January 15, 2010. Alec Johnson's poster can be seen at KSU's National Radon Program Services website, <http://sosradon.org>.

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