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## News Release

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### **Guthrie Junior High School Student Wins National Radon Poster Contest**

Alec Johnson, a student at Guthrie Junior High School, has 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 7 tribal nations. The contest is sponsored by the National Safety Council, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Winners of the National Poster Contest, along with a parent and sponsor, 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 Kansas State University's National Radon Program Services Web site at <http://sosradon.org>.

This year's winners for the state of Oklahoma were:

- Jace Williams, Nichols Elementary, first place
- Jamie Hurren, Guthrie Junior High, second place
- Alec Johnson, Guthrie Junior High, third place for the Oklahoma poster contest

This is DEQ's third time to host the Radon Poster Contest and the second time an Oklahoma state winner from Guthrie Junior H.S. has placed in the National Poster Contest. To participate, students must submit an original artwork that relates to radon. Judging criteria includes content accuracy, visual communication of topic, reproducibility, and originality. Each state chooses its own winners and submits the top three to the national contest.

Radon is formed by the natural radioactive decay of uranium in rock, soil, and water. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. Naturally existing, low levels of uranium occur widely in Earth's crust. It can be found in all 50 states. Once produced, radon moves through the ground to the air above. Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. As they break down further, these particles release small bursts of energy. This can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer over the course of your lifetime.

EPA estimates that radon causes about 20,000 deaths from lung cancer annually in the United States. The U.S. Surgeon General has warned that radon is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking.

The level of radon exposure in homes, schools, and other buildings can be determined through a simple test. Testing for radon is easy, inexpensive, and effective. If elevated levels are detected, proven mitigation techniques can be used to lower the levels.

For more information on radon, 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).

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