

Radon

In Georgia

www.fcs.uga.edu/radon 1-800-ASK-UGA1

www.dca.state.ga.us 1-800-359-4663

www.southface.org 1-800-765-0037

Quarterly Newsletter and Outreach Report October through December 2006

Made possible through a partnership between the University of Georgia College of Family & Consumer Sciences and Cooperative Extension, Southface Energy Institute, and the Environmental Health Department of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.



GA Radon Program Wins National Award

The Georgia Radon Education Program (GREG) has been awarded the 2006 National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Housing Outreach Award.



Becky Chenhall accepts the NEAFCS Housing Outreach Award for the GA Radon Education Program.

The Award was presented to Dr. Jorge Atilas, GA Radon Program Director, and Becky Chenhall, Radon Educator, at the National NEAFCS Conference in Denver, Colorado in October.

This award recognizes outstanding Extension System programming which enhances housing outreach to communities. The application was judged on program description; content of program;

partnerships; leadership capacity; unique delivery methods; program impact; program transferability; and supporting materials.

The UGA Radon Education Program emphasizes quality home environmental education. The application was submitted as a collaborative team consisting of Jorge Atilas, Program Director and Radon Educators, Becky Chenhall, Ginger Bennett, Joyce Habegger, and Clarke County Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, Penny Thompson.

Becky Chenhall

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2006-2007 Radon Poster Contest

Just after school started, UGA Radon Educators blitzed school students aged 9-14 with information about the 2006-2007 Radon Poster Contest. Students in seven counties, Clarke, Dawson, Elbert, Gwinnett, Hall, Lumpkin, Madison, and Walton were provided contest entry information and encouraged to enter the contest.

As you can imagine, the beginning of school is challenging for students and teachers alike, but with the encouragement of 4-H teacher/sponsors, many of the students produced wonderful entries.

The goals of this contest are to raise awareness about the harmful effects of indoor radon gas and to increase the number of homes tested and mitigated for radon.

There were two categories in the contest: Hand-Drawn posters or Computer-Generated posters. Students were asked to create and submit a poster in one of those categories.

Each poster was required to depict one of the following radon topics in the artwork:

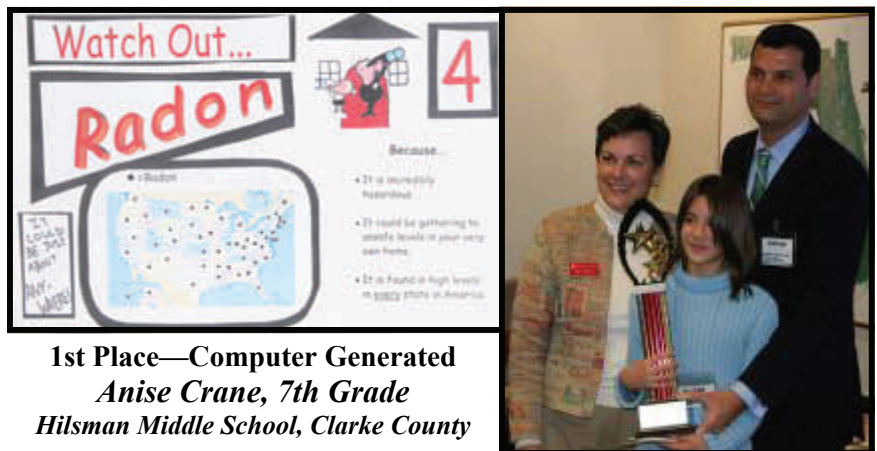
- What is radon?
- Where is radon found?
- Where does radon come from?
- Health effects of radon
- Radon test being performed
- Radon mitigation taking place
- House structure undergoing
- Radon Resistant New Construction

Judging criteria included accuracy of radon information, visual

The two 1st Place winning artists are pictured here with their posters.



1st Place—Hand Drawn
Evan English, 7th Grade
Clarke Middle School, Clark County



1st Place—Computer Generated
Anise Crane, 7th Grade
Hilsman Middle School, Clarke County

communication of topic, reproducibility, and originality.

The top two winners in each category were submitted to the National Safety Council for judging in the National Radon Poster Contest.

Next year, students may enter one poster that is hand-drawn or computer generated. Look for details on next year's contest on the UGA Radon Education Web Site, www.gafamilies.com/housing/radon in the Summer of 2007.

If you are a student between the ages of 9-14, start planning your radon poster now. And if you are a 4-Her, consider doing your 4-H project on radon next year.

See other winning artists and their posters on page 7 of this newsletter.

The National Radon Poster Contest is sponsored by the National Safety Council, who sponsor an award ceremony in Washington, D.C. each January.

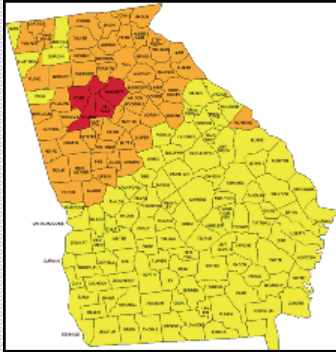
Quarterly Radon Outreach Report

Program Contacts & Media Impressions for October - December 2006

PROGRAM CONTACTS	Dawson/	Gwinnett	Madison/	Walton/	Southface	Other	Totals
Programs, Meetings, Classes	0	8	5	14	83	0	110
Participants	0	426	210	364	1,230	0	2,230
Materials Distributed	0	423	425	1,800	33	0	2,681
Exhibits or Events	3	0	1	1	0	0	5
Participants	635	0	250	200	0	0	1,085
Materials Distributed	470	0	160	70	0	0	700
Other Contacts	20	0	23	9	414	0	466
Medical Professionals	12	0	14	4	0	0	30
Homebuilders	4	0	5	2	356	0	367
Realtors	4	0	4	3	58	0	69
Radon Test Kits Distributed	202	194	68	169	21	0	654
Test Results Received	51	41	28	78	8	0	206
Results above 4.0 pCi/L	6	5	5	19	2	0	37
Results below 4.0 pCi/L	38	32	18	54	6	0	148
Results incomplete	7	4	5	5	0	0	21
% of elevated levels	14.2%	13.5%	15.0%	26.0%	33.0%	0.0%	
Highest Reported Level	5.7	6.8	56.8	19.8	6.0	0	
Mitigations completed	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Radon resistant starts	0	0	0	0	26	0	26
MEDIA IMPRESSIONS	Dawson/ Hall	Gwinnett	Madison/ Elbert	Walton/ Clarke	Southface	Other	Totals
Radio Spots/Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Listening Audience	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TV Spots/Programs	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
Viewing Audience	1,536,000	0	0	60,000	0	0	1,596,000
Newspaper Articles Published	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Reading Audience	0	0	10,000	30,000	0	0	40,000
Newsletter Articles Published	3	0	2	1	0	0	6
Number Distributed	1,700	0	1,500	1,200	0	0	4,400
Web Site Hits	550				2,658	0	3,208
Total Media Impressions	1,537,700	0	11,500	91,200	0	0	1,643,608

EPA Zone 3 Counties Can Have High Radon, Too!

The Surgeon General of the U.S., Richard Carmona, says that all homes should be tested for radon, including those in counties with a low radon potential. The EPA Map of Radon Zones in Georgia, compiled some 20 years ago, was intended to show a preliminary assessment of radon potential for each county. According to that map, Zone 1 counties have the highest potential for average indoor radon greater than 4 pCi/L; Zone 2 counties a moderate potential and Zone 3 counties a low potential. And according to that map, Putnam County, in Zone 3, has a low potential risk for radon exposure in buildings and homes.



After learning the potential health effects of radon, a Putnam County homeowner requested a complimentary radon test kit from the UGA Radon Education Program. His home's test results proved to be elevated, above 7 pCi/L. A second test confirmed the high result. The EPA strongly recommends mitigating or fixing a home with test results at or above 4 pCi/L, the EPA "Action" level.

Radon Educator, Becky Chenhall, supplied the homeowner with mitigation information including a list of the four NEHA-certified

radon mitigators operating in Georgia. The homeowner solicited bids from mitigators on the list and chose one of them to install a mitigation system in the home. A follow-up radon test verified the mitigation was successful in reducing the radon to 1.4 pCi/L, well below the EPA's action level.

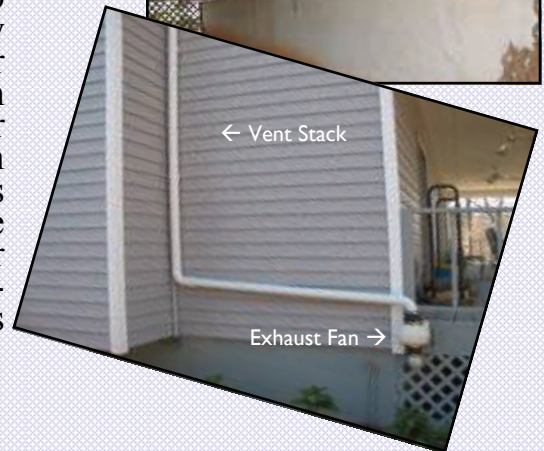
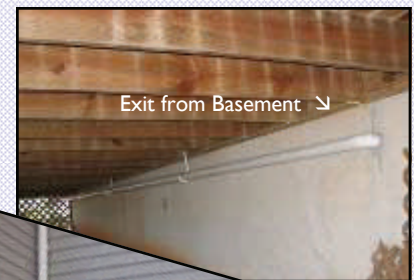
This mitigated home, located on Lake Oconee, is surrounded by large granite outcroppings. Granitic rocks are included the rock types that



are more likely to be a source for radon. The uranium in the granite rock decays into radium, which then decays into radon.

The U.S. EPA Map of Radon Zones is only a starting point for characterizing radon potential because our knowledge of radon sources and transport is always growing. The factors used—indoor radon data, geology, aerial radioactivity, soils and foundation type —

are basic indicators for radon potential. The EPA Map of Radon zones is designed to assist national, state and local governments and organizations to target their radon program activities and resources and should not be used in place of testing. Therefore, the EPA joins the Surgeon General in urging all residents to test their homes for radon, regardless of geographic location or the zone designation of the county in which they reside.



Radon Outreach Results to Date

Program and Media Contacts

These figures represent programming and media contacts from the beginning of the Radon Program to date (April 2003 through December 2006)

¹ Exhibits and Events totals represent reports beginning January 2004 to date.

² Sumter Radon Education Program was terminated in May of 2004.

³ Madison/Elbert Radon Education Program began in September of 2004.

⁴ "Other" category includes data from radon programming by County FACS/4-H agents.

⁵ Data in these categories were not tracked in 2003.

⁶ Web Site Hits tracked beginning in October, 2006.

Program Contacts	Dawson/ Hall	Gwinnett	Madison/ Elbert ³	Sumter ²	Walton	South-face	Other ⁴	Totals
Programs & Meetings	90	111	112	22	243	343	292	1,213
Participants	3,067	8,652	2,671	944	6,342	9,570	1,130	32,376
Materials Distributed ⁵	3,504	6,618	3,946	11	14,222	5,592	30	33,923
Exhibits or Events¹	39	25	21	0	54	14	21	174
Participants	15,027	9,330	8,327	0	44,475	5,313	2,496	84,968
Materials Distributed ⁵	13,448	7,011	2,830	0	9,520	1,090	1,346	35,245
Professional Contacts⁵	317	18	455	24	310	3,345	28	4,497
Medical professionals	72	16	45	24	69	0	0	226
Home builders	72	1	376	0	97	2,888	0	3,434
Realtors	173	1	34	0	144	457	28	837
Radon Kits Distributed	3,125	3,081	1,702	380	5,372	2,416	3,999	20,075
Test Results Received	879	972	881	137	2,380	308	712	6,269
Highest Reported Level	49.9	49	44	4.9	42	4.2	77.1	
Mitigations Completed	24	1	6	0	15	20	97	163
Radon Resistant Starts	2	0	0	0	10	261	0	273
Media Impressions	Dawson/ Hall	Gwinnett	Madison/ Elbert ³	Sumter ³	Walton	South-face	Other	Totals
Radio Spots	35	0	257	2	118	0	0	412
Listening Audience	1,509,000	0	3,805,000	377,000	2,056,000	2,000	0	7,749,000
TV Spots	97	456	0	2	203	2	435	1,195
Viewing Audience	17,877,000	47,007,000	0	700,000	25,819,000	1,263,000	7,685,000	100,351,000
Newspaper	18	4	9	3	38	0	3	75
Circulation	451,000	1,103,117	133,000	30,500	1,366,300	0	39,000	3,122,917
Newsletter Articles	13	10	4	14	27	5	2	75
Distribution	4,650	246	2,900	2,054	1,234,720	893,043	4,000	2,141,613
Web Site Hits⁶			550			2,658	0	3,208
Total Media Impressions	19,841,650	48,110,363	3,940,900	1,109,554	30,476,020	2,158,043	7,728,000	113,367,738

2006-2007 Radon Poster Ceremony, October 24, 2006

EPA Region 4 hosted the 2006-2007 Radon Poster Contest Award Ceremony at their **Science and Ecosystem Support Division (SESD)** located in Athens, GA. Poster artists, their families and special guests were welcomed by Michael Peyton, Director of Region 4 SESD, shown below.



Becky Chenhall assisting with kit distribution at registration table.



Joyce Habegger, upper left, was our photographer for the day.



L to R: Rhonda Bogdanow, M.D., Athens Regional Medical Center; Michael Peyton, USEPA Region 4; Linda Carroll, Athens area realtor.



L to R: Jim Casey, Athens area builder; Johnny Miller, NEHA-certified radon mitigator

2006-2007 Radon Poster Ceremony

Awards for State Winners were conferred by Dr. Jan Hathcote, Interim Dean of the College of Family and Consumer Sciences and Dr. Jorge Atilas, Associate Dean of the College of Family and Consumer Sciences.



2nd Place—Hand-Drawn
Minjung Kim, 7th Grade
Clarke County Middle School

3rd Place—Hand-Drawn

Kristin Habegger
6th Grade

Madison Co.
Middle School



2006-2007 Radon Poster Contest Entrants and Winners



2nd Place—Computer-Generated
Hannah Johnson, 6th Grade
Youth Middle School, Walton County



3rd Place—Computer-Generated
Ben Hammond, 7th Grade
Home Schooled, Walton County

Radon in The News...

2 • The Walton Tribune — Sunday, September 18, 2005 **Community News**

High Radon levels, the silent killer

WALTON COUNTY — With the recent death of Peter Jennings and the announcement by non-smoker Dana Reeve (Christopher Reeve's wife) that she has been diagnosed with lung cancer, all America hopes this will stimulate additional research to help defeat lung cancer.

Although cigarette smoking is the primary cause of lung cancer, an often overlooked carcinogen is radon, a naturally occurring, odorless radioactive gas.

Radon comes from the breakdown of uranium in soil and rock and seeps through the foundation into our homes. The U.S. Surgeon General, Richard H. Carmona, reports that

indoor radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States with an estimated 21,000 deaths annually. These deaths can be prevented. More Americans die from radon each year than from drunken drivers.

Most Americans have little or no knowledge about this silent killer; however, radon can be detected with a simple test kit. Nearly one out of every 15 homes in the U.S. is estimated to have elevated radon levels. High levels can be easily corrected with affordable mitigation efforts.

The University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences provides complimentary radon test kits to Georgia

homeowners through the County Extension Offices. The Georgia Radon Education Program is funded with a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Radon educators promote radon awareness through community radon educational programs and by encouraging testing of homes.

Walton County has been designated by EPA as a county with a moderate to high potential for radon. Complimentary radon test kits are available for homeowners at the Walton County Extension Office, 203 Milledge Ave., Monroe. Contact Radon Educator, Becky Chenhall, at 770-267-1324 for more information.



Becky Chenhall

The Georgia Radon Education Program is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in partnership with the University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences, the Pollution Prevention and Assistance Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Southface Energy Institute.

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Ginger Bennett

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News You Can Use[®] From the Extension Office

UGA Cooperative Extension in Hall County

January is National Radon Action Month
By: **Ginger Bennett, Radon Educator—Hall & Dawson Counties**

Many of you have heard of radon, some of you may have tested your homes for it, and very few who received high radon results for their homes have ever done anything about it. That means that those homeowners who have ignored elevated radon levels in their homes have volunteered for the list of people who die each year of radon-related lung cancer. Sadder still, in Georgia, a majority of homeowners receiving a complimentary 3-day radon test kit at programs and health fairs conducted by the UGA Radon Education Program have never used the test kit. What you don't know may kill you!

In Hall County, radon is present at elevated levels in about 18% of the homes tested through the UGA Radon Education Program. The only way you can find out the level of radon coming into your home is to test for it. If your home has a radon problem, you can take steps to fix it to protect yourself and your family.

The Surgeon General of the U.S., Richard Carmona, has declared that radon, the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking, kills nearly 22,000 people in the U.S. each year; 600+ of those will die in Georgia.

Exposure to radon causes lung cancer in non-smokers and smokers alike—lung cancer kills thousands of Americans every year. The untimely deaths of Peter Jennings and Dana Reeve have raised public awareness about lung cancer, especially among people who have never smoked. Smoking, radon, and secondhand smoke are the leading causes of lung cancer. Although lung cancer can be treated, the survival rate is one of the lowest for those with cancer. From the time of diagnosis, between 11 and 15 percent of those afflicted will live beyond five years, depending upon demographic factors. In many cases lung cancer can be prevented; this is especially true for radon.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released from rock, soil, and water from the natural decay of uranium. While levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, radon coming into your home can be very dangerous if you breathe the higher level often drawn into our homes. You can't see, smell, or taste it, but an elevated radon level in your home may be harming the health of your family. And since it is radioactive, there is virtually no safe level.

Testing your home for radon is as easy as opening a package, placing a radon test device in a designated area, and, after a set number of days, sending the device to a lab for analysis. The lab will then inform you of your radon test results.

If you've tested and received high results, contact Ginger Bennett in the Hall County Extension Office for information on certified radon mitigators in Georgia. If you have a test kit and haven't used it — do it today. For those Georgia homeowners who haven't yet gotten a complimentary radon test kit, come by the Hall County Extension Office and pick one up.

www.hallcounty.org/extension www.ugaextension.com