

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Students Help Raise Awareness of the Health Risks of Radon

Three Chadron youth have won prizes for helping to get the word out about the second leading cause of lung cancer – radon. “Second only to tobacco smoke,” said Tabi Prochazka, environmental health coordinator with Panhandle Public Health District.

Contest winners include:

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|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 st Place | Tate Ryan, Chadron Intermediate | Won an iPod Nano |
| 2 nd Place | Isaiah Beye, Chadron Intermediate | Won a Wal-Mart gift card\ |
| 3 rd Place | Kristian Bartlett, Chadron Intermediate | Won a Wal-Mart gift card |

One in every two homes in the panhandle has elevated radon levels, Prochazka added. “Radon is radioactive gas that occurs naturally in soil that you cannot see, smell or taste. It comes up through the soil and can enter your home through cracks in foundations, floors and walls or crawl spaces. Once inside, radon gas can be trapped inside the house causing elevated radon levels.”

Prochazka said all houses have some radon, but houses next to each other can have very different radon levels. Elevated radon levels are found in new and old houses, well-sealed and drafty houses, houses with or without basements and houses with every kind of furnace. The only way to measure your particular risk is to test your house. Free radon kits are available to Panhandle residents by calling PPHD at 308-487-3600 ext 107 or toll free at 866-701-7173 ext 107.

PPHD has collaborated with area schools in a short-term radon test kit contest running through March 31. If a student gives you a coupon participate in the contest by calling PPHD, request a test kit and send it in to receive the results. Students will not receive credit in the contest unless the test kit is returned for results. “The goal is to get as many people as possible to test their homes for radon,” Prochazka concluded.

Winter is the best time to test your home for radon. If you have received a radon test kit in the past and haven’t used it yet, now is the time to test your home and send the kit in.

For additional information about radon, visit www.pphd.org. The purpose of the Panhandle Public Health District is to educate the region it serves about the prevention of epidemics, spread of contagious diseases, injury, illness and disability. The district is charged with promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors. They promote the quality and accessibility of health services and protection against environmental hazards. Through education, protection and promotion of these issues, the Panhandle Public Health District believes the quality of life of the residents they serve can be greatly improved.