

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: *Hollie Held at 541-573-4836*

HARNEY ESD TO BEGIN RADON TESTING Winter 2020-Spring 2020

Residents urged to test homes for radon, the second leading cause of lung cancer in U.S.

Harney ESD will begin testing for radon BETWEEN February 2020 – March 2020 to protect children and school staff from exposure to the gas that is the second leading cause of lung cancer behind smoking.

Radon testing involves the placement of small devices in each of the frequently occupied rooms in contact with the ground. Initial testing should last between two and seven days. Testing devices are not dangerous, and school occupants and guardians are urged to cooperate with staff and radon professionals while radon testing is occurring.

The EPA has established 4.0 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L) as the action level for radon. The law does not require schools to reduce radon levels if they exceed the EPA action level. Harney ESD will post Radon results at www.harneyesd.k12.or.us. Often, elevated radon levels in schools can be reduced quickly with changes in ventilation.

“We want to demystify radon testing for both school districts and homeowners,” said Curtis Cude, Oregon Radon Awareness Program manager. “Getting a school and home tested for this gas is easy, and repair done by a certified professional is highly effective.”

Radon comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil and rock. You can't see, smell, or taste radon, but it is found throughout Oregon and in all different types of buildings. Breathing high levels of radon over a long period of time can cause lung cancer. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, behind smoking. The EPA estimates that around 21,000 people die from radon-induced lung cancer each year in the U.S.

In addition, smokers are much more likely to experience lung cancer if they are also exposed to radon.

Because many people spend much of their time at home, the home is likely the most significant source of radon exposure. For children, the second largest contributor to radon exposure is likely to be at school. As a result, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recommend that all schools and homes be tested for radon. Oregon law requires schools to test for radon.

See the frequently asked questions about radon, including radon in schools, at <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/HEALTHYNEIGHBORHOODS/RADONGAS/Pages/Radon-FAQs.aspx> Information on how homes can be tested easily and at low cost can be found at www.healthoregon.org/radon. OHA offers free test kits to homes located in zip codes where test information is not available. Find out if you are eligible by contacting OHA's Radon Awareness Program at 971-673-0440 or radon.program@state.or.us.

For more information regarding radon testing at Harney ESD, contact Hollie Held at heldh@harneyesd.k12.or.us