



THE PUEBLO RADON PROJECT



On a recent Wednesday evening, residents filled the main meeting room of the Rawlins Public Library in Pueblo to learn about the potential threat that radon poses for Pueblo's families. The ***Pueblo CAREs*** project sponsored a presentation by Doug Kladder, also known as "Mr. Radon". Doug spoke for more than two hours about what radon is, how we may become exposed to radon and how we might mitigate our exposures. The assembled community members were most interested in whether they and their families might be exposed to

radon in their homes.

The principal goal of this meeting was to bring the Pueblo community together to increase understanding of and to realistically assess the risks to the community from exposure to radon. EPA recently sponsored a "Radon Month" campaign. Region 8 has responded to that initiative by assisting the Pueblo community, through its CARE¹ Grantee, in learning about and responding to the threat of radon in Pueblo.

According to statistics gathered by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), nearly one half of Colorado's homes that have been tested for radon exceed the recommended 4 picocurie per cubic liter of air level. Levels above 4 picocuries are recommended to be mitigated to reduce the prospective incidence of lung cancer which radon promotes.

A quick analysis of historical statistics reveals that the average level of radon for those homes tested in Pueblo City and County is about 8 picocuries (the range of levels tested is 2-135 picocuries). Those statistics were generated from data sorted by Zip Code. Thus, we now know roughly where higher exposures are found. However, at this time, we do not know the specific neighborhoods where exposures may be high.



The State of Colorado's Radon Program made coupons available to secure free testing kits. Additionally, the EPA [National Exposure Research Laboratory](#) in Las Vegas supplied the project with radon measurement units under it's Outreach Program. These are being distributed to the community with particular attention paid to EJ neighborhoods. The Pueblo City/County Health Department is distributing the kits, at no charge. The project is asking for a report back on the results, so that we can better identify neighborhoods at greatest risk.



The results of the tests will be analyzed to determine the current level of risk from radon in Pueblo residences. This information will then be shared with the larger community to encourage more widespread testing. There will also be outreach to the home construction trades to encourage them to include radon mitigation in high risk areas for new home construction.

One of the larger challenges identified by the community is the mitigation of risk in homes showing high levels of radon, but for which the cost of mitigation is beyond the means of the homeowner. We are discussing ideas for innovative approaches for working with homeowners who face this problem. Additionally, we are investigating several sources of potential funding to address this challenge. Sources identified to date include HUD funds for low-income home improvement, using energy retrofit resources, identifying grant funds and creating a matching grant program to pair with identified resources to encourage community residents to step in and help their neighbors.



¹ Community Action for a Renewed Environment

