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NEWS RELEASE
Wednesday, May 27, 2020

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Radon: Check Your Indoor Air, Make Yourself Aware

SALT LAKE CITY — Susan Dowdle, a senior-aged, Davis County resident, decided to test her home for radon after learning her stepdaughter's mother had been diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer. The cause of this cancer was directly linked to exposure to unmitigated radon gas. She purchased a radon test kit from radon.utah.gov for \$10.95 (if purchased at a hardware store or online marketplace it would cost about \$50) and deployed the easy-to-do test in her basement.

Dowdle discovered that her home had three times the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency action level for radon — the equivalent of smoking one-and-a-half packs of cigarettes every day. This revelation produced a new dilemma. Living on a fixed income, where was she going to find \$1,500 for a radon mitigation system?

After a long Internet search, Dowdle reached out to the Utah Radon Coalition (URC) to talk about mitigations options. The URC — Utah's only nonprofit, all-volunteer, 501 (c)(3) provider of radon awareness, advocacy, and community service programs — provides financial assistance to low-income households for radon mitigation.

Dowdle submitted her application for help with the mitigation services, which she found at URC's website, and was deemed eligible by the URC Board of Directors to receive this service. In her case, these services include a steeply discounted price for the mitigation system by Radon Be Gone, a Davis County radon mitigation company that will install her system, and the URC is paying two-thirds of the remaining costs of the project.

As Utah residents spend increasing amounts of time indoors with teleworking and stay-at-home orders, it is more important now than ever to test homes for radon. Radon is a natural, radioactive gas that claims about 21,000 lives each year. It is the leading cause of death from lung cancer among nonsmokers in the United States. Exposure to radon is a preventable health risk. Testing is the only way to know if your home has elevated levels. You cannot see or smell radon.

One in three Utah homes have elevated radon levels and studies indicate that most of our radiation exposure comes from indoor radon. It costs about \$1,500 to mitigate elevated levels of radon.

For more information about radon, instructions on hiring a certified professional, or how to test your home, visit radon.utah.gov.

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About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) mission is to safeguard and improve Utah's air, land and water through balanced regulation. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah's air, land and water. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov, follow DEQ on Facebook ([utahdeq](#)) and Twitter ([UtahDEQ](#)), or call 1-800-458-0145.