

Radon Risks in the Tahoe Region

*Happy Hour with Jeff Miner (Radon at Tahoe) and
George Faggella (California DHS Radon Program)*

Date: Thursday, January 18, 2007

Time: 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$5 donation requested.

Includes a **No-Host Bar**.

Location: Assembly Rooms A & B, Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences
291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, Nevada (on the campus of Sierra Nevada College)

Lecture Topic: Radon Risks in the Tahoe Region

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas. You can't see radon. And you can't smell it or taste it. But it may be a problem in your home. Radon is estimated to cause many thousands of deaths each year. That's because when you breathe air containing radon, you can get lung cancer. In fact, the Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. If you smoke and your home has high radon levels, your risk of lung cancer is especially high.

Radon comes from the natural (radioactive) breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water and gets into the air you breathe. Radon can be found all over the U.S. It can get into any type of building - homes, offices, and schools - and result in a high indoor radon level. But you and your family are most likely to get your greatest exposure at home, where you spend most of your time. (Source: EPA's "A Citizen's Guide to Radon: The Guide to Protecting Yourself and Your Family From Radon")

Radon is produced by the normal decay of uranium, an element that is found in nearly all soils. However, higher concentrations are found in the decomposed granite soils of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Join us during *Radon Action Month* for information and resources about radon, how to test for it, and how to get rid of it. Learn how to detect this deadly gas and protect yourself and your family.

Jeff Miner of Radon at Tahoe is a 35 year resident of South Lake Tahoe who discovered high levels of radon gas in his Tahoe Paradise home. After researching the radon problem, he tackled the job as a do-it-yourself project and was able to reduce levels from 6 pCi/L to 1 pCi/L, well below the EPA Action Level of 4 pCi/L. To better understand the EPA radon mitigation process, Jeff took a week long radon testing and mitigation certification class in Colorado Springs and now runs a web-based business, <http://www.RadonAtTahoe.com>, to help others to test for and eliminate radon from their

homes. He also promotes Radon Resistant New Construction (RRNC) to the building trades and sells a radon book and electronic tester.

With the help of George Faggella, he created a radon display at the El Dorado County Library for the month of April, 2006. He has participated in the Green Building Expo at Lake Tahoe Community College and has spoken to a group of architects and engineers in South Lake Tahoe. Jeff has a BS degree in business and an MBA. In the early 1970s he and his wife Karen started Grass Roots Natural Foods in South Lake Tahoe. He worked for the Lake Tahoe Unified School District for 14 years managing their computers, and he currently runs a web page and consulting business along with Radon at Tahoe.

George Faggella of the California Department of Health Services Radon Program has been managing the Indoor Radon Program since 2004. Previous to that he was with the Environmental Lab Accreditation Program for 4 years and Dept. of Fish and Game for about 10 years working in aquatic toxicology. He has an MS Degree from UC Davis in Water Science. The State Indoor Radon Program is a public outreach and education program with the main goal of reducing human exposure to indoor radon. The program provides free test kits to CA residents, maintains a web site, maintains a registry of CA certified radon service providers, and conducts county screening programs to locate and map areas of high radon potential.

This Winter George will be conducting the Tahoe Radon Survey which will invite over 7,000 residents of El Dorado, Nevada, and Placer County portions of the Lake Tahoe Basin to test their homes for radon. The study will attempt to more accurately classify the radon risks in the granite rich Sierra Nevada portions of all three counties. The EPA currently classifies radon risks by county and not by region. A recent analysis of the DHS radon test data base indicates a higher percent of homes in the foothills and mountains are over the EPA action level of than homes in the valley portions of the counties. The Tahoe Radon Survey seeks more tests results to better define the radon risks in the Tahoe Region.

Sponsorship: This event is sponsored by the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) in partnership with Sierra Nevada College.

Monthly Lecture Series: The UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) *Monthly Lecture Series* will provide a forum for community members to gain access to scientific experts. The *Monthly Lecture Series* will present interesting topics in science, from A to Z (air quality to zooplankton), and topics pertinent to the region, directly to enthusiasts in nearby communities. Speakers include authorities on various environmental issues, scientific research and related regional topics of interest.