Radon Awareness Key Topic at IEMA’s Radon Networking Day in Springfield

Debra Bartman of Princeton Honored
with Excellence in Radon Award

SPRINGFIELD – Nearly 40 public health officials, contractors, extension educators and other radon partners are attending a day-long meeting in Springfield Tuesday to learn how they can increase public awareness about radon. The 8th Annual Radon Networking Day is sponsored by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) Radon Program.

“Radon is a very real health hazard,” said IEMA Interim Director Joe Klinger. “It’s estimated that nearly 1,200 radon-related lung cancer deaths occur each year in Illinois. This annual conference provides an excellent opportunity for our radon partners from throughout Illinois to share their experiences and enhance our outreach efforts.”

High levels of radon, a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas, have been found in more than 40 percent of homes tested for radon in Illinois. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the nation. However, for non-smokers, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer.

During the conference, IEMA announced that Debra Bartman of Princeton was selected as the recipient of the Illinois Excellence in Radon Award for her efforts in radon education and outreach. Bartman is a Consumer and Family Economics Educator for the University of Illinois Extension. She was instrumental in developing the nationally recognized “Take Action on Radon” website and has played a key role in promoting the annual radon poster contest.

“Debra Bartman exemplifies the meaning of community outreach,” said Patrick Daniels, manager of IEMA’s Radon Program. “She has worked with schools and after school programs, created radon videos, taken pictures and so much more to spread the radon message with countless people.”

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Participants in the networking event include representatives from the American Lung Association, the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU, Memorial Medical Center, the Illinois Plumbing and Heating Association, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region V, individual radon contractors, realtors and CANSAR/AARST.

In addition, representatives from Cook, Kendall, Logan, McLean, Southern Seven, Will and Winnebago county health departments participated in the event.
More information about radon, including lists of measurement and mitigation professionals, is available on IEMA’s radon website (www.radon.illinois.gov) or by calling the Radon Hotline at 1-800-325-1245.

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Press Release

Pat Quinn, Governor
Joe Klinger, Interim Director