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Radon Professionals, Health Officials in Springfield Thursday for IEMA Radon Networking Day

Former State Rep. Dan Reitz Recognized for Supporting Radon Legislation

SPRINGFIELD – Public health officials, contractors, extension educators and others who deal with radon public education, measurement or reduction are in Springfield Thursday for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency’s (IEMA) 9th Annual Radon Networking Day. The day-long event offers presentations on research into the radioactive gas found in nearly 40 percent of Illinois homes, as well as discussions on how to increase public awareness of radon hazards.

During the conference IEMA will recognize retired state Representative Dan Reitz as the recipient of the Illinois Excellence in Radon Award for his support of radon legislation. As a member of the Illinois General Assembly, Reitz, of Steeleville, sponsored several key radon legislative initiatives, including the Radon Awareness Act, which requires home sellers to provide buyers with information about radon hazards. Reitz also sponsored amendments to the Radon Industry Licensing Act and a law that encourages radon testing in all school buildings.

“Thanks to the efforts of Rep. Reitz, more people are aware of the health risks associated with radon and are testing their homes,” said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. “It’s estimated that nearly 1,200 radon-related lung cancer deaths occur each year in Illinois. We’re working to reduce that number, and the laws sponsored by Rep. Reitz are helping us with that mission.”

Recipients of the Excellence in Radon Award are selected from nominations submitted to IEMA’s radon program. The five past recipients of the award reviewed nominations submitted this year and voted to award the honor to Reitz.

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Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas that comes from naturally occurring radium in soil. Data collected by IEMA indicates that nearly 40 percent of homes tested in Illinois have levels about 4 picocuries per liter of air, the level at which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends corrective action. Radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the nation. However, for non-smokers, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer.

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

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