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City of Prince George proclaims ‘Radon Aware Month’

Announces new radon education initiatives

The City of Prince George is proclaiming November as “Radon Aware Month” and announcing new projects to help homeowners educate themselves about the effects of radon, a gas which is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in Canada after smoking and second-hand smoke.

Radon is a naturally occurring, colourless, odourless gas caused by the breakdown of uranium in soil and rocks. Health Canada estimates as many as 16 percent of lung cancer deaths can be attributed to radon exposure. In 2012, Health Canada released the results of a nation-wide survey which estimates 12% of people in the Northern Interior of BC are living in homes with radon levels exceeding the actionable guidelines.

The City of Prince George works in collaboration with agencies such as the BC Lung Association, Northern Health, and the Canadian Cancer Society to raise awareness, identify, and mitigate the harmful effects of radon.

In recognition of Radon Aware Month, the City of Prince George will be selling Health Canada recognized indoor radon detection kits at a discount price of \$16.00 to homeowners who wish to check the radon levels of their residences. The kits can be purchased at the Service Centre at City Hall beginning on November 1, 2015.

In addition, as part of a City pilot project, test kits will be distributed to new homeowners via building officials and contractors during final building inspections. The results from these tests will help to determine the effectiveness of the new BC Building Code radon protection measures, and if new occupants will need to install an active component to the extended rough-in in their home to mitigate radon levels. The City is also conducting radon testing at all of its civic facilities.

These announcements come following a presentation to Prince George City Council on October 5, 2015, which detailed the results of a study led by the BC Lung Association’s RadonAware campaign revealing 29 percent of Prince George homes have radon levels above Health Canada’s action guideline. Notably, more than half of the homes in the “V2M” area code have radon levels above this threshold. The study was Canada’s largest community-wide radon testing project, and the results have been provided to participating residents.

“On behalf of Council, I would like to thank the BC Lung Association for providing this important information so that we can act quickly to educate homeowners,” says Mayor Lyn Hall. “I encourage all residents concerned about radon in their homes to visit radonaware.ca for

information and to order a home test kit, or to visit City Hall to get one at a discount during the month of November and while our supply lasts.”

Residents can also get a kit at Northern Health’s Public Health Protection Office at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre (fourth floor - 1600 Third Avenue).

“The best prevention against radon gas is to know if radon is coming into your home or place of work,” says Dr. Sandra Allison, Northern Health’s chief medical health officer. “That is why we encourage people to test their homes and talk to their employers about testing their buildings. Knowing is the first step to being able to protect you and your family.”

Northern Health’s radon-related public health information can be viewed [here](#).

“I would like to congratulate the City of Prince George for being the first community in Northern BC to proclaim November as Radon Aware Month,” says Britt Swoveland, Provincial Manager of the RadonAware campaign. “Other communities such as Trail, Nakusp, Creston, Princeton, and Kamloops are following Prince George’s lead! We want residents of Prince George to know that radon testing is simple and that mitigation solutions exist that can effectively reduce radon gas to safe levels.”

For more information on the health risk of radon, purchasing a test kit, or locating a certified mitigation professional, please visit www.radonaware.ca.

Last week, the Canadian Cancer Society hosted a course in Prince George for construction professionals to become certified to measure and reduce radon. The Society hosted BC’s first-ever radon measurement and mitigation courses and have trained more than 35 professionals across the entire province. On Wednesday, October 7, the Society hosted a free radon public information forum at the Kordyban Lodge for residents and homeowners.

“Radon is a serious health concern, but undue exposure is preventable and certified professionals are available to help in our community,” says Megan Klitch, Health Promotion Coordinator, Canadian Cancer Society. “We congratulate the City of Prince George for taking this leadership role in raising awareness and encouraging action.”

Information about radon and its effects can be found on the Canadian Cancer Society’s [website](#).

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