



707 North Robinson, P.O. Box 1677, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-1677

## News Release

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Contact: Skylar McElhaney, (405) 702-7167

### **Guthrie Junior High Students Win State Radon Poster Contest**

Taylor Gilbert, a student at Guthrie Junior High in Guthrie, Oklahoma, placed first in the 2011 State Radon Poster Contest. Second and third place also went to Guthrie Junior High students. The contest is sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). This year's winners for the state of Oklahoma were:

- Taylor Gilbert, Guthrie Junior High, first place
- Sarah Adams, Guthrie Junior High, second place
- Bri Borynack, Guthrie Junior High, third place

To participate, students must submit an original artwork that relates to radon. Each state chooses its own winners and submits the top three to the national contest.

Radon is formed by the natural radioactive decay of uranium in rock, soil, and water. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. Naturally existing, low levels of uranium occur widely in Earth's crust. It can be found in all 50 states. Once produced, radon moves through the ground to the air above. Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. As they break down further, these particles release small bursts of energy. This can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer over the course of your lifetime.

EPA estimates that radon causes about 20,000 deaths from lung cancer annually in the United States. The U.S. Surgeon General has warned that radon is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking.

Fortunately, the level of radon exposure in homes, schools, and other buildings can be determined through a simple test. Testing for radon is easy, inexpensive, and effective. If elevated levels are detected, proven mitigation techniques can be used to lower the levels.

For more information on radon, call DEQ at (405) 702-5100 or visit the DEQ radon Web pages at: [www.deq.state.ok.us/radon](http://www.deq.state.ok.us/radon).

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