

Pat Quinn, Governor
Andrew Velasquez III, Director

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Student Group from Wheaton North H.S. Wins Statewide Radon Video Contest

Video promotes awareness of radioactive gas linked to lung cancer

SPRINGFIELD – A group of teens at Wheaton North High School are helping spread the message about radon’s health hazards across Illinois through a 60-second YouTube video they produced and submitted to the “2010 Illinois High School Radon Video Contest.” On Thursday morning, the students learned their video won the contest during a presentation ceremony at the school.

Representatives from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the American Lung Association of Illinois (ALA-IL), the contest sponsors, presented a \$1,000 prize to the students, along with a \$2,000 prize to their high school during the ceremony. Other organizations supporting the contest included the University of Illinois Extension Office, Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

“These students found a creative, entertaining way to present this important message,” said IEMA Director Andrew Velasquez III. “We appreciate their hard work on this video, which will give us an innovative new tool for promoting radon awareness throughout Illinois.”

The winning video was selected from more than 30 videos submitted by high school students from throughout Illinois. The videos were made available for public viewing and voting, and vote totals were combined with judging by a panel of contest sponsors to determine the winner.

The Wheaton North video features a ninja attempting to get into a home, illustrating the message of, ‘you wouldn’t let a ninja into your home, so why would you let radon in?’ The video will be on the IEMA and ALA-IL websites as part of the agencies’ on-going efforts to increase public awareness of radon gas and the need to test homes for its presence..

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that comes from the radioactive decay of naturally-occurring uranium in the soil. It can enter homes and buildings through small cracks in the foundation, sump pumps or soil in crawlspaces. The USEPA has determined that radon is the

second leading cause of lung cancer, behind smoking. However, among non-smokers, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer.