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Local Youth Help Launch National Radon Action Month

Citizens Urged to Test Homes for Radon, the Second Leading Cause of Lung Cancer in U.S.

Wampsville, NY, 1/9/07 ---Rocco DiVeronica, Chair of the Madison County Board of Supervisors, will declare January as National Radon Action Month in Madison County at a special proclamation ceremony today at the Madison County Main Office Complex foyer at 11:00 AM. Joining Chairman DiVeronica will be his fellow supervisors, MCDOH Director Eric Faisst, Irene Scruton from the National Safety Council, Otto Shortell Middle School youth, faculty and administration and management and staff from the Madison County Environmental Health Division.

Otto Shortell Middle School youth will be on hand to assist in the launch of National Radon Action Month because they've won awards in the National Radon Poster Contest, sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and coordinated by the National Safety Council (NSC), the New York State Department of Health and the Madison County Department of Health. Otto Shortell Middle School science teacher, Wanda Zinski, invited a representative of the Health Department to visit her classes and speak about radon issues in early October. As part of the educational effort, students were encouraged to participate in the National Radon Poster Contest. Twenty-two students submitted artwork entries, which were entered into the National Contest.

Ms. Irene Scruton, President of the New York Chapter of the National Safety Council, personally oversaw the contest in New York State. She will present her congratulations to the first-prize winner of the National Radon Poster Contest in the computer-generated artwork division to Samantha Savage of Canastota and to Jaclyn Cavanagh of Oneida who earned a third-place award in the hand-drawn artwork category at the state level of the contest.

The National Contest winner, her parents, and her teacher will enjoy an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. to personally take part in the National Radon Action Month Declaration Ceremony in the historic Rachel Carson Room at EPA's headquarters on January 16th, 2007.

The Madison County Department of Health (MCDOH) is working with the (EPA) in a nationwide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families. In our community, MCDOH is conducting several initiatives throughout the county during National Radon Action Month in January.

Radon is present at elevated levels in about 37% of Madison County homes (about one in every three homes). Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is harmlessly dispersed in outdoor air, but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. A scientific report confirms that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths each year.

Test your home for radon gas now. Radon poses a serious threat to our community. Testing is easy and inexpensive. The only way to know a radon problem exists in your home is to test and radon problems can be fixed. For more information on radon call the Madison County Department of Health at 366-2526.