

Rock And Roll

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Last year around this time *Radon Today* made the observation that Peter Hendrick, Executive Director of the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (AARST), is a modern day Sisyphus. In Greek mythology Sisyphus was a King of Corinth who was condemned to roll a huge stone uphill and the stone always rolled back down.

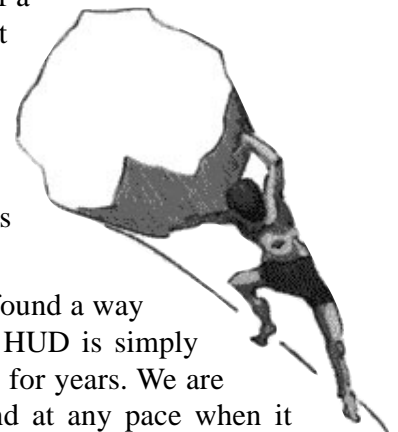
The stone, for Peter Hendrick, is Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This federal agency, tasked with making sure that dwellings are free from environmental hazards, refused to recognize that radon is an environmental hazard. HUD's attitude was so appalling because its jurisdiction includes government regulated mortgages to ensure that a greater percentage of the population can afford a home.

Well thanks to the hard work of Peter Hendrick and others, HUD began including three new documents with its FHA (Federal Housing Authority) mortgage applications. As of February 21, 2004, HUD's form explaining the benefits of a home inspection states, "The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Surgeon General have recommended that ALL houses should be tested for radon." This revised HUD form also includes the sentence, "As with a home inspection, if you decide to test for radon, you may do so before signing your contract, or you may do so after signing the contract as long as your contract states the sale of the home depends on your satisfaction with the results of the radon test."

The second document from HUD is to mortgagees telling them that they must sign and submit the above form. This letter states, in part, "The Department of Housing and Urban Development through FHA continues to be responsive to public safety concerns by informing mortgagees and borrowers of the Environmental Protection Agency and Surgeon General's recommendation for radon testing. The revised form incorporates radon testing as one of the components of a home inspection."

The third form was added as recently as June 7th. It is a "Radon gas and mold notice and release agreement." It announces, in bold print, that "Purchasers are hereby notified and understand that radon gas and some molds have the potential to cause serious health problems." Further the form goes on to state that, "Purchasers are encouraged to obtain the services of a qualified and experienced professional to conduct inspections and tests regarding radon and mold prior to closing." HUD makes the point that "radon is an invisible and odorless gaseous radioactive element. Mold is a general term for visible growth of fungus" but that it may not always be visible until certain barriers are removed.

Now we are not suggesting that Mr. Hendrick has found a way to keep the stone at the top of the hill. After all, HUD is simply following existing mandates that it chose to ignore for years. We are saying that we welcome progress in any form and at any pace when it



moves us closer to a safer environment for all people.

Radon Today applauds the efforts of Peter Hendrick and those hard working souls at the American Radon Policy Coalition (an AARST subcommittee) and at AARST.

Happily Ever After

Once upon a time a man had an idea to start a radon business. It began in his study at home. It then took up the garage. When it encroached on the rest of the house it was time for Alan Zucchini to find a building. And he did. Then the business grew more and it was time to find a bigger space. And he did. Well here he goes again.

On Friday May 14th, Spruce Environmental, the parent company of RadonAway, became the proud owner of a new building located at 3 Saber Way, Ward Hill, MA 01835. It is hoped that the 40,000 square feet will allow for years of future growth as nobody at the company wants to pack everything up every few years! The move will take place on the weekend of July 10th and the goal is to be fairly well settled in by Monday the 12th.

Knowing, however, that things sometimes go awry, Spruce would like its customers to be aware of the fact that there could be some technical difficulties with phones and computers. It is the company's intent to provide its customers with the same excellent service as always, but asks for patience in advance just in case.

If it is possible for you to place orders by Thursday July 8th for anything you think you might need for the following week that would be great. If you have any questions please feel free to call 800-767-3703.



Are You Talking To Me?

The American Radon Policy Coalition (ARPC), a non-profit subcommittee of the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (AARST), has certainly been trying to hold Housing and Urban Development (HUD) accountable.

On May 20th the HUD Office of Inspector General was to begin investigating allegations, brought by the ARPC, that it is violating federal radon laws and has been for at least fifteen years. Congress requested this investigation and HUD Inspector General Kenneth Donohue has been in touch with Senators Lugar and Santorum. Donohue was to have an interim response to these allegations by May 28th.

Of all the allegations lodged against HUD, the most shocking may be that HUD "willfully concealed a radon testing protocol for multifamily housing developed...for the sole purpose of assisting HUD with the implementation of the McKinney Amendments." The McKinney Act Amendments required HUD to "develop an effective departmental policy for dealing with radon contamination that utilizes any EPA guidelines and standards to ensure that occupants of federally assisted multifamily housing are not exposed to hazardous levels of radon."

In February 1995 the EPA gave HUD the guidelines and standards in a guidebook called "Radon Measurement in HUD Multi-family Buildings". The EPA stated that this represented, "an important step towards achieving equitable protection from the health risks of radon for low income communities."

According to the allegations, "At HUD's request, the document did not receive 'the same broad review typical for EPA radon documents, and, therefore, has not been approved for publication as an EPA document'." The existence of this guidebook might never have been known except that in 2003 it was leaked by a HUD employee.

In response the CDC blasted HUD saying, "People in minority groups or with low levels of income or education are significantly less likely to have heard of residential radon and its potential health risk than were whites or people with higher levels of income or education." Also that, "By failing to consider the impact of environmental contaminants, especially but not limited to radon, HUD has caused severe and irreparable harm to the occupants of all structures under its programs and activities, as well as placing the owners, appraisers and underwriters of these properties in a position of severe potential liability,"

Frankly we are shocked here at *Radon Today* by the fact that as of the second week of June, HUD had still not responded. We will continue to follow this story and keep you updated.

Make Way For Dave

Spruce Environmental Technologies, Inc. is very pleased to announce the addition of David D. Hill to its employee family.

Some of you may know Dave as the current national president of the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (AARST). Others of you may remember when he co-founded Radon & Water Control Systems back in 1988. Most recently you may have done business with him when he was president of US Radon Systems, Inc.

Some of Dave Hill's other accomplishments include: designing and manufacturing the Checkpoint monitors and alarms; designing the patented AIRaider bubble aeration systems; authoring numerous articles for professional publications and membership in many professional organizations such as the Water Quality Association and the NEHA Technical Review Board.



Dave joined Spruce on April 1st and is Vice President of Marketing. He is responsible for all marketing functions for Spruce's various product lines. Welcome aboard Dave.

Mighty Pens

Even Don Quixote had Sancho Panza to keep him company. For years radon professionals were tilting at Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and even the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) all alone. Enter two United States Senators to help fight the good fight.

Senators Frank R. Lautenberg and Jon S. Corzine co-signed two letters sent out on June 4th. One of the two letters was addressed to Michael O. Leavitt, Administrator, U.S. EPA. In this letter the Senators expressed "serious concern that the EPA has failed to finalize a regulation to limit the concentration of the radioactive gas, radon, in drinking water."

The letter cited the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments, enacted August 6, 1996. A provision had been added to require the EPA, "to propose a maximum contaminant level (MCL) ...for radon by August 1999 and to publish a final MCL...by August 2000." Well four years have gone by and "Although EPA published a proposed regulation for radon in drinking water on November 2, 1999, it has yet to publish a final regulation for this important contaminant, despite the fact that the statute requires a final regulation to be published by August 2000..."

The Senators wrote about the 1996 amendments which

directed the EPA to establish an alternative MCL, because radon in air is more of a risk than radon in water and thereby states could adopt a multimedia radon mitigation program in lieu of the MCL. The letter concludes with, "Because of the public health benefits of a drinking water regulation, especially a regulation that allows states to adopt a multimedia approach, we urge you to finalize this regulation as soon as possible."

The second letter the Senators wrote was to The Honorable Alphonso R. Jackson, Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and addressed HUD's failure to adhere to federal radon laws.

Senator Lautenberg just happens to be an original co-sponsor of Public Law 100-551 which is more commonly referred to as the Indoor Radon Abatement Act of 1988. This act states, among other things that, "The Secretary [of HUD] shall utilize any guideline, information, or standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency for testing residential and non-residential radon, identifying elevated radon levels, identifying when remedial actions should be taken."

In their letter to Secretary Jackson they write, "We are both deeply concerned that, inexplicably, your department has shown little willingness to implement its responsibilities to reduce the risk of radon exposure in housing." Further, "Although HUD belatedly submitted a report to Congress in April 1991, both Congress and the General Accounting Office (GAO) found it to be inadequate."

Also, despite assurances by then HUD Secretary Jack Kemp to initiate a program of testing and mitigation in 1992, "It does not appear that any of the promised testing and mitigation of federally-assisted housing required by this legislation and promised by Secretary Kemp has ever been carried out in the over fifteen years since the McKinney Amendments were enacted. In addition, it does not appear that HUD has made any significant efforts to assist EPA in reducing radon contamination."

The letter concludes with, "We understand that the Department's Inspector General is currently reviewing this issue. We urge you to give serious consideration to his conclusions and take all steps necessary to bring your department into compliance with the radon requirements of the McKinney Amendments. Radon-induced lung cancer is preventable. HUD's failure to meet its testing responsibilities under the law is having a potentially deadly impact all across America."

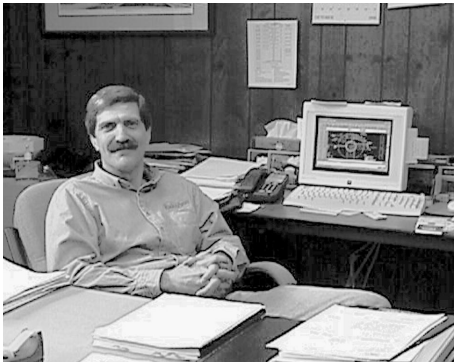
We here at *Radon Today* offer applause and a standing ovation to Senators Lautenberg and Corzine for their attempts to move both the EPA and HUD. They certainly moved us. Thank you.



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Dave's Corner

Radon in Water: Diffused Bubble Aeration

Even without an EPA radon in water rule or an established federal standard, thousands of water treatment systems are installed each year to deal with elevated radon in domestic water systems. Most of these systems are used to treat individual well systems. The best available technology for removing radon in water is a diffused bubble aeration system. RadonAway is pleased to announce that it has begun to manufacture the AIRaider™ series of Diffused Bubble Aeration Systems. This proven, patented technology can deliver up to 99+% reduction rates in a small, energy efficient package.

The AIRaider™ System is installed inline with the existing well pump/ house water supply through a bypass manifold. The bypass manifold allows the equipment to be isolated from the water supply for maintenance or repair. The well water fills or is sprayed into the tank and a series of holes in the diffuser bars generate micro-bubbles to agitate the water and strip off the radon. A 2" PVC vent stack is run from the unit to the roof of the home to exhaust the radon. Generally, no exhaust fan is required. A jet pump is then used to re-pressurize the treated water for household use.

Prior to installation, a site evaluation of the home should be performed. Some of the things you will need to know are:

- Plumbing size and type
- Current well flow rates
- Space available to locate the system
- Location for 2" PVC vent stack
- Initial radon level
- Other known water quality problems

Many states may require that a licensed plumber perform this type of system installation. An electrician may also be required to perform the electric installation. Be sure to adhere to all state and local codes when installing AIRaider™ Diffused Bubble Aeration Systems. Please call RadonAway at 800-767-3703 with further questions or product inquiries. We will be happy to assist you with model selection and jet pump choices.