

# HEALTH HOUSE<sup>®</sup>

## NEWS

Spring 2007

### Inside:

- Chemical Air-Fresheners Reduce Lung Function
- Product Spotlight: Carbon Monoxide Alarms or Monitors?
- Radon Facts
- Local Green Codes Adopt Health House<sup>®</sup> Guidelines
- Already Over 80 Million Media Impressions This Year
- Earnest Coburn, MD Is Building a Health House Community in Virginia
- The Dirty Dozen of Indoor Air

### Upcoming Health House News

- ⇒ Health House launches national magazine focusing on indoor air quality and indoor living environments.
- ⇒ Health House offices to become first Healthy Remodel of its kind in the state.
- ⇒ Tribal Training for Indoor Air Quality by Health House for San Carlos Apache Tribe in Arizona
- ⇒ Japanese media plan trip to U.S. to visit Health House program



The American Lung Association<sup>®</sup> Health House<sup>®</sup> program this winter began providing its Builder Program through a provider network known as “Support Centers.” Guaranteed Watt Savers Systems (GWS) of Oklahoma recently commissioned the first Health House under this new network.

The house is located in Weatherford, Texas and also received a LEED-H Platinum Certification.

The reason GWS, which services builders in an eleven state region, decided to become a Health House Support Center is simple—market differentiation. Builders with business smarts have long used companies like GWS to provide building science training to

### Guaranteed Watt Savers Systems Inc. First National Support Center to Commission a Health House<sup>®</sup>

staff in the field. And, at the end of the construction process these same builders now have the option to have the home recognized by programs like Health House as having been built according to tight construction standards.

Health House is a program of the American Lung Association, a name recognized and trusted by consumers. As such, the program sets the highest construction standards in the industry to help ensure safer, more durable and more energy efficient homes are being delivered to families.

EarthCraft Homes of Virginia is also one of the twenty or so home performance raters who have begun providing Health House to builders. EarthCraft said it has had a “pet interest” in Health House since the program began in the early 90’s. However,

only now, given the new Support Center model will the Health House program have the “wheels under it” needed to make it accessible to many more builders.

Dan Johnston, Director of the Health House program, believes the new model is a win-win for everyone. “The program content has not changed. In actuality, in the past the performance raters were still the ones who delivered the program. Yet, there was a cumbersome and costly back and forth with the Health House program office. All we have done is empowered the providers to use their sets of highly professional skills. We are getting out of the way so we can now focus on research and developing better educational programming and give continual improvement to the Health House Builder Guidelines.”

### A Health House<sup>®</sup> Grows in Brooklyn

GreenStreet Construction is building the first American Lung Association Health House project in the New York City metro area. Located in a neighborhood of classic brownstone buildings in Brooklyn, the project is being led by Robert Politzer, a former New York City schoolteacher who became an environmental engineer and later a builder and developer.

GreenStreet is a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified firm and Politzer is chair of the New York City Sustainable Business Task Force.

The building will house two three-bedroom town homes and feature leading edge green building technologies.



The home was recently featured in Natural Home Magazine. <http://naturalhomemagazine.com/press/pr20070205.html>

## Tidbits

### Chemical in Many Air Fresheners May Reduce Lung Function

#### National Institute of Health press release

[www.healthhouse.org/new/ChemicalsInAirFresheners.asp](http://www.healthhouse.org/new/ChemicalsInAirFresheners.asp)

### Quick Survey on Mold

What is the best relative humidity level range to maintain in your home?

20-35%

35-50%

50-65%

Answer: It is best to keep relative humidity below 50% to prevent mold growth in your home and above 35% for your family's comfort. Purchase a digital humidity gauge, available at most hardware or home improvement stores, to monitor levels. Tips on dehumidifying [www.healthhouse.org/tipsheets](http://www.healthhouse.org/tipsheets)



To place an order or read technical data on co-monitors and alarms go to our on-line store at [www.healthhouse.org](http://www.healthhouse.org)

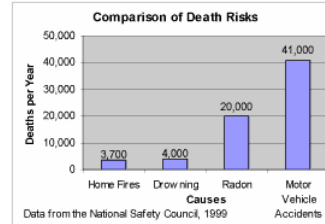
## Radon Facts

### Is Radon Prevalent in Your Area?

No matter where you live, radon can be present in your home. The American Lung Association recommends that everyone test their home, regardless of where it is located. However, some areas have been found more likely to have higher levels of radon than others. EPA ranks the likelihood that homes will have elevated levels of radon into zones. Discover the radon zone in your area according to the Environmental Protection Agency [Map](http://www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap.html). <<http://www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap.html>>

### Protect Your Family from Radon

Winter is the best time of the year to test your home for radon, an invisible, odorless gas that is drawn into homes or buildings through cracks in the foundation or slab and through unsealed

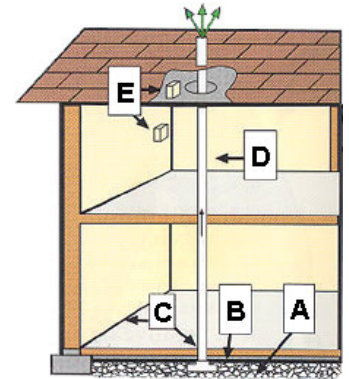


pipes, sumps, drains, walls and other openings such as crawl spaces.

### Building New? Ask about Radon-Resistant Features

If you are building a house, you

can make your home less likely to have dangerous radon levels from the start. American Lung Association Health House guidelines recommend using EPA's guidance to build radon resistant houses, at <http://www.epa.gov/radon/construc.html>



## Carbon Monoxide: Alarms or Monitors?

Typical UL listed carbon monoxide alarms, sold at retail stores, are not appropriate for infants, young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and/or, people with chronic conditions, such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, heart disease or anemia because they only sense CO levels at 30 ppm after 30 days.

A Kidde UL listed CO monitor manual states: "This device is designed to protect individuals from acute effects of carbon monoxide exposure. **It will not fully safeguard individuals with specific medical conditions.** If in doubt, consult a medical practitioner. **Individuals with medical problems may consider using warning devices, which provide audible and visual signals for carbon monoxide concentrations under 30 ppm."**

The American Lung Association Health House program is committed to healthier indoor air quality and, as such, supports the installation of carbon monoxide alarms in all residences. But we believe that protection from life threatening levels of carbon monoxide is a

minimum level of protection people should expect in their own homes.

**In a typical year, 10,000 Americans seek medical attention for accidental CO exposure.** According to Underwriters Laboratories, about 500 people die annually from CO exposure.

CO has several sources, namely gas appliances. Average levels in homes without gas stoves vary from 0.5 to 5 ppm. Levels near properly adjusted gas stoves are often 5 to 15 ppm and those near poorly adjusted stoves may be 30 ppm or higher. Attached garages with idling cars can also be a significant source of CO. All these levels, higher than permissible outdoor air amounts, would be ignored by UL 2034 detectors, which are designed as a life safety, instead of a health pro-

tection device.

At low concentrations, carbon monoxide can cause fatigue in healthy people and chest pain in people with heart disease. At higher concentrations, CO can cause impaired vision and coordination; headaches; dizziness; confusion and nausea. It also can cause flu-like symptoms that clear up after leaving home. CO is fatal at very high concentrations.

The American Lung Association Health House program is offering a low level CO monitor that will display levels as low as 10 ppm and keep a history of levels so that professional responders can quickly and accurately evaluate the severity and potential sources of CO exposure as well as estimate carboxyhemoglobin levels. This early warning will prevent exposure to potentially dangerous levels of CO.

These monitors are sold by industry professionals for \$189 and up and are available at the Health House website for \$140 ([www.healthhouse.org](http://www.healthhouse.org))

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## Over 80 million Media Impressions This year—Health House® In The News

**“The house is slated to be New York City’s first American Lung Association Health House, meeting rigid certification standards that address moisture and humidity control, energy efficiency, air filtration and ventilation, and materials emissions. “There’s tremendous cachet in this, especially for New Yorkers after September 11, when air-quality issues became extremely important...”**

Source: Jan/Feb 2007 issue of *Natural Home* magazine, which has chosen our Brooklyn Health House demonstration project as its 2007 Showcase Home. *Natural*

*Home's* estimated 500,000 readers are educated, eco-savvy homeowners whose values and purchasing patterns mirror the Cultural Creatives, a growing market of 50 million individuals who care deeply about healthy living, natural products, and a sustainable economy.

Link: <http://www.naturalhomemagazine.com/showhouse2007/>

**This program (Health House) is nationally recognized for raising the standards of residential air quality and energy efficiency”**

Source: The Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC), a Seattle-based nonprofit organization that describes itself as “...the Northwest’s leading source of high quality, unbiased pollution prevention information.” The PPRC lists the American Lung Association Health House program in the “Codes and Standards” section of its Green Building Report.

Link: [http://www.pprc.org/pubs/greencon/code\\_std.cfm](http://www.pprc.org/pubs/greencon/code_std.cfm)

## The Dirty Dozen of Indoor Air Quality.



1. Combustion byproducts including carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and PAH
2. Biological Agents such as mold, dust mites, cockroaches and rodents.
3. Particulate matter from fireplaces, kerosene heaters and tobacco smoke
4. Radon build-up
5. ETS
6. Endocrine disrupters such as pesticides and plastics
7. Lead and asbestos
8. Ozone
9. Formaldehyde found in paneling and other pressed woods
10. Organic Chemicals TVOCs
11. Moisture from bulk water intrusion and vapor accumulation
12. Benzene

For more information go to <http://www.healthhouse.org/iaq/HomePollutants.asp>

## Program Integrated Into Local Green Programs

Wide Recognition continues for Health House as a Green Building program. Many green or sustainable home building programs continue to adopt Health House guidelines, providing credit for building according to American Lung Association Health House program guidelines:

**City of Aspen/Pitkin County (CO) Efficient Building Program\***

**Arlington County (VA) Green Home Choice Program**

**City of Portland (OR) G/Rated Program**

**Telluride (CO) Energy Efficient & Environmentally Responsible Building Code**

**Town of Crested Butte (CO)**

\* This program, formerly voluntary, is now **code** for all new residential housing in Aspen/Pitkin County, Colorado.

**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK  
OUR EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS  
WHO UNDERWRITE MANY OF  
OUR EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS  
WITH FINANCIAL  
CONTRIBUTIONS AND  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

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To discuss becoming an Educational Partner, contact Dan Johnston, National Director, Health House at 651-268-7614 or email [dan.johnston@alamn.org](mailto:dan.johnston@alamn.org)

**RAISING THE STANDARD FOR HEALTHIER INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS**

Homeowners, Architects, Engineers, Energy Raters, and Builders who would like to learn more about participating in the Health House® program please visit us online at [www.healthhouse.org](http://www.healthhouse.org)

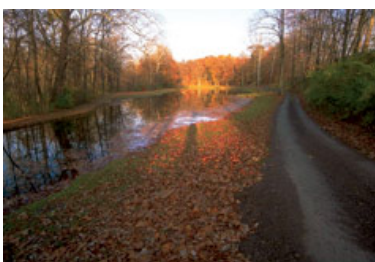
**Piper Springs: Virginia's Health House® Community**



The 116 acre development is situated on gently rolling terrain.



Construction of new homes is underway using the Health House® Guidelines.



Biking and walking trails are included in the development that benefits from some of the best natural views in the country.

Americans spend an estimated 90 percent of their time indoors. The majority of the public does not realize that indoor air pollution is an urgent risk to their health. In 2005 the Surgeon General's Workshop on Healthy Indoor Air highlighted that construction practices are being introduced with little understanding of the indoor environments and the health of the occupants.

Looking to build homes with healthy indoor environments that are durable and energy efficient, Ernest Coburn, MD of the Quest Group and Houburn Construction and Terry Boone of Perfect Air of Abingdon, Virginia looked to the American Lung Association Health House® program for training and builder guidelines.

The result? The Quest Group is developing and Houburn Construction Company is building Piper Spring community in Abingdon, Virginia, with 204 homes to be commissioned under the Health House® program.

The development will include walking trails, biking trails, a swimming pool, picnic areas and a clubhouse.



According to the developers: "A Health House home gives you the satisfaction of knowing that your new home has a healthy, safe, durable and energy efficient environment, and was built to the most stringent building standards in the U.S. These homes promote improved living conditions by:

- Using safer building materials, thereby improving air quality and reducing exposure to known toxins
- Using more durable materials and advanced techniques, giving you a better-performing home that requires less maintenance and retains its value over time
- Controlling the moisture levels and ventilation throughout the entire home, ensuring a healthier breathing environment that benefits everyone, especially

those with allergies and asthma

Construction of a Health House home costs 3-5% more than traditional construction techniques. However, building to the Health House Guidelines can actually save you money through a reduction in your utility bills, ranging from 30-40%. Because these homes are built to such strict standards, your home qualifies for energy efficient mortgage programs, which can increase your purchasing power."

Given the new market conditions that exist, with a significant down-turn in home sales and increased cancellations of purchase contracts on new home construction, programs like Health House are experiencing heightened activity as developments such as Piper Spring seek market differentiation by aligning themselves with a major brand name's standards that consumers recognize as trustworthy.

For more information on this project go to [www.piperspring.com](http://www.piperspring.com)