



CONTACT: Stephen B. Etsitty
Executive Director
Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency
Office: (928) 871-7692



For Immediate Release
May 4, 2011

Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency To Receive Prestigious Award

Window Rock, AZ – The Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency Radon Program (NNEPA) will receive the Virgil Masayesva Tribal Air Programs Excellence Award for their achievements in protecting and improving indoor air quality and public health within the Navajo Nation. The award will be presented at the National Tribal Forum on Air Quality Management, in Spokane, Washington, in June 2011.

The Radon Program is under the NNEPA Air & Toxics Department. The primary goals of the program are to inform the public about significant topics related to radon such as how to conduct radon testing, mitigation, and identify health effects of radon. It also provides educational, training opportunities to encourage independent responsibility for action. The program is not a regulatory program, but it provides important information to protect against radon exposures.

“The dedication to raising awareness and training others to address Indoor Air Quality is vital to fulfilling our mission to protect human health and the environment. We invite your questions, requests, and comments regarding testing, and mitigation, so that everyone can do more to protect themselves against radon exposures,” said Stephen B. Etsitty, Executive Director, NNEPA.

The Virgil Masayesva Tribal Air Programs Excellence Award was established by the Northern Arizona University, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP), Tribal Air Monitoring Support Center, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Radiation and Indoor Environments National Laboratory. It is named in honor of the late Virgil Masayesva, co-founder and former director of ITEP, and a Hopi Tribal member. He was instrumental in the development of ITEP’s air quality programs that train environmental professionals in Indian Country, so they can contribute to meaningful and successful environmental management programs.

Since 1996, the Radon Program has provided support to numerous Head Start facilities, senior citizen centers, and school districts within the Navajo Nation, and trained school employees to properly test for radon, encouraging independent responsibility for testing and addressing IAQ issues. In February 2011, the Program received national recognition during the February National Radon Action Month, and was

also featured on “*Radon Leaders Saving Lives.*” Since 2009, under the auspices of the NNEPA’s Contaminated Structures Project (CSP), and in conjunction with the NNEPA Superfund Program and other NNEPA staff, the Radon Program has been instrumental as community liaisons, disseminating information, performing assessments and field screenings near high-risk abandoned uranium mines.

For additional information, please contact: Vivian Craig, Environmental Specialist, NNEPA Radon Program at 928-871-7863; or Eugenia Quintana, Environmental Department Manager, NNEPA Air & Toxics Department at 928-871-7800.

###