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Idis & Sandra Bates Story
-In memory of Sandra Bates-
By Radon Professional:
James Fraley

Radon Certifications:

NRPP Radon Measurement ID: RT-108477

NRPP Radon Mitigation ID: RMT-108478

Date: 04/12/2017



The Request

On November 15, 2016 Elite received a request via the company website from Idis Bates. His wife Sandra was diagnosed with lung cancer in December 2014. The doctor recommended they have the home tested for radon. The radon test showed the average radon level was 28 and peaked at 42.

The History

Idis hired three mitigation companies and was turned down by two others before hiring Elite. The purpose of this article is not to bash other companies. In fact, Elite has a lot of respect for 2 of the companies that worked on the home. There are two sides to every story, only the facts are reported here, not opinions. Note that the home owner purchased 3 radon meters of his own and had extensive records of radon levels.

- 1/22/2015 Athens Radon installed a radon system (dropped radon to 4.9 pCi)
- 1/26/2015 Athens Radon added a port to the system (dropped radon to 1.9)
 - Note: Radon level increased above 4.0 when it rained.
- 11/03/2015 SWAT removed system and installed their own
- 12/10/2015 Idis followed SWAT recommendation and had sump pump installed
- 1/12/2016 SWAT added holes to sump pump basin voiding warranty on work.
 - Radon level fluctuated from ~2.5-22 pCi
- 10/18/2016 Georgia Radon Solutions removed system and installed their own.
- 11/11/2016 Georgia Radon Solutions refunded money and left system installed.
- 11/15/2016 Elite received email request.

Elite's Approach to the Problem

Owner of Elite has a master's degree in Engineering and approaches problems like this from a scientific stand point. After learning of the frustrations the home owner had been through, Elite offered to conduct some diagnostic work free of charge. Upon arrival, Elite noticed the areas where Athens Radon and Georgia Radon Solutions had conducted Pressure Field Extension (PFE) testing. Elite repeated these tests to verify that proper PFE was achieved. Next, Elite took photos of the interior and exterior of the home. Elite then left a radon meter with a list of actions for the home owner.

Recommendations

After reviewing all the data and studying the photos, Elite had the “Ah Ha” moment. Full of confidence, Elite returned to the property to tell the home owner how the problems would all be solved with one more port added to the system. However, the home owner said “No, I have had moisture issues in that area and will not let you drill there.” Not willing to accept defeat, Elite proposed a secondary alternative and recommended an Energy Recovery Ventilation (ERV) system. On December 8th, Elite installed the system and the radon level remained below 2.0 pCi from then on.

Follow up

On February 27th Idis contacted Elite. He was going to sell his home and turned off the Sub-Slab Depressurization (SSD) system and the levels rose above 4.0 pCi. He felt that it would be difficult to sell the home if it took 2 systems to reduce the radon. Elite informed him that the ERV was designed to work with the SSD. However, all ERVs that are installed by Elite are variable speed. Elite instructed Idis to switch the system from low to medium and his problem was solved.

The Struggle

Throughout this process, Idis reached out to political figures, wrote emails to WSB TV, and others trying to raise radon awareness and tell their story. Sandra passed away on February 12, 2017 and Idis felt guilty for his wife’s cancer. You see, they built their dream retirement home in 1991. They spared no expense as they did the EFIS siding, steel studs and beams, high energy windows, and geothermal heating and air. Neither of them had any knowledge of radon at the time. Idis beat himself up for not knowing. James prayed with him and gave them information for a prayer group in their area. Elite felt compelled to tell their story hoping that it may prevent others from finding themselves in the same situation. Radon reduction in new construction (RRNC) is not expensive. Nor is radon testing. Please share their story with anyone you know building or buying a home. Elite visits many homes to provide radon assistance and often runs into folks that think radon is a myth or hoax. Those folks never met anyone like Idis and Sandra. Radon is real.

What’s your radon level?