

Essential Pittsburgh: The Rising Amount of Radon in Pennsylvania Air

By ESSENTIAL PITTSBURGH · APR 21, 2015

SHARE [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#)



• *Three natural gas drilling sites located next to a windmill farm in Bradford County, PA.*

DFBPHOTOS FLICKR

Since 2004, the amount of radon present in Pennsylvania air has steadily increased -- an increase that our guest Dr. Joan Casey notes began the same year that the state's first fracking sites became operational. Dr. Casey recently [published her findings](#) that quantify PA radon levels, and she joins us

to discuss the possible cause of its decade-long spike as well as what PA residents can do to protect themselves from the toxic gas, which is the second leading cause of lung cancer nationwide.

Asked about the importance of checking radon levels in the home -- especially homes near hydraulic fracturing sites -- Casey explains:

"Radon is colorless, it's odorless, but it's also this carcinogenic gas. And so, it is important for people in Pennsylvania to be checking their indoor radon levels because we know that historically Pennsylvania has had a lot of radon, and there are potentially new pathways opening up due to this industry." --

Dr. Joan Casey

Listen

Listening...

49:16

Also in the program, Illah Nourbakhsh and Bea Dias explain how CMU's CREATE Lab has developed an affordable way for families to test the indoor air quality of their homes, Jody Bell describes a lending program for the devices that is being offered by the Squirrel Hill branch of the Carnegie Library, Margaret J. Krauss takes us through the saga of the polio vaccine, and Rebecca Harris breaks down mobile businesses.

Testing Indoor Air Quality (begins at 12:20)

Carnegie Mellon's CREATE Lab has a new, easy way for Pittsburgh residents to identify potentially harmful particles in the air around them. Illah Nourbakhsh directed the creation of an [indoor air quality monitor](#) that allows families to visualize the air they breathe and take their health into their own hands. Bea Dias, Community Outreach Coordinator with CMU's Robotics Institute, explains the device along with Nourbakhsh. Jody Bell, Library Services Manager at Carnegie Library's Squirrel Hill branch, also

joins us to explain their popularity in the community and why there's a wait-list to take one home.

WESA Celebrates Inventing Pittsburgh: The Polio Vaccine (begins at 35:57)

Sixty years ago this month, Pittsburgh scientists developed a vaccine that eradicated polio in the United States. But persistence of the disease worldwide underscores the vaccine's importance. Margaret J. Krauss reports.

Businesses on the Move (begins at 40:00)

In some instances, visits to brick and mortar stores are being replaced by the businesses and services coming to your doorstep. From food trucks to pet grooming to medical supplies, contributor Rebecca Harris takes a look at mobile businesses.

More Essential Pittsburgh segments can be found [here](#).