

One Approach to Adopting Codes for Radon-Resistant New Construction Manhattan, Kansas

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Summary: As a member of the Manhattan City Council and the Kansas State Radon Extension Program, Bruce Snead was in an excellent position to champion the adoption of radon-resistant new construction (RRNC) in Manhattan, Kansas. To pass the code, he collaborated with other council members and reached out to the local building code officials and the builder community to successfully generate support for its adoption.

Code Adoption Process: In Manhattan, as in many areas, the code adoption process is straightforward. Either a building department official or a city council member proposes the new building code (ordinance) to the council. After some discussion and public meetings, the council members vote on whether to adopt the new ordinance.

Educating Key Stakeholders: Before Snead proposed the code to his fellow council members, he arranged to have the head of Manhattan's city council attend the National Environmental Health Association's (NEHA's) radon training in Washington, DC. A local code official spent a year training local builders and others in the community. Additionally, Manhattan received a small grant from NEHA to assist builders interested in using RRNC techniques.

Reasons for Success: Because the RRNC code that Snead proposed had been developed by the International Code Council, it was easier to persuade the building community to accept it. Thanks to the strong education and training efforts in Manhattan, there was virtually no opposition to the code when the council held final hearings and adopted it in 2001.

Looking back on the code adoption process, Snead highlights the importance of engaging local building code officials from the start. "They are the crux in the jurisdiction," he said. Through education and training, the building code officials provide an influential voice in the builder community in support of the code.