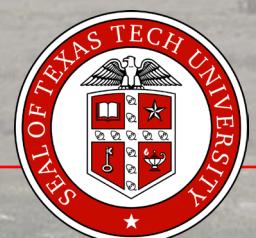


Texas and the TikTok: A failed social media effort to increase radon testing

**Dr. Kay Millerick,
Texas SIRG Coordinator
Associate Professor at Texas Tech University**

**Presentation for AARST/IEA Annual Symposium,
October 28, 2025**



Overview



Radon in Texas



Texas SIRG Initiatives



The TikTok



TikTok Timeline



Community Responses



A Path Forward

Radon Map 1993

$n = \sim 2,600$ indoor tests

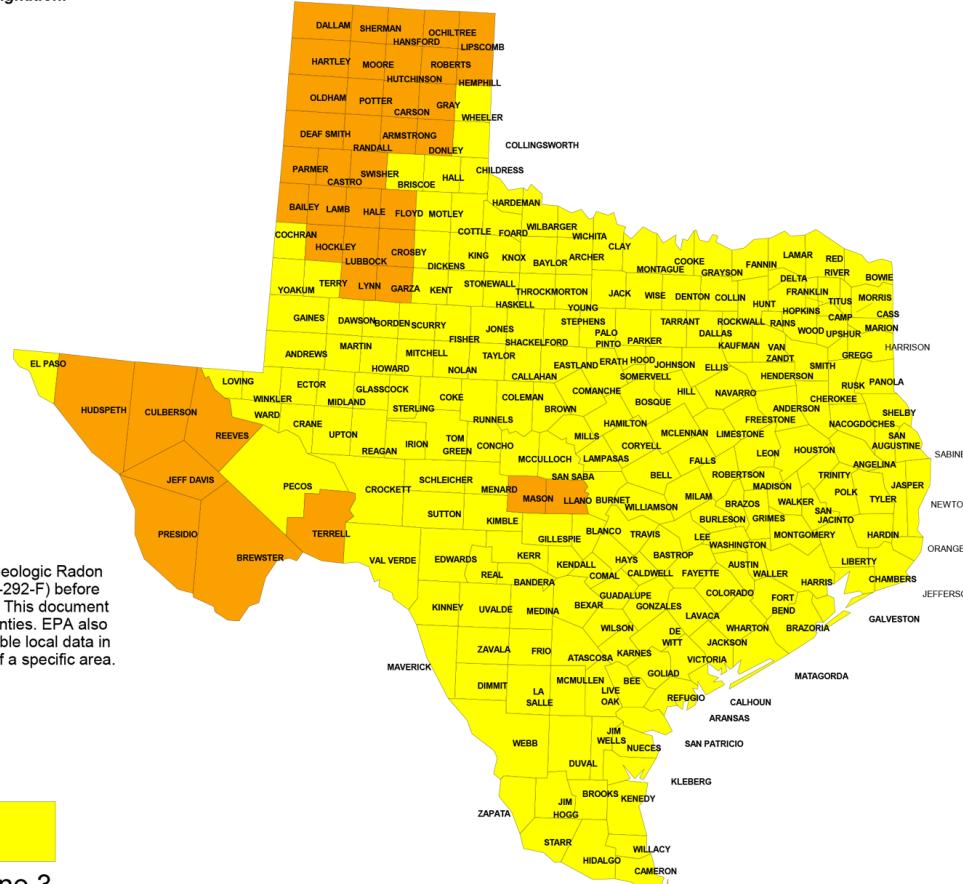
TEXAS - EPA Map of Radon Zones

<http://www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap.html>

The purpose of this map is to assist National, State and local organizations to target their resources and to implement radon-resistant building codes.

This map is not intended to determine if a home in a given zone should be tested for radon. Homes with elevated levels of radon have been found in all three zones.

All homes should be tested, regardless of zone designation.



IMPORTANT: Consult the publication entitled "Preliminary Geologic Radon Potential Assessment of Texas" (USGS Open File Report 93-292-F) before using this map. <http://energy.cr.usgs.gov/radon/grpinfo.html> This document contains information on radon potential variations within counties. EPA also recommends that this map be supplemented with any available local data in order to further understand and predict the radon potential of a specific area.



Zone 1

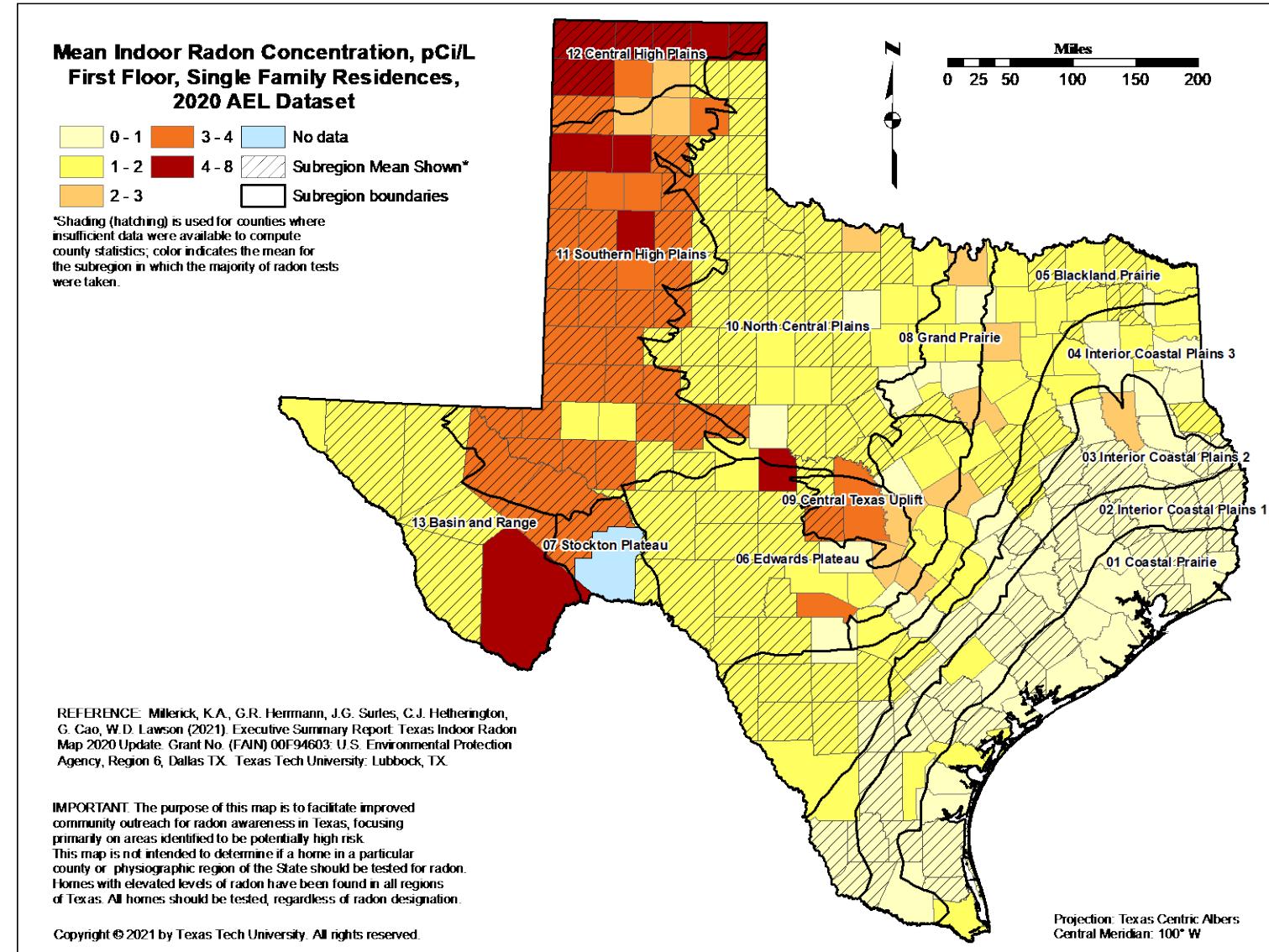


Zone

Zone 3

Radon Map 2021

n = 11,504 (of 27,145)

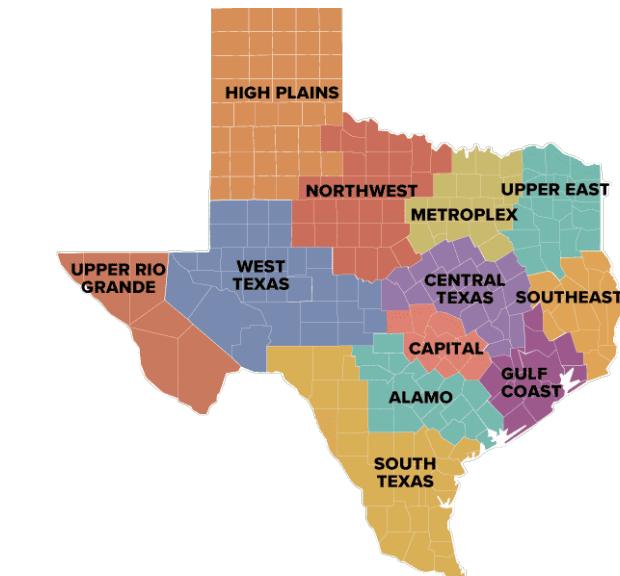
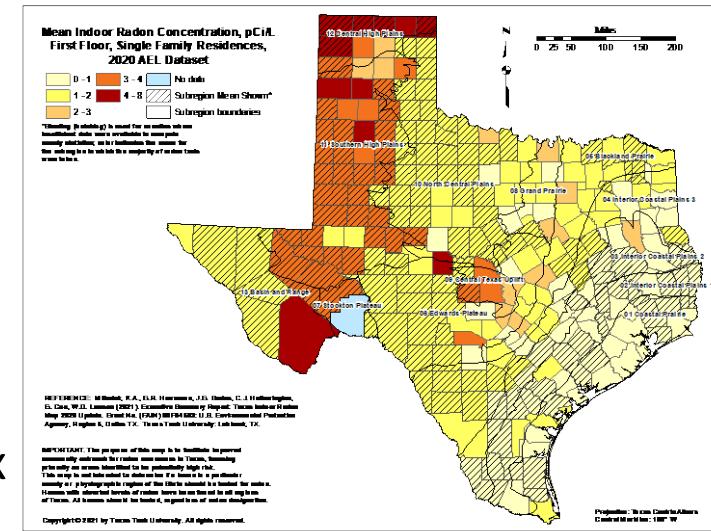
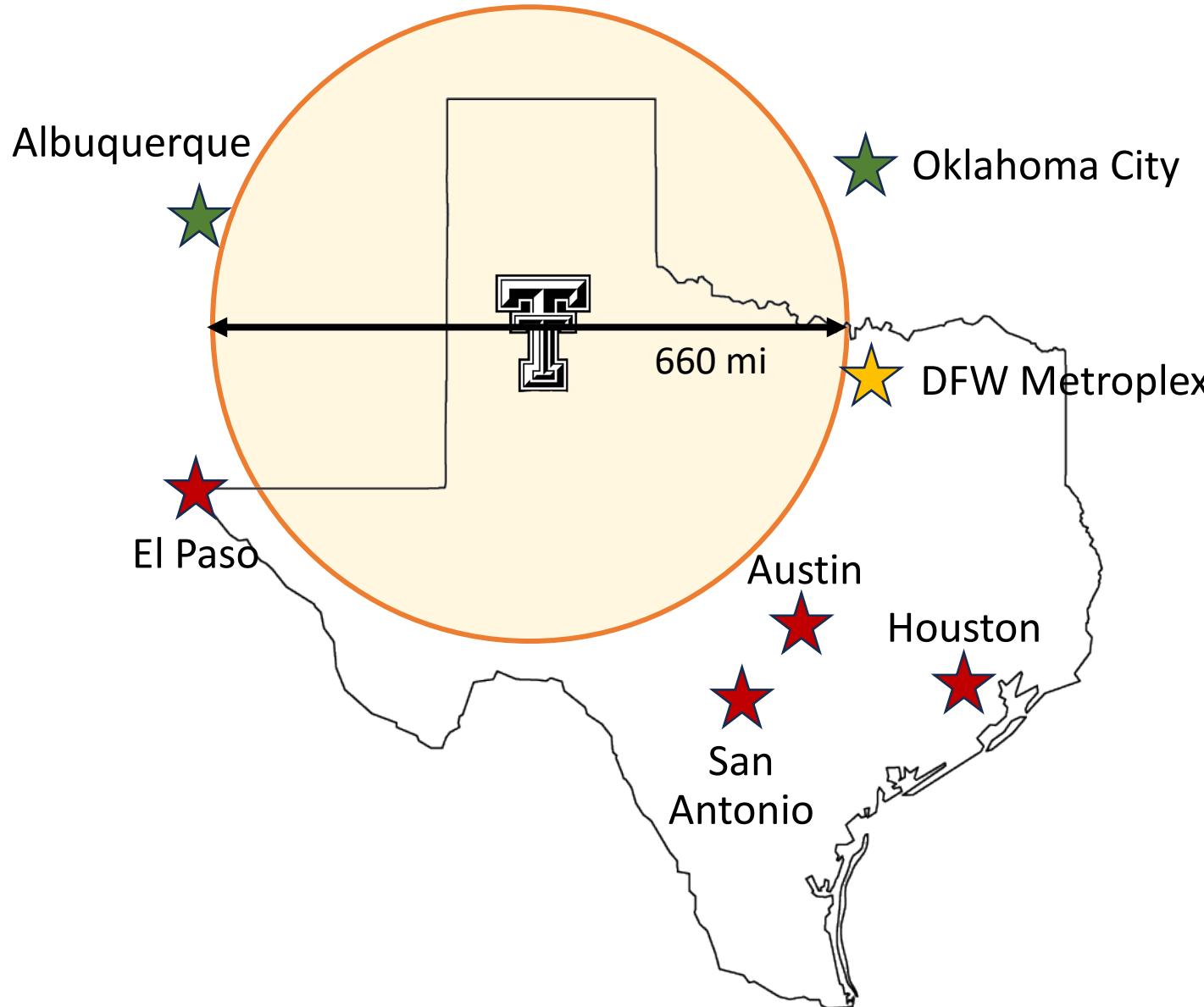


350 miles north/northwest of the
Fort Worth Convention Center....



Images adapted from Wikipedia

Radon (and TTU) outside of population centers



Texas Comptroller's Office

2023-2025 Texas SIRG Program Initiatives



Education

HUD and FEMA

American Lung Association

*Lubbock & Amarillo
Neighborhoods*

Student Assistants



Data Analysis

GIS

*Target Population
Identification*

*Risk-Driven Outreach
ROI Assessment*



Testing

Free Tests via Website

(with short survey)

*Testing Different Populations
Targeted Communities*



Targeted Messaging

Bilingual

*Social Media**

*Museum and Neighborhood
Posters*

Billboards

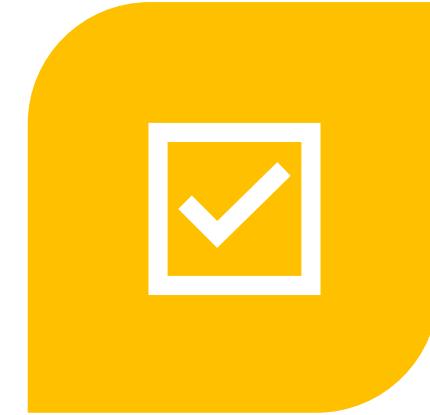
Success Benchmarks



OUTREACH EVENTS IN
(PANHANDLE) COMMUNITIES

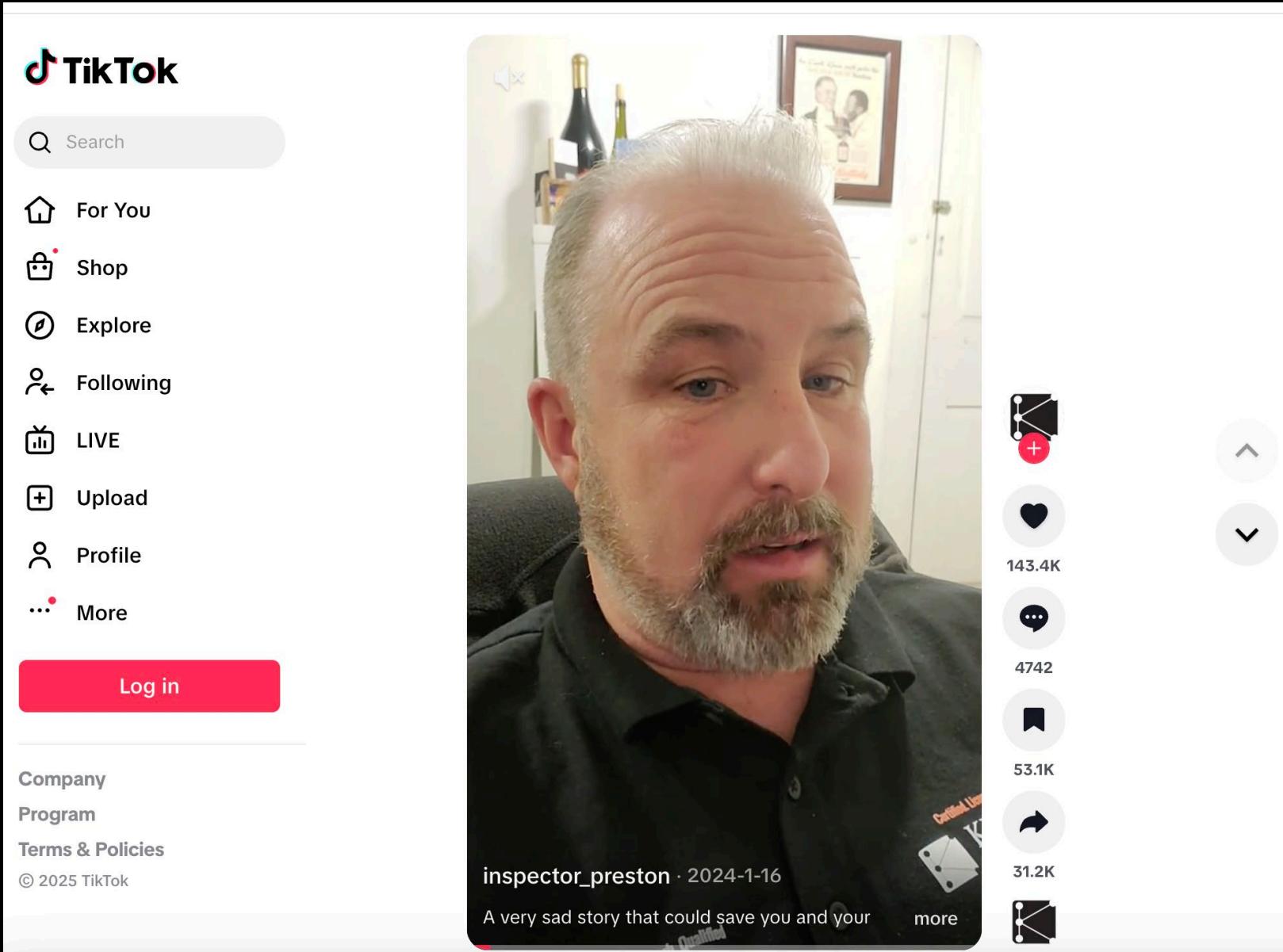


INCREASE IN TESTING KIT
DISTRIBUTION



INCREASE IN TESTING KIT
UTILIZATION

The TikTok

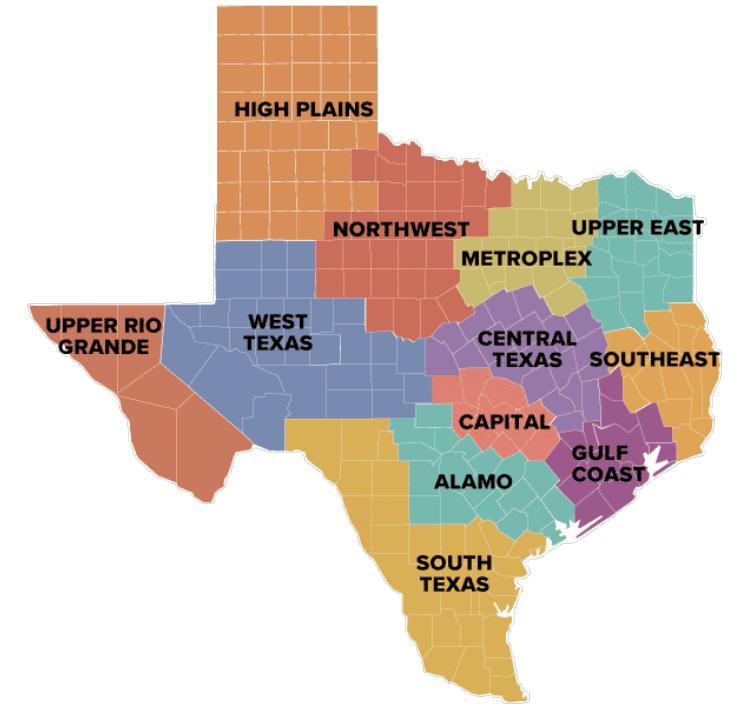


A TikTok Timeline (2024)

- **January 16:** 50 email inquiries are received within 3 hours
- **January 17:** SIRG receives 134 radon test kit requests in 24 hours
- **January 21:** It's a TikTok (and not a bot)!
- **January 22:** Kit distribution begins. Harris County put on hold.
- **February 2:** We are out of kits. Rush order placed with AEL. Harris County removed from free kit list
- **March 1:** All January kit orders filled (except Harris County)
- **March 4:** Email requesting interest sent to all kits requested in February

Texas SIRG Radon Test Requests

*** Excludes 304 test
requests from
Harris County
(Gulf Coast)*



Texas SIRG Radon Test Requests

January and February

- High traffic (website and tests)
- Geographical distribution mirrors distribution of TX population
- No distributions in Harris County and surrounding area

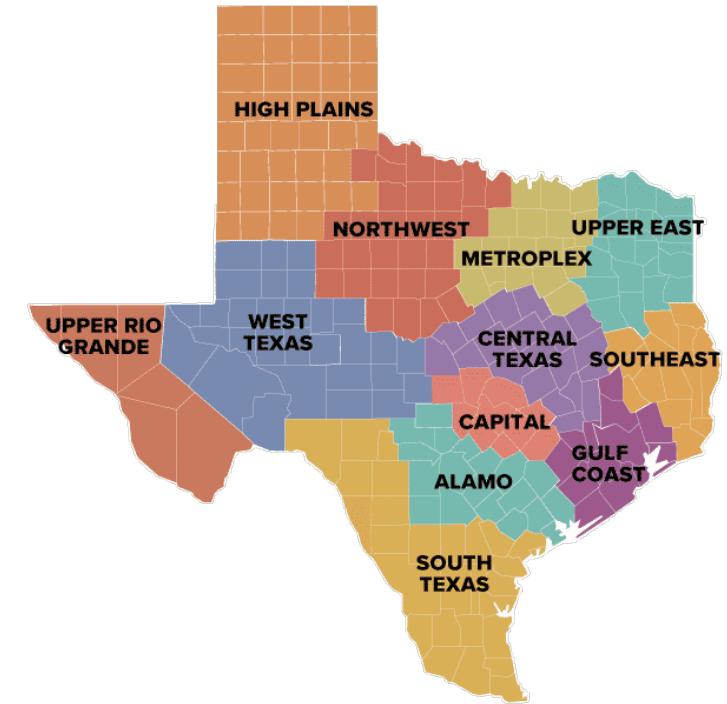
January

- Kit requested = kit distributed

February

- Kit requested = confirmation email
- Kit distributed if return email sent

*** Excludes 304 test requests from Harris County (Gulf Coast)*



Texas SIRG Radon Test Requests

APPROXIMATE RESPONSE RATES

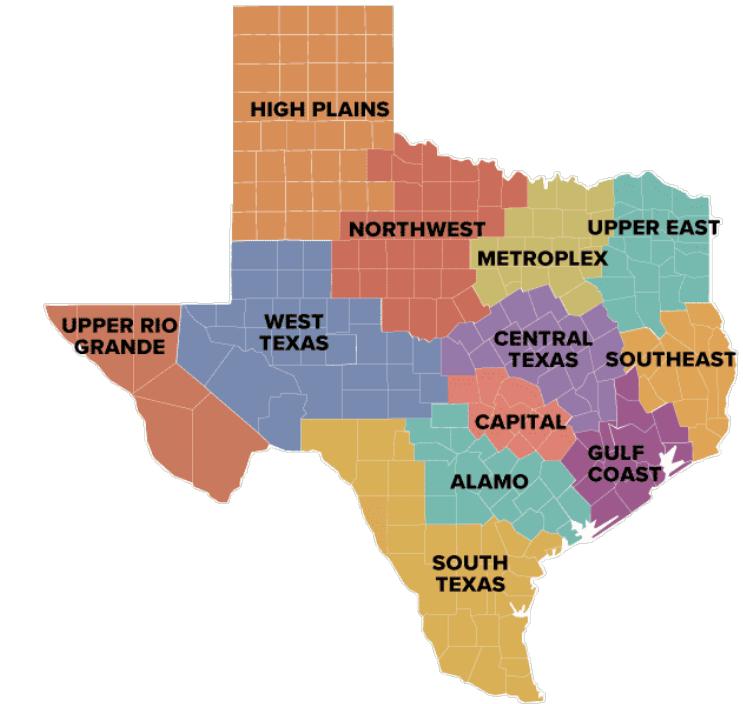
40%

32%

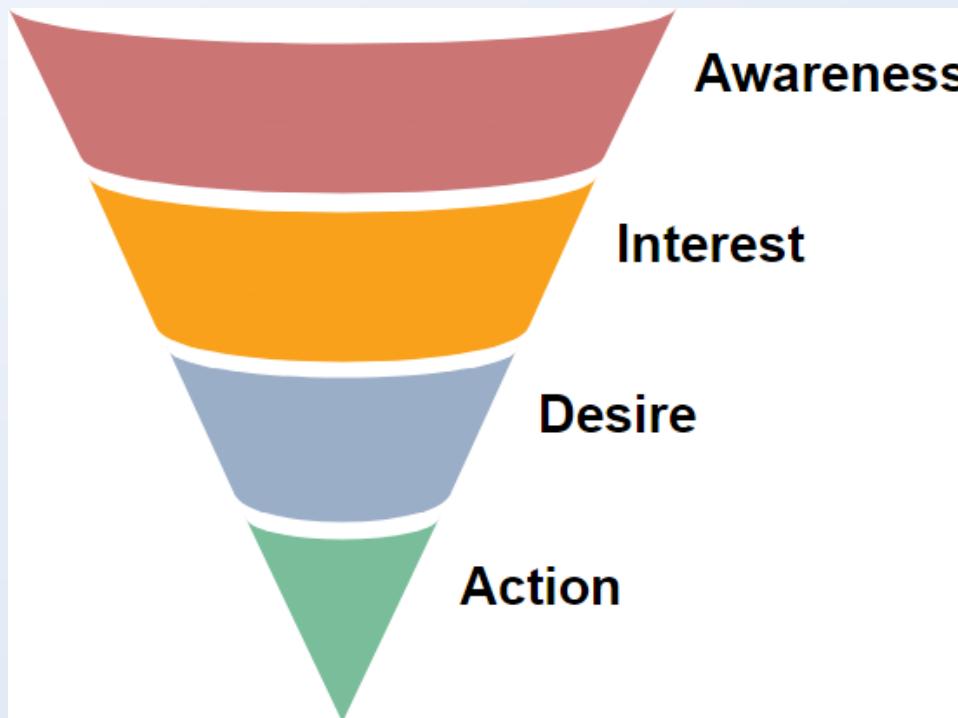
n = 19

8%

*** Excludes 304 test
requests from
Harris County
(Gulf Coast)*



Is Social Media the Answer?



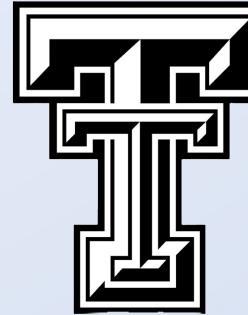
- "Response rates" (email, kit return) similar for both January and February
 -but are lousy.
- TikTok is "an avenue to build communities around civic discussions including political activism, online learning, climate change, and science communication", but does this translate into action?
- Interaction Analysis Model (IAM) describes knowledge as a social construction consisting of (1) shared ideas, (2) explored dissonance, (3) negotiated meanings, (4) knowledge syntheses, and (5) application of the newly constructed knowledge to new contexts, and this is well established for TikTok. But does this translate into action?
- The relationship between TikTok and political activism is well described, but ties to environmental activities are not

Computers & Education,

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2023.104896>

Lessons and Implications for Texas SIRG

- Prior to the TikTok sensation, we were **connecting with fewer people but we were seeing results** and follow-through
- TikTok users either **didn't use or kits or didn't reply to emails.**
 - Flagging interest in online movement?
 - Delays in sending out the kits?
- The TikTok **consumed funds we had earmarked for other outreach efforts**
 - One billboard was canceled
 - A second was delayed (but intended for Radon Awareness Week 2026)
- **Texas SIRG generally plans to focus on fewer, more sustainable relationships with communities, partners, and established media delivery strategies**



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