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# TAMPA TRIBUNE

## LAKELAND PLANS TO SUE OVER 'SICK BUILDING'

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STEVE NEWBORN - OF THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

LAKELAND - The city likely will file suit against a company that helped build an addition to Lakeland City Hall where toxic mold has been found.

A meeting Friday with officials from Brown & Root to see if they would pay for repairs to the 1988 addition to the building was fruitless, so the city will take the company to court, said Roger Haar, assistant city manager. "They felt it wasn't their responsibility," Haar said. The company offered to lend a supervisor to oversee the reconstruction, but no money was offered.

The cost of fixing the problem has reached \$550,000. The money will come from an unappropriated surplus account.

Dozens of employees were evacuated from the wing Sept. 21 after toxic mold was discovered deep in the air conditioning ducts. Since then, walls have been ripped out in the sealed-off third floor and ducts have been removed and sealed.

It was hoped employees would be able to return a month later, but that date has been pushed back to March 15 because structural defects were found that allowed warm, moist air between the walls.

The company that installed the wall supports and drywall agreed to bear the cost of repairing those structures.

Four city employees experienced serious health problems related to "sick building syndrome," and 20 others saw doctors.

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