

News release:

### **Renovation of Thomas G. Abernethy Federal Building, Aberdeen, MS**

The Thomas G. Abernethy Federal Building in downtown Aberdeen, Mississippi continues to battle mold infestation in a building suffering from decades of deferred maintenance by the General Services Administration.

The original 1971 air conditioning and heating equipment are unable to maintain dew point and humidity levels to deter mold growth. The mold threat will require all activities and personnel at the building to be temporarily relocated while repairs and renovations proceed.

Much of the staff and two Judges have reported symptoms consistent with mold exposure such as headaches, dizziness, asthma, respiratory issues, severe allergy symptoms, etc.

The Court has asked GSA to provide temporary quarters to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the staff and the public. Much of the Court staff have already relocated. The remainder of Judges and staff will relocate to temporary quarters in the near future.

Concerns date back prior to 1992 when the Court demanded the General Services Administration take action on visible mold in the secure corridor and was rebuked by GSA. The breakdown of HVAC equipment in the summer of 2016 caused a full mold infestation in the District courtrooms, Library, Jury rooms, and Chambers. The entire HVAC system supplying these areas tests positive for excessive moisture and mold.

GSA has attempted to do spot remedial work, but it has not solved the problem and the Courts seek a comprehensive solution and construction effort be undertaken. In addition to the complete replacement of the mechanical system, the water intrusion issues must be addressed and additional sources and locations of mold must be investigated and removed. The windows are past their life expectancy and are a major source of water intrusion at this time.

Starting immediately, civil trials will be moved to the Bankruptcy Courthouse in Aberdeen, Mississippi and criminal trials will be moved to the U.S. District Courthouse in Oxford, Mississippi.

The Court remains committed to the City of Aberdeen and Monroe County and will return to the courthouse when the repairs and renovations are completed.

For more information please contact:

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