



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 21, 2012

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## **Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives update on remediation plans for Administration Building No. 1**

WINDOW ROCK – The latest report regarding the status of Administration Building No. 1 was delivered to the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee on Wednesday by officials from three different Navajo governmental entities. Plans for remediation of the building were also discussed.

According to officials from Navajo Nation Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Division of General Services Administration, and the Facilities Maintenance Department, if all remediation activities go accordingly, employees may begin moving back into the building as early as December or as late as January.

Administration Building No. 1, which housed several Navajo tribal departments in Window Rock, was closed a year ago due to the discovery of mold contamination and concerns about the building's structural integrity. The closure occurred by order of NNOSHA.

Council Delegate Charles Damon II (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Łichíí') inquired as to how the whole issue began and evolved.

It began when employees began complaining about changes in health conditions over a year ago, said NNOSHA director Patrick Sandoval.

Although the Window Rock District Court on Sept. 6 vacated all orders regarding the closure, Division of General Services director Virgil Brown stated that NNOSHA's closure order is still in effect.

Currently, plans for the building's remediation will soon be developed by two incident management teams, Brown said.

The plans will identify which individuals and entities will have clearance to enter the building, which will have authority over certain activities, and which will perform remediation work.

Building clearances allow permitted individuals to retrieve priority documents from the building.

The retrieval of financial documents is important in order for financial audits to be completed.

Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill ) said Diné College, Navajo Technical College, and the Navajo Nation Scholarship all have requirements to provide a federal report by the end of December, and part of those reports includes an audit of the nation.

"I want to convey that there is a need to speed up the timeline for remediation," said Delegate Witherspoon, who wants to ensure that the aforementioned education entities will be able to meet their report deadlines with all the necessary information attached.

According to Marcus Tulley, Facilities Maintenance manager, two potential contractors have been selected to perform remediation work on the building.

Bids are scheduled to be finalized next week. After review, one contractor will be selected, and remediation activities will begin immediately.

The committee was advised that not all parts of the building are affected by mold contamination. Some areas of the building can be remediated immediately, while other areas may be more tedious.

Removal of all priority-designated documents and records will take approximately three weeks.

This estimated time period accounts for the fact that digital scanning of each document – sheet by sheet – will slow down the retrieval process.

Once priority documents have been removed and stored, remediation workers will remove all equipment and all contaminated materials such as carpets, ceiling tiles, and drywall.

Renovation work and repairs will follow. No additions will be made to the building.

At this time, remediation costs for the building are not known.

“We understand that we have displaced a lot of employees,” said NNOSHA director Patrick Sandoval, who assured the committee that his staff is working to get the matter resolved in a timely manner.

As preparation for remediation work continues, the building will remain closed.

The committee has stated that they would like to see remediation work completed in a timely manner so as displaced employees will not have to spend another winter in their alternate locations.

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