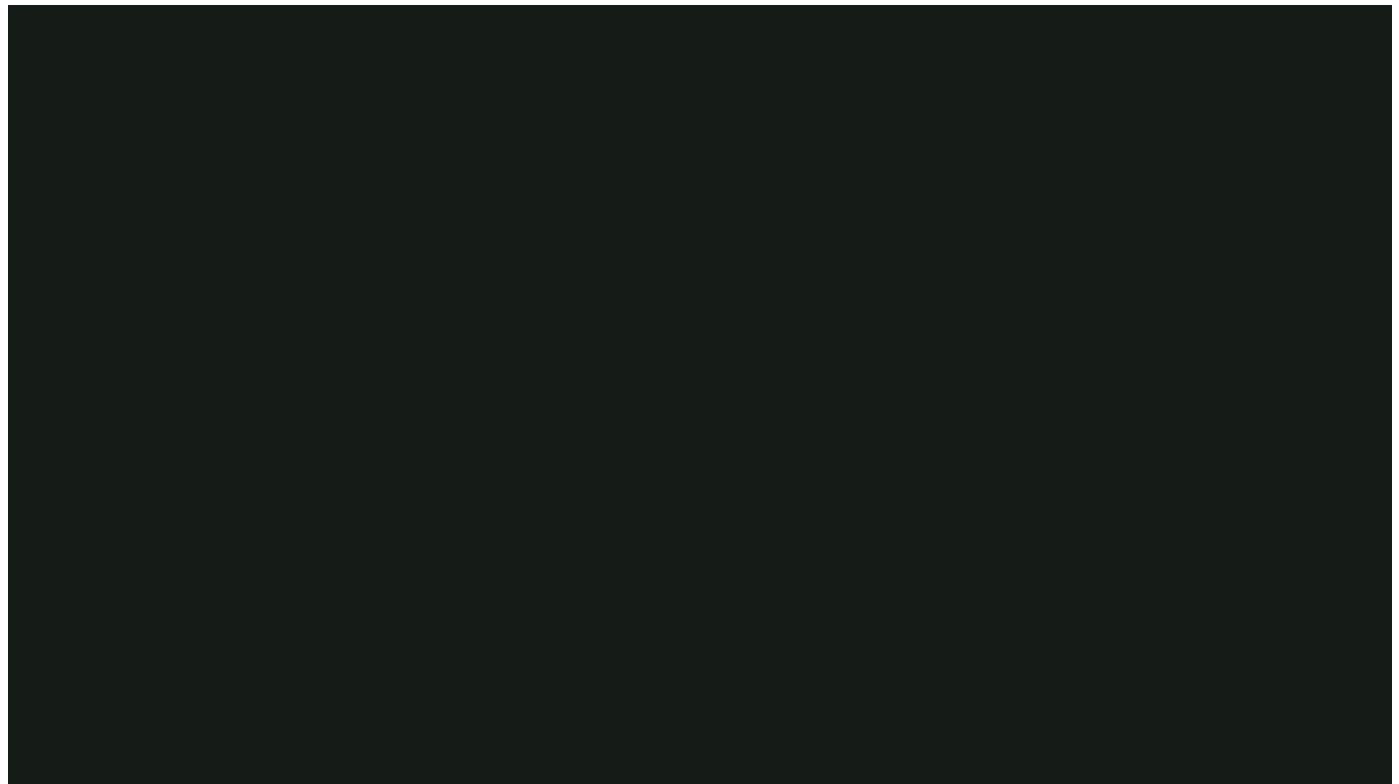


Mold delays opening of new Broward County courthouse

BY BRANDON BEYER

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FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. (WSVN) - The opening of the new Broward County courthouse is being delayed by a problem that plagued the old courthouse: mold.

Four years ago, Broward County broke ground on the \$200 million Broward County Judicial Complex. The building's opening is now about a year late, it's because of mold.

The old Broward County courthouse has dealt with numerous problems: flooding, asbestos, and black mold, which 7News chronicled in 2003.

Clerk of Courts Howard Forman said the county needs to fix the problem quickly.

“It is ironic,” Forman said. “But they have to move very quickly and solve the problem.”

Neva Rainford-Smith claims the mold in the old building made her sick. She has worked there for 16 years.

“Over the years it has just gradually increased,” Rainford-Smith said. “Now I’m sick almost every week. I’m either in the emergency room or in the hospital, using my sick days.”

Assistant County Administrator Alphonso Jefferson told 7News in an email, “During construction of a project of this magnitude, there are bound to be issues and it is important that they are addressed appropriately. The county and the contractor are both committed to tenants occupying the building expeditiously.”

Broward County Mayor Marty Kiar said that, though he’s dissappointed, now is not the time to point fingers.

“The most important thing is that the county and the developer fixes the problem,” Kiar said. “I don’t know whose fault it is. That will all be decided later on after the whole thing is done. But right now folks need to put blame aside and just work to get it done so that the courthouse can finally be put to use.”

It is not known when employees will be moved into the new courthouse.

“I want a healthy environment for everybody who uses the courthouse- the old one and the new one,” Forman said.

County officials said furniture from the old building should be moved to the new one sometime in November.

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