

Lake judge orders deadline in courthouse flooding fix

Commissioners have until Friday to come up with plan

Video online



Tour the damage to the Lake County Courthouse West Annex.

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David S. Glasier
Dglasier@News-Herald.com
Twitter: @hhglasier

Lake County Probate Court Judge Ted Klammer decided he's had enough of what he regards as the soggy status quo of the county Courthouse West Annex. Klammer issued a court order Friday that gives the board of Lake County commissioners until this upcoming Friday to present plans for the repair of drainage problems that led to flooding various rooms in the annex.

The order further specifies that by no later than Dec. 28, the commissioners will permit Klammer to "select the appropriate plan" for repairs.

Although he said there have been "at least 12 leaking incidents" since the annex opened in 2003 as home of the Probate Court and Clerk of Courts, Klammer points to a Nov. 3 flooding incident as the one that forced his hand.

"I don't claim to be an engineer, but I'm going to do whatever it takes to prevent water from coming in here," Klammer said Monday during an interview in his office.

"I'm faced with a problem I shouldn't have to face," he added. "Individuals

who work in this building or have business here are getting ill. I owe it to them."

On Monday, Klammer issued another court order, this one appointing attorney Richard T. Spatz Jr. to represent the Probate Court in dealings with the commissioners.

County Commissioner Raymond E. Sines said he and fellow commissioners Daniel P. Troy and Robert E. Aufuldish "have been doing everything possible" to deal with drainage problems in sanitary sewers behind the annex that led to the flooding.

"Judge Klammer put us in an awkward position with this filing," he said.

Sines further explained that because there are two county entities involved in this dispute, the commissioners cannot be represented by county Prosecutor Charles E. Coulson.

Instead, the commissioners will have

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no reason for (Klammer) to go the way he did, but he went, anyway," Sines said.

Late Monday afternoon, a crew hired by commissioners to engage the services of an independent counsel was at work on the malfunctioning drains.

"In my opinion, there was

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