



Investigates: Rat infestation, other health hazards plague Seminole County government offices

By Karla Ray, February 13, 2017

SANFORD, Fla. - The Seminole County Tax Collector claims his Sanford office is full of rats and other health hazards.

It comes after 9 Investigates exposed a plan to move some offices out of the County Services building in Sanford, where Joel Greenberg and his staff use the space for free. He's planning to expand into a new, leased space in Lake Mary, costing taxpayers \$110-thousand per year.

Investigative Reporter Karla Ray tried to ask why the offices are still open to customers, if conditions are so bad.

"There are 10 rat traps placed around this building, as well there is a rat issue here," public relations representative Alan Byrd with Byrd Communications said.

We requested to see the problems following a Tweet from Joel Greenberg, stating, "The 'free' office space is infested with rats, asbestos and much like your reporting, a total health hazard." It comes after we exposed the plan to use office space inside the 5/3 Bank building in Lake Mary at a cost of \$110-thousand per year.

"If there are so many health hazards, as Joel Greenberg has said himself, why keep it open to customers, why keep staff here?" Karla Ray asked.

"It's free office space, we've been here for a few weeks, we're working to get through as much as we can," Byrd said. Byrd is not an actual Tax Collector employee, and he claims he's representing Greenberg for free.

There is asbestos, but it's undisturbed underneath carpet in the office.

Work orders do show complaints about smells from dead rats on January 11, 23, and 31 of this year. We also spotted pest droppings on a storage tub inside a supply closet.

"He was describing the free space. The reason we are moving to Lake Mary is to expand our offices, and the customer service issues with the parking lot," Byrd said.

Greenberg's Chief Administrator, Mike McLean, told Eyewitness News that the parking lot at the current Lake Mary office fills up quickly, and the reason for adding a second office in Lake Mary is to alleviate those issues.

Joel Greenberg provided this statement:

"I have been in office for one month. This situation has been in existence for years. In fact, the rest of the building has already had the asbestos removed. My predecessor chose not to do it when the rest of the building was done. We are working on fixing the situation, but it is not a quick, easy or inexpensive process. Fixing this includes closing the entire operation at Sanford for a period of time, which is impossible because there is no place to move those functions presently. But, again, we are working on fixing the issue as soon as possible."