

Building overhaul may cost millions

State workers endured no air conditioning, odd smells last summer

Kate Nash | The New Mexican

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Fixes could be coming to the Manuel Lujan Sr. Building, where state employees this summer suffered through stinky odors and no air conditioning.

At least one more summer could go by, however, before the improvements are under way — if they win legislative approval.

The state has hired AI Engineering and Conron and Woods to assess the building's condition and recommend changes, according to an e-mail sent to employees in the Taxation and Revenue Department this week. That department is the main tenant of the building on St. Francis Drive at Alta Vista Street.

The 76,262-square-foot building is 35 years old, and state officials say it's due for a major overhaul.

Although it won't be until next June that a cost and schedule estimate will be available, the entire renovation — which aims to redo the heating, cooling and plumbing systems in the building — could cost \$7 million to \$10 million, Tax and Revenue Department officials have said.

The project could take several years to finish, the e-mail from deputy Taxation and Revenue Department Secretary Marilyn Hill said.

The process could mean disruptions for employees, who likely will be moved to other offices during renovations.

The firms will spend 26 weeks gathering data and then preparing drawings for improvements, including more energy-efficient use of the space, the e-mail said.

Officials from the General Services and Taxation and Revenue departments will request money for the project once a needs assessment and preliminary budget are done.

Already, a study by the General Services Department found problems, including cracks in sewer lines in the walls. Workers this summer complained about terrible stench in the building, along with unbearably hot conditions. Employees on at least two occasions were sent home from work because of the heat and odors.

About 325 people work in the building, where state revenue is processed.

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