

Days Inn closed by health board order

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Days Inn, 1134 N. Main St., will remain closed after the Logan County Board of Health confirmed at a special meeting Wednesday afternoon that the motel is a public health nuisance.

Some of the public health issues found at recent inspections of the 65-bed facility included problems with plumbing, mold, roof leaks and an insect infestation. Consequently, Logan County Health Commissioner Dr. Boyd Hoddinott asked owners Raxon General Trading USA to voluntarily close the facility April 8, and they complied with the request.

Board members determined that the facility must pass inspections both by the LCHD and the State Fire Marshal's Office before it can reopen, and no timeline was set for the inspections to be completed.

The health district's investigation into this nuisance was prompted by a complaint received Feb. 23 from out-of-town guests. The State Fire Marshal's Office —the agency responsible for licensing motels and hotels in Ohio — received a complaint the same day that cited "horrific unsanitary conditions" at the Bellefontaine motel.

Initial building inspections were performed separately by the LCHD and the State Fire Marshal's Office, and then a joint inspection was conducted April 7. Inspectors for the joint inspection found a total of 65 nuisance, plumbing or fire code violations, which occurred in nearly all of the rooms, according to Fire Marshal Dustin Buell's documentations.

Nuisance violations included mold or mildew on the ceilings, walls, carpet and furniture in a number of rooms; dead insects on the floor; stained mattresses; and a dirty refrigerator. Fire code issues cited included smoke detectors inoperable because of missing batteries, broken glass in a fire extinguisher cabinet and an extension cord used for permanent wiring in the hot water room. Also, no hot water was available on the second floor and several rooms had issues with water spots on the ceiling, resulting from a roof leak.

LCHD Plumbing Inspector John Clary said in about 18 of the rooms, the toilets either were not flushing correctly or were not working at all, and some toilets were not bolted to the floor.

General Hotel Manager Peter Garg reported at the meeting that the company has been working to fix the violations. To deal with the mold issue, he said a professional consultation was conducted with Fournier Robson Associates LLC, and equipment and tools, including a fogging machine, were rented. Also, according to paperwork presented to the board, "the affected walls (with mold/mildew) have been totally replaced with new walls."

Mr. Garg also noted that all smoke detectors in the rooms are working, and sanitary and cleanliness issues and plumbing problems "have been taken care of." He asked that the business be able to open in 10 days, a request that was denied by the health board.

"Thirty of the 65 objections have been corrected," Mr. Garg said. "We have a big investment in this property. We cannot afford to shut down."

LCHD environmental health employees Lisa Engle, Tim Smith and Mr. Clary, all of whom inspected the site, said considering the number of violations at the property, it



Mold issues were prevalent in this room and in a number of others at Days Inn, 1134 N. Main St., at a joint inspection April 7 by the Logan County Health District and the State Fire Marshal's Office.

LOGAN COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT PHOTO

would be unlikely that they could be resolved in 10 days.

Several local leaders voiced their concerns at the meeting, stating they have been aware of issues at the motel for some time.

“We’ve had people at our breakfast meetings in from out of town who have stayed at Days Inn,” said Sandy Musser, owner of the Whitmore House. “They came in with wet hair. They had no hot water and their rooms were freezing. To say that they were furious is putting it lightly.”

“The facility is a direct reflection not only on the owners, but on the city of Bellefontaine and the community,” said Ed Wallace, president of the Logan County Area Chamber of Commerce. “I’m passionate when I say to close the facility.”

Craig Kauffman, environmental health director, said the health district has not received any complaints about the motel since the new owners took over several years ago. However, the building has had structural issues in the past, and “a large portion of the building was demolished years ago, including the restaurant and pool area,” he said.

Annual inspections of the facility fall under the state fire marshal’s jurisdiction because they are the licensing agent.

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