

Date: October 3, 2024

To the Residents of Mercer,

As your Mayor, I want to address the recent decision to temporarily close the Mercer Community Center. This decision was based on the findings of a microbial sampling and assessment report conducted by Badlands Environmental Consultants, Inc., which identified significant mold and fungal issues within the building. These issues present a health risk, as exposure to certain molds can lead to allergies, respiratory problems, and other health concerns.

We received the results of this assessment just two days ago, and while we understand the inconvenience this closure presents, your health and safety are our top priorities. The report highlighted elevated levels of *Aspergillus*/*Penicillium* species in the air and active fungal growth on building surfaces, along with a potential bacterial threat from observed rodent activity.

Addressing these issues is not just about mitigating health risks; it is also about protecting the City from potential liability. If we were to ignore these findings and allow the Community Center to remain open, we could face significant legal and financial repercussions should anyone suffer health consequences from exposure to the identified hazards.

The source of the moisture causing these mold problems has been identified as a leaky roof, and we have received an estimate of over \$100,000 for repairs. Given our small population of approximately 125 residents, this represents a significant financial challenge for our community.

We are actively seeking estimates for remediation of the mold issue and exploring all available options to address these concerns responsibly. This includes assessing funding options and potential assistance programs to help cover remediation and repair costs.

We understand the importance of the Community Center as a hub for events and activities in Mercer, and we are committed to working diligently to resolve these issues as quickly and efficiently as possible. We appreciate your understanding and patience during this time.

A copy of the findings of a microbial sampling and assessment report is available on the City of Mercer's website. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or to discuss how we can work together to overcome these challenges.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Lori Stute
City of Mercer