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Indoor Environmental helps property owners in the treatment of mold and moisture problems

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Inspecting and treating homes and businesses for mold problems is a long, long way from selling liquor, and even somewhat distant from selling mortgages, but that is the path that led Bob Bowen of Marshfield to launch his business, Indoor Environmental, a company providing mold inspection and remediation, as well as treatment for moisture problems, for residences and businesses throughout the South Shore and beyond.

The company is owned by the Bowen brothers, Bob of Marshfield and brother Jim of Pembroke. The Randolph natives each bring unique skills to the new venture. Jim Bowen is a 25 year veteran of the construction industry, a licensed contractor who is experienced in both construction and deconstruction under his company name, J.P. Bowen Construction of Pembroke. Bob Bowen, who is the operations manager for the company, brings a strong business background to the venture. His resume includes having owned and operated a distribution/manufacturing company in the food industry and serving a seven-station region, as well as work in the mortgage and lending industries, in both the wholesale and retail sectors. When they opened their doors in 2010, they did so following a period of rainy weather. Some may say that rain can dampen the spirits, but for homeowners and business owners, the potential problems are far greater than a mood swing.

Rain is one of the precursors to mold, and that is where Indoor Environmental has been making a difference. The company provides inspections and testing for mold and moisture, as well as remediation of the problem. Indoor Environmental holds Certified Mold Inspection (CMI) and Certified Mold Remediation Contractor (CMRC) designation, and serves a client base that includes residential home, apartment and business owners, across the South Shore and Cape Cod.

Bob Bowen's experience in the field of lending, where he came in contact directly with the real estate market, is in part what led him in the new direction. He saw firsthand the problems that mold caused in the sale and purchase of homes and saw an opportunity to make a difference.

In establishing Indoor Environmental, the principals have developed an environmentally-friendly business model, being one of the few in the industry that can claim the "green" mantra. In building their business, they have obtained exclusive regional rights to use a natural, organic product for the treatment of mold. Made from plant enzymes, the Indoor Environmental treatment differs from many traditional mold treatments which require chemicals. The Indoor Environmental product is safe for humans and animals; at the conclusion of an application, all that is left is a light scent and a healthy building. Application and cleanup are both significantly simpler than traditional treatments and the product's ability to penetrate areas that have been impacted by mold reduces the likelihood of needing to tear down and rebuild a wall, ceiling or affected area.

Bob Bowen says, "Our product eliminates mold - it doesn't simply render it dormant." The product is

applied by a handheld fogger and the residence or building is suitable for occupation in only 24 hours as opposed to longer period of time with typical methods. The organic application is also particularly suited for all materials including sheetrock, and wallpaper, both of which are "mold-friendly." The organic treatment greatly reduces and in most cases eliminates the need to remove and re-construct material. "The organic application in effect causes the mold to decompose into an amino acid which has no allergen properties," Bowen said.

The company offers:

- * Certified mold inspections on residential, commercial or municipal properties;
- * Mold inspection consulting and remediation;
- * Air treatment with an air scrubber;
- * Guarantee on all work and inspections; and
- * Construction repair if and as needed.

What to watch for

Mold growth can occur quickly, sometimes as soon as 24-48 hours after an incident, and is caused by any condition that results in excess moisture. The moisture sources can be from inside, or outside. Flooded basements, high humidity or a broken water pipe are apparent and easily detected examples, yet others cannot be seen because they originate from behind walls or under appliances. Musty odors are one indication of mold; others include visible signs of mold and mildew. Mold grows and develops spores which are released into the air. These spores can then travel to different rooms or floors, and when they land on a surface mold can grow. Physical symptoms such as sneezing, cough, runny nose, nasal congestion, itchy watery and red eyes, skin rashes or hives, sinus headaches, reduced lung capacity and difficulty breathing can be early signs of mold.

This past fall, the company officially expanded its services into the commercial arena, and has been working with schools where mold is a great threat on a number of levels. The need for this service became apparent with the growing number of toxic mold cases found in commercial buildings and the increased inability for building owners to find mold insurance. Bowen believes that their company can be of great assistance to property managers of industrial, manufacturing and commercial office buildings.

The duo cautions commercial property owners of the dangers of not treating mold problems, which can result in unhappy tenants, health issues, and a number of other undesirable results. They also note to property owners, particularly cottages that have been closed through the winter season, that a mold inspection is a great insurance policy in the springtime to ward off potential problems. "People who own property do so for either their own enjoyment or to generate income from rentals," Bob said. "A preventive inspection can help avoid interruption in those key areas."

The company offers an initial complementary consultation and offers a menu of services that range from inspection to complete remediation. To learn more about the company, visit Indoor Environmental on the web at www.indoor-environmental.com or contact Bob Bowen at 781-319-9888, or info@indoor-environmental.com.