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LANG seeks Explo's eviction, \$1.4 M in expenses

Court hearing set Aug. 13 to consider military's request.

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The Louisiana Army National Guard wants Explo Systems Inc. off its property and to pay more than \$1.4 million in delinquent rent and expenses related to an October explosion that rocked parts of northwest Louisiana.

State military officials on Monday filed a petition in Webster District Court seeking Explo's eviction and outlining the money it says the government is owed. An Aug. 13 court date has been set to determine if the eviction is warranted.

Explo has been under fire since late last year. An explosion in October destroyed a storage igloo and led to the discovery in December of more than 10 million pounds of improperly stored explosive materials. The latter forced the voluntary evacuation of Doyline residents for more than a week as public safety officials relocated tons of M6 propellant to prevent the possibility of a more catastrophic situation.

Then last month, a Webster Parish grand jury returned indictments against six of the company's management officials on charges related to the unlawful storage of the propellant. The men are scheduled for arraignment Monday in Webster District Court.

The 55-page lawsuit includes pages of invoices that the state military department submitted to Explo in an attempt to make the company follow the terms of its lease. Explo was notified in February 2012 that it was three months behind on rent, which at the time totaled \$135,586.

In the letter, installation commander Col. Ron Stuckey acknowledged Explo's position as the largest commercial tenant and its plans for expansion at Camp Minden. However, Explo owner David Smith was reminded late fees were being assessed for the delinquent rent.

Monthly rent, according to a contract amendment in July 2012, was set at \$47,518. It covered buildings, land, storage igloos and water and sewer service.

Another letter was sent to Explo in October noting its non-response to the February letter and reminding the company of its financial obligations and continued delinquent rent, which at this time reached more than \$417,000. This time, state military department Director Stephen Dabadie said non-payment would result in litigation to force Explo to fulfill its lease obligations.

On Dec. 21, Explo sent a check for \$55,000. No other payments have been received.

In addition to the back rent of \$787,825, Explo owes for attorney's fees, \$3,137 in unpaid water and sewer bills and \$62,298 for storage igloos not covered by the approved lease, according to the lawsuit.

The military department also has set additional costs: replacement of the destroyed igloo, \$481,622; reimbursement of expenses and charges related to the Oct. 15 explosion, \$67,609; igloo site cleanup, \$50,000.

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