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METRO

DEVELOPER IS READYING FOR ABRAM LAND; RICE SAYS HE MAY SUE OVER HIS REJECTED BID

By Marianna Riley Of The Post-Dispatch

Developer Don Breckenridge said Tuesday that he was moving ahead with his plans to turn a downtown federal building into a parking garage. The L. Douglas Abram Building was sought by both Breckenridge and the Rev. Larry Rice, who wanted to use the building as a homeless shelter. The federal Department of Health and Human Services on Monday rejected Rice's bid for the building.

Rice said Tuesday that he will probably file a lawsuit in the District of Columbia, asking for the courts to review the Health and Human Services decision.

The Abram Building is next to the Kiel Opera House. Breckenridge plans a \$30 million renovation of the Kiel and needs the Abram Building for parking.

Breckenridge said his next step was to finish working drawings for converting the building into a parking garage. He said the cost is estimated at \$2 million.

Before any construction or renovations could begin, the General Services Administration must sell the Abram Building. It can only sell to public, tax-supported bodies. The city of St. Louis is expected to buy the property and sell it to Breckenridge.

A federal law, the McKinney Act, mandates that surplus federal property must first be offered to homeless providers. That law is what spurred Rice to begin his pursuit of the Abram Building four months ago.

Breckenridge said that he has made several attempts to talk to Rice and to offer to help him find another building. But Tuesday was the first time that Rice has publicly expressed interest in the offer.

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

NEWS SUBJECT: (Capacity/Facilities (C24); Corporate/Industrial News (CCAT))

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INDUSTRY: (Parking Lots/Garages (I98204); Parking Lot Construction (I5020008); Heavy Construction (I502); Business/Consumer Services (IBCS); Construction (ICONST); Construction/Real Estate (ICRE))

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