

Work down the drain?

LIVE OAK

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LIVE OAK — Residents and high school swimmers who have been clamoring for a community pool for two decades must keep waiting.

Workers discovered problems at the newly built but unopened Simpkins Family Swim Center that may require crews to take jackhammers to the sides of two of the center's four pristine pools.

Construction workers noticed a month ago that metal anchors imbedded in the sides of the pools, used to hold lane ropes in place, were turning black.

"It's possible the materials in this metal were

Defective materials may force delay in opening of Live Oak swim center

not properly manufactured," said Tom Burns, director of the county Redevelopment Agency, which is helping pay for the \$6.5 million project. "If that turns out to be the case, they'll actually need to be replaced and we'll need to jackhammer into the pool walls to replace them."

Burns' announcement comes just weeks after a media day was held so members of the press could get a glimpse of the long-awaited center,

which was to open this month.

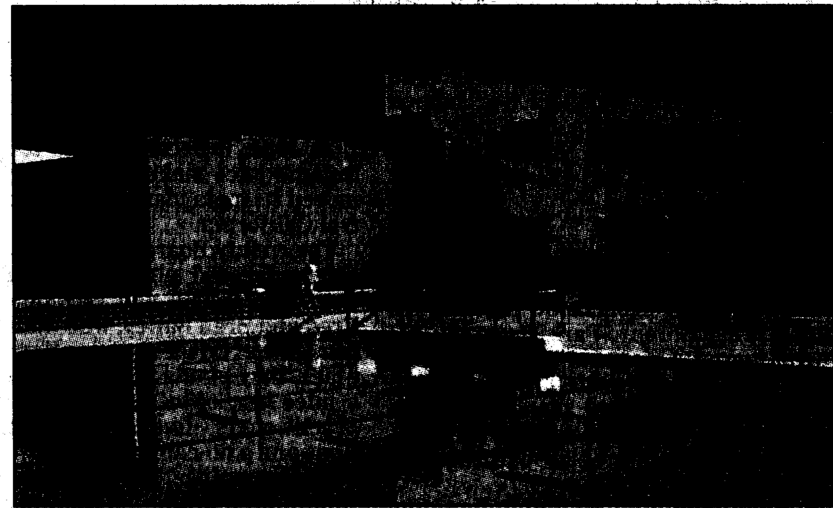
No one is sure now when it will open. Barry Samuel, director of the county Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services, said he couldn't give an estimate.

"All sorts of people can't wait to get in it, and we can't wait to open it," Samuel said. "We don't know the answer."

The 11,000-square-foot swim center sports four pools, including a warm-water pool for aerobics, an Olympic-size pool, a wading pool and a 120-foot spiraling water slide.

The delay has left a number of local teams in the lurch.

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

The Simpkins swim center's opening has been postponed.