



PRESS RELEASE

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MUSCATINE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 24, 2022

FRUITLAND COUPLE CHARGED WITH ANIMAL NEGLECT

Police investigation follows seizure of 42 dogs from mobile home Feb. 10

MUSCATINE, Iowa – A Fruitland couple was arrested Thursday (Feb. 24) and charged with 42 counts of animal neglect following a two-week investigation that began after 42 dogs were rescued from the couples' mobile home in Fruitland on Feb. 10.

Muscatine Police Department (MPD) charged both Douglas Elshoff, 65, and Karen Elshoff, 61, 150 Main Street, Fruitland, Iowa, with 42 counts of animal neglect in accordance with Iowa Code Section 717B.3.

Douglas and Karen Elshoff were released on a promise to appear in court, and both are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The Elshoff's had previously signed over custody of all 42 dogs to the Muscatine Humane Society voluntarily. All dogs continue to be housed and treated at the Muscatine Humane Society, 920 South Houser Street, Muscatine, Iowa.



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MPD received an anonymous tip on February 10, 2022, regarding allegations of animal neglect occurring at 150 Main Street, Fruitland, Iowa. The tip alleged that a couple were living in a mobile home with an excessive number of dogs. The overcrowded conditions in the mobile home were suspected of causing severe health issues for the dogs.

Muscatine Animal Control Officer Courtney Patel investigated the anonymous tip, and discovered that an excessive number of dogs were housed in the mobile home, and concerns of overcrowding and unsanitary conditions were identified.

In conjunction with the Muscatine Police Department, a search warrant was obtained for removal of the animals.

The Muscatine Police Department, with assistance from Muscatine Animal Control and the Muscatine Humane Society, accessed the residence and were able to rescue the animals. A total of 42 dogs were rescued from inside the mobile home. The conditions of the mobile home were considered unsafe for the animals due to the excessive amount of animal waste present, as well as a lack of access to adequate food and medical care.

In accordance with Iowa Code 717B.5, which outlines the rescue of threatened animals, the Muscatine Police Department worked with the Muscatine Humane Society to take over possession, care, and maintenance of the animals while the investigation continues. The animals will remain with the Muscatine Humane Society until dispositional proceedings can be held.

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