

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 22, 2009

Animals Seized from home

Sheriff Jimmy Harris states as follows:

On July 21, 2009 DeKalb County Sheriff's Office received a call from Dade County Georgia Authorities regarding a house full of animals which appeared to be unattended. The residence had a Rising Fawn, GA address but is located just inside the DeKalb County, AL line. Authorities were alerted by a family friend who came to the house to feed the animals. A family member who was staying at the residence while the family was on vacation apparently left Monday and asked a friend to go by and feed the animals until her parents returned. The friend arrived Tuesday around lunch and found the house full of dogs and cats. Every room in the house was extremely dirty. Animal feces was also found throughout the residence. The Dade County Sheriff's Office was notified and responded with several agencies to try to begin some sort of clean up of this property. When it was determined this house was actually in DeKalb County, authorities here were notified. Deputies and Investigators arrived on the scene around 4:30 PM and began to develop a plan for the animals. Solid waste officers were notified of the outside waste and health hazards on site. The Georgia Department of Agriculture responded to help with the animals. Personnel and volunteers from the DeKalb County Animal Adoption Center arrived and took possession of the animals which were released to them by the property owner. At this time there have been 19 dogs, 77 cats, 50 guinea pigs, and 2 rabbits removed from the residence. There were 3 dead animals found inside the home. Of these 148 live animals, 127 were inside the residence. The animals were taken to the Fort Payne center and then placed in other sites due to the overwhelming numbers. Authorities are continuing the investigation at this time along with Department of Human Resources personnel to make sure the residence is made safe and is clean before it is occupied again. Animals are still being captured in live traps by animal control officers and the health issues are being addressed.

Sheriff Harris said, "I would like to thank all the agencies that responded and helped in the clean up. The cooperative effort of all the agencies on scene was instrumental in getting this situation under control in a timely manner."



