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James C. Backstrom
County Attorney

Tim Leslie
County Sheriff

Media Release

August 29, 2018

ST. PAUL WOMAN CHARGED WITH MULTIPLE COUNTS OF MISTREATMENT OF ANIMALS

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that Caycee Lynn Bregel*, age 25, from St. Paul, has been charged with one felony count of Mistreatment of Animals and twelve misdemeanor counts of Mistreatment of Animals in connection with the death and care of numerous cats. At the time of the offenses Bregel was the owner and operator of "Minnesota Animal Rescue" a non-profit organization who had been renting a residence located in Castle Rock Township, Dakota County. The investigation into this matter was led by the Dakota County Sheriff's Office, with the assistance of an agent of the Animal Humane Society.

A summary of the allegations contained in the criminal complaint filed on August 28, 2018 is set forth below:

On May 9, 2018, a Dakota County Sheriff's Office deputy was dispatched to a residence in Castle Rock Township, Dakota County, Minnesota, on a report of a pig running loose near the residence. Upon arrival at the residence the deputy was able to smell an overpowering odor coming from inside the residence. The owner of the property was contacted. The owner entered the residence and reported that there were several animals in the residence, including several cats that were "skin and bone". The owner also reported that he did not observe any food or water in the residence for the animals. The owner reported that he began renting the property to Bregel in February 2017.

Bregel arrived at the residence and gave Dakota County Sheriff deputies permission to enter the residence. Once inside the residence deputies observed several uncaged dogs and cats. Deputies also observed that the floors, walls and windows were covered with animal feces and garbage. Upon further inspection of the property the deputies located several animals buried in shallow graves and the carcasses of deceased cats scattered across the backyard. The condition of the property required Dakota County Public Health Department to issue a condemnation order for the residence. Several living cats were subsequently removed from the residence and examined by the Animal Humane Society. The examination revealed that cats were severely malnourished and suffering from multiple illnesses. One of the cats had to be euthanized due to the severity of the cat's illnesses and

poor physical condition. Additional investigation revealed that Bregel had previously entered into an agreement with the Animal Humane Society to provide foster services for animals. It was further learned that between July 2017 through February 2018, 144 cats and 1 dog had been transferred to Bregel.

Additional facts pertaining to this case can be found in the criminal complaint, which is located online at: <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/LawJustice/CriminalComplaint/Pages/default.aspx>.

Sheriff Leslie commented: "This home, filled with cats and dogs, was in horrific condition when investigators gained entrance. Finding this many deceased, diseased and unnourished cats and dogs was extremely disturbing."

County Attorney Backstrom stated: "The abuse of animals in the manner alleged in this criminal complaint is unconscionable."

Backstrom thanked the Dakota County Sheriff's Office for their thorough investigation into this case.

Bregel will receive a Summons to appear in Dakota County District Court in Hastings. The date and time of her court appearance has not been set. If you have questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4440.

**Criminal charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant/suspect is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*