

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: November 3, 2009

LOCAL ANIMAL RESCUE BUSINESS OWNER ARRESTED BY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES ON SEVERAL COUNTS OF CRIMINAL ANIMAL NEGLECT

Sheriff's Jail MASH facility takes in nearly 100 dogs and cats
while case is adjudicated

(Phoenix, AZ.) A local animal rescue business owner was arrested by Maricopa County Sheriff's detectives this morning and may be charged with as many as 77 counts of animal neglect stemming from conditions found at two Phoenix locations where up to 120 animals were being kept.

Diane Habener, (DOB 12 -31-47), was taken into custody this morning and is being booked at the Fourth Avenue Jail. (mug shot available)

According to Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Ms. Habener started a rescue business called 'Tuffies Rescue' in 2004 with the intent to provide shelter and adoption services to animals, which may otherwise have been euthanized.

"It appears as though Ms. Habener got in way over her head by taking in too many animals. She did not provide the proper care needed to safely and humanely house these animals," Arpaio said. "Conditions at both locations where Habener housed animals were deplorable at best."

This morning's search warrants at 25312 North 16th Avenue in Phoenix and at 3836 West Morrow Drive, Phoenix had Sheriff's deputies and animal crimes detectives

News Release

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working with local vets and the County Attorney's Office to determine the magnitude of the neglect.

Animals were without water, food, living in excrement and many were caged in kennels too small to even allow any real movement by the animal.

Extra precaution was needed by deputies and detectives as they removed the animals as at least one dog tested positive for leptospirosis, an animal to human contagion. As a safety measure, Arpaio says, all animals brought in to the MASH facility today from this case will be quarantined until a health evaluation can be made as to this disease.

The jail MASH unit is located in the old First Avenue Jail that was closed to inmate incarceration due to plumbing issues in 1999. That same year, Sheriff Arpaio turned the jail into an air-conditioned animal housing facility for dogs, cats and other pets confiscated by deputies during abuse or neglect cases. To date over 500 animals have been cared for female inmates while the animals' owners were going through the court process.

Inmates who care for these animals will not be allowed to do so alone, as is their custom, until the health evaluation is done. Officers will accompany the inmates in the quarantine area to ensure all inmates comply with health recommendations to stop the spread of leptospirosis.

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