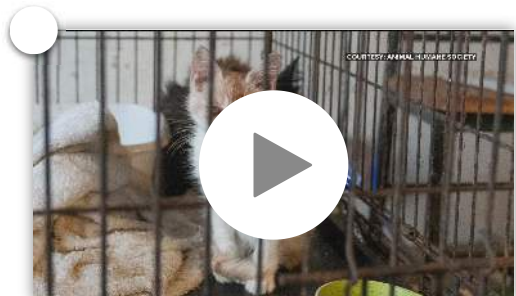


LOCAL NEWS

## AHS rescues dozens of dogs and cats from horrific conditions in northern Minnesota

The animals were confiscated from a property in the town of Hines in Beltrami County on Dec. 6. The owners face multiple charges involving animal mistreatment.

Author: Dana Thiede





GOLDEN VALLEY, Minnesota — More than 60 dogs and cats are in the first days of their new lives after being rescued from deplorable conditions on a property in northern Minnesota.

Animal Humane Society (AHS) Chief Medical Officer Dr. Graham Brayshaw met with reporters on Friday to update the situation with the [animals that were rescued](#) from "dire, unsanitary conditions" on the problem property. He said 35 dogs and 29 cats are living in temporary housing that is clean and safe, eating substantial food, drinking clean water, and receiving much-needed medication.

Investigative agents and critical response team members had been assisting the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office with the case in recent weeks, chronicling the horrific conditions that more than 250 companion animals were living in. There was no food or water for the animals, and the outbuildings and shelters they were living in were overrun with urine and feces.

The team had been to the property multiple times and on Friday, Dec. 6, Brayshaw was among those who arrived in Hines expecting to transport all those animals back to AHS headquarters in Golden Valley for emergency lifesaving care.

Instead, Brayshaw told reporters, they discovered more than 170 dogs and cats they had previously seen were unaccounted for and that those still on the property were in worse shape than they had been in three previous visits. Sheriff's investigators recovered a number of animals that were dead and found a wood stove filled with the remains of a number of animals and bone fragments consistent with small animals.

"This is obviously not the outcome we were hoping for," Dr. Brayshaw said.

Property owners Douglas Ray Erickson and Debra Kay Marshall told reporters they were running an animal rescue. Each stands charged with 10 felony counts



mistreatment/torture.



*Credit: Beltrami County Sheriff's Office*

Douglas Erickson, left, Debra Marshall, right.

The critical response team rounded up most of the animals and transported them back to Golden Valley, where they are being treated for respiratory ailments, infections, broken bones, fleas and other medical ailments. After living in a clean, safe environment with food and water for just four days, Brayshaw says he is already seeing significant improvement in most of the dogs and cats.

In fact, some of the rescues could be placed up for adoption sometime next week or the week after for people willing to provide the special physical and behavioral care these animals need. Others have a longer road to recovery, and due to a lack of human interaction and socialization, some may not ever be adoptable. Brayshaw says being in a safe and loving place for a week or two will reveal which of the animals exhibiting anti-social or dangerous behavior can be saved.

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Brayson says humane investigators remain on the case, helping the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office with forensic expertise in the processing of the ash and bone fragments found on the property in Hines. He told reporters there were also horses, mules and mini ponies found on the property that are being cared for on a local level.



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