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NEWS RELEASE

NORTHFIELD WOMAN CHARGED WITH MULTIPLE COUNTS OF ANIMAL CRUELTY

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that Dayna Kristine Bell* age 61 of Northfield, has been charged with 16 counts of felony animal cruelty in connection with the deaths of numerous puppies and dogs in her care in September of 2011. Bell is the owner and operator of Bells Kennels in Sciota Township, Dakota County.

On September 27, 2011, the Dakota County Sheriff's Office received a report of cruelty and maltreatment of animals by Bell. A witness reported that Bell had drowned puppies and other dogs in late September of 2011. This same witness told police she had also observed Bell tie a rope which was attached to a cinderblock around the neck of a small dog and throw the dog and block into a pool. This witness also reported observing Bell take a small dog which had bit her on the arm outside and return claiming that she had broken the dog's neck. Another witness told police that Bell had put a puppy in a bucket of water and then placed another bucket on top of that to hold the puppy down. A third witness saw this dead puppy in the bucket and was told by Bell that the puppy, which had been born a week earlier, was not doing well and she did not want to see it suffer.

When executing a search warrant on September 29, 2011 at the Bells Kennel property, investigators found 10 small breed adult dogs in individual plastic bags in a freezer chest. Officers believed that the dogs had been wet when placed in the freezer based upon the appearance of their fur. Other items of evidence were also recovered, including a bucket and a cinderblock with a rope tied to it.

Additional facts pertaining to this case can be found online at www@dakotacounty.us/attorney (click on Criminal Complaint Search and/or News Release). If in custody, a mug shot can be viewed at www@dakotacounty.us/sheriff (click on Inmate Search).

Backstrom commented: "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.

Bell is expected to make her first court appearance in this case this morning in Hastings. 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.*