

15 abused animals seized, owner arrested

by Cheryl McDermott

A 41-year old Washington County, Oregon woman was arrested Thursday morning for suspected animal abuse and assaulting an officer when authorities seized 15 animals from a semi-truck trailer where the suspect was living -- including one dog whose muzzle she had tied shut, sheriff's deputies reported.

Echo Chamberlin, WCJ Photo

Animal Control officers and sheriff's deputies from Washington County served an administrative search warrant at 20480 NW Pottery Lane in an unincorporated area of the county shortly after 11 a.m., said Sgt. David Thompson. The warrant was based on information gathered Monday when an Oregon Department of Transportation worker found the dog whose muzzle had been tied, and he reported that the flesh around the mouth area was decaying.

Chamberlin told Animal Control officers that she had tied the dog's mouth shut to cure it of rabies. "They were convinced that she may be mentally ill and were concerned about several other animals on the property," Sgt. Thompson said. The dog was seized, and a search warrant was obtained.

During execution of the warrant Thursday, Chamberlin refused to open the door for deputies, and they eventually forced entry into the semi-truck trailer. As the first deputy entered the trailer, Chamberlin "came at him" and tried to hit him in the head with a piece of steel rebar. Chamberlin was subdued without being harmed, said the sergeant, and was taken into custody.

Chamberlin was booked into the Washington County Jail and is charged with 14 counts of second-degree animal neglect, two counts of first-degree animal abuse, and single counts each for first-degree attempted assault and assaulting a public safety officer.

Deputies reported that the trailer was littered with animal feces, urine, and rotting food, and said the stench was unbearable. A total of ten cats, one dog, and two ferrets were seized and taken to the Bonnie L. Hays Animal Shelter.

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