

Elderly Prineville couple's suicide may be linked to mortgage foreclosure

by Cheryl McDermott

Deputies believe that failing attempts to save their home following the receipt of a mortgage foreclosure notice may have led to the suicide of an elderly Prineville couple, discovered dead yesterday afternoon from suspected carbon monoxide poisoning.

Crook County Sheriff's deputies responded to 4800 NE Mill Creek Road about 1 p.m. in response to a welfare check request made by neighbors when the couple failed to answer the door and several of their dogs hadn't been seen, Sgt. Travis Jurgens reported.

When deputies arrived on scene, they found someone had used a dozer to move a steel fifth-wheel frame to block the driveway, located about 200 yards from the home. They also found a 1981 Cadillac running inside the locked garage, the sergeant said. Deputies broke inside and discovered the inside door to the tri-level residence had been propped open with a rock.

The bodies of 71-year old Raymond Donaca and his wife Deanna, 69, along with their four deceased golden retrievers were found inside.

At this time it is believed that the Donaca's committed suicide after attempts to save their home following a foreclosure notice left them believing they had few options, Sgt. Jurgens said.

Although deputies and fire personnel took precautions to alleviate the presence of deadly fumes by turning off the vehicle, opening the garage doors, and using a large fan and breathing apparatuses, two sergeants and one deputy suffered ill effects and were treated and later released from Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

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