Elderly Prineville coupleâ€™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 Sheriffâ€™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 hadnâ€™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.

â€œAt this time it is believed that the Donacaâ€™s committed suicide after attempts to save their home following a foreclosure notice left them believing they had few options,â€• 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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