



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Chad Enright Chief Deputy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update and Arrest in Death Investigation of Dog in Rural Waupun

This afternoon, Dodge County Sheriff Dale Schmidt arrested Richard Van Buren on a charge of Mistreating Animals after an incident occurred in the town of Chester which resulted in the death of a Golden Retriever. Following the arrest, Richard Van Buren was booked into the Dodge County Jail, where he will await his initial appearance in Dodge County Circuit Court. Richard Van Buren is the Chairman of the Chester Town Board in rural Waupun. The sheriff's office will release no further information today as information will be made available through court documents at the appropriate time and the case does remain under investigation. As always, all persons are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The sheriff's office certainly took note that there was significant public outcry on this case. However, the sheriff would like the community to know that the sheriff's office does not make enforcement decisions based on outcry or pressure from the community as that would be inappropriate and unethical. Rather, we take the time to gather the necessary evidence that the district attorney needs for a successful prosecution. While the community may at times request immediate action by a law enforcement agency, that may not always be what is best for the final resolution of a case. If the sheriff's office were to make snap decisions in cases like this, and a defendant in a case were not held accountable as a result, there would be equally significant public outcry. This is why we always strive to conduct as much of the investigation, when possible, before making an arrest.

Additionally, there have been threatening comments made by some community members that must be addressed. Threats to the personal safety and property of individuals are not only inappropriate but may also be illegal. While we respect the freedom of speech, that freedom of speech does have limits when it comes to threatening another person's life, family members, or property. The sheriff's office will take threats seriously and make arrests as appropriate if they are deemed to be in violation of the law. This includes threats which are made via social media.

Other social media posts have been seen that are grossly inaccurate and inflammatory. One such post alleged that a Dodge County Board Supervisor was on the scene of this incident. We can confirm that no Dodge

County officials were present or were involved, and the only officials involved were from the town of Chester, and no other persons have been identified as being party to the crime of mistreating animals in this case.

The sheriff's office takes mistreatment of animal cases very seriously and we have a history of making arrests of individuals who have committed the crime of mistreatment of animals. We encourage reporting of incidents to law enforcement when these alleged crimes occur so they can be investigated by law enforcement.

*****Original Release*****

Death Investigation of a Dog in Rural Waupun

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office is currently conducting a death investigation into the death of a dog in the town of Chester. At 7:02 pm on June 17, 2025, an incident was reported on Oakwood Rd, which resulted in the death of a Golden Retriever. Deputies have been following up since last evening and have been working on the case throughout the day today.

Because this investigation is still active, no additional information can be released. Additional will be provided to the community when it has been determined that the release of information will not negatively impact the investigation or potential legal process that may follow.

The sheriff's office understands that there is considerable interest in this case by the community and the desire for additional information to be released, but we ask the community's patience as we determine the facts of the case.

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt

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