

New task force to target dogfighting in county

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MUNCIE -- Wednesday's dogfighting arrest came hours after officials announced plans to form a task force aimed at eradicating the underground contests.

The Muncie/Delaware County Dogfighting Task Force will include animal control officers, police, veterinarians and prosecutors, according to Jill Dolon of Delaware County Animal Control.

The task force is offering a \$2,500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anybody involved in animal fighting.

Dogfighting involves placing two animals in a pit where they must fight until one becomes too injured or too exhausted to continue.

Dogs often die from dehydration, blood loss, infection, exhaustion or shock, and owners kill many of the losing dogs by shooting them, according to the Humane Society of the United States.

An estimated 250,000 pit bulls are used in organized dogfighting, which is on the rise nationwide, according to the humane society.

The contests are often connected with illegal gambling, drug distribution and guns.

"While dogfighting is usually at the center of other crimes, our focusing on dogfighting is part of a broader effort to resolve the culture of violence in our community," Dolon said in a press release.

Deputy prosecutor Mark McKinney said the prosecutor's office will work as a liaison with the dogfighting task force, much like it does with the city/county drug task force, helping the group to obtain search warrants.

Dolon and Muncie Animal Shelter superintendent Karen Gibson will serve as co-chairs for the task force.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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