

## Austin couple enters pleas on alleged animal neglect case in Superior Court

Written by George Browning

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A couple living in Austin have entered not guilty pleas in Scott Superior Court to charges of animal abandonment/neglect filed against them on July 20.

George Helton, 28, and Rebecca G. Smith, 25, both of 317 West York Road, appeared at initial court hearings held for them on Tuesday, July 24, before Judge Marsha Owens Howser.

Judge Howser set their trials on the three misdemeanor counts for September 25. Their original bonds of \$10,000 corporate surety/10% cash were reduced to \$5,000 surety/10% cash. Each filed cash bonds that same day and was released from the Scott County Security Center in Scottsburg.

Helton and Smith are charged with neglect of three mixed boxer dogs, two females and a male, which Scott County Animal Shelter personnel found chained in the yard of the couple's home on June 25, allegedly without food or water.

All were examined by veterinarians and declared underweight. The dogs were seized and are now gaining weight under animal shelter workers' care.

An attempt by the couple to reclaim the dogs three days after the animals were impounded was not successful. All will reportedly remain in the county's care until the case is concluded.

The charges against Helton and Smith are all Class A misdemeanors.