



By the end of the week, the Diamonds in the Rough pet rescue operation will close. These animals are among the 200 searching for homes to avoid going to the pound or being euthanized.

Rescue site seeks homes for 200 dogs

By Dawn Marks
Enid Bureau

VICI — About 200 dogs could be headed for the pound or euthanized if they aren't rescued from a rescue operation that might close this weekend.

Michelle Raines, the third operator since the first of the year, said she will try to find homes for the dogs until this weekend, then, depending on the number left, will determine the next step.

Raines said the rescue operation founder, Sam Poortinga, is selling the 80 acres of land about eight miles west of Vici on U.S. 60.

"She's selling the land out from under me," Raines said.

Raines said she had long-range plans to run the rescue operation when she took over March 7. Formerly known as Adopt a Pet, she renamed it Diamonds in the Rough before she saw an ad for the land on a Web site.

She was getting nonprofit designation and building new kennels, but cannot afford the \$59,900 asking price.

Poortinga said, however, that she wanted to work with Raines to buy the land, and her main goal also is getting homes for the dogs.

Poortinga said she was willing to sell the land to Raines for \$1 a month for 12 months and then negotiate payments after that. She made the offer through a third party, Kay Johnston, a former rescue operation volunteer, but Raines hasn't accepted it, Johnston said.

Poortinga also has an offer from a man willing to buy 70 acres and leave the house and 10 acres for the rescue operation.

Poortinga first started offering animals for adoption from her farm about eight years ago and started the large-scale operation in February 2004. She left the operation in mid-February to move back to Iowa for family reasons. The

HOW TO HELP

■ To adopt a dog or seek information for a rescue group, contact Michelle Raines at (580) 939-2424.

next manager changed her mind after a few weeks, and Poortinga said she gladly signed a contract with Raines to run the operation.

"I love these animals more than anything except my kids," Poortinga said.

However, now Poortinga

said she wonders why Raines wants out.

"My guess is that the biggest problem is it's a lot of work," she said.

Raines agreed the operation requires work and expense. She said she planned to downsize eventually because the average size of a rescue operation is 15 to 20 dogs.

"Personally I can't handle 200 dogs," Raines said. "It costs about \$800 a week to feed the animals."

Raines said her first priority is finding homes for the dogs before she has to leave the property.

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