SCAM Alert—
The FBI recently released an alert about on-line car-buying scams. Between 2008-2010, the FBI’s internet Crime Complaint Center received nearly 14,000 complaints from consumers who had been victimized by on-line auto scams, accounting for nearly 44.5 million in loses. Buyers should be aware of “red-flags” before making a purchase and be wary of on-line purchases as often times once the consumer realizes they’ve been scammed, the criminals and the money are long gone. Car buying red-flags include:

- Cars advertised at too-good-to-be true prices
- Sellers want to move transactions from the original website to another
- Sellers claim that a buyer protection program offered by a major internet company covers an auto transaction conducted outside of that company’s website
- Sellers refuse to meet in person or allow potential buyers to inspect the car ahead of time
- Sellers who say they want to sell the car because they’re in the U.S. Military about to be deployed, are moving, the car belonged to someone who recently died, or similar story
- Sellers who ask for funds to be wired ahead of time

A Job Well Done—
On August 31st we saw two proud careers come to an end as Officer Dave Schroeder and Detective Sergeant Joel Welinski worked their last day as officers with the Owatonna Police Department. The photographs below show fellow officers gathered around Officer Schroeder as he signed off duty for the last time and Chief Hiller congratulating Sergeant Welinski at his retirement ceremony held in the Detective Bureau.

Headlight Out?—
On a daily average, the Owatonna Police Department issues approximately 12 warning citations to motorists, many of which are for equipment violations. In an effort to curb the number equipment violation, on Tuesday, September 13th, the Owatonna Police Department, the Owatonna City Council and Senior Place will be holding a complimentary vehicle equipment inspection check at Senior Place. The department will have community service officer(s) on hand to conduct the inspections. This service is provided to assist those who don’t have others to help them inspect their cars for malfunctions. Just a reminder, this is a courtesy inspection only.

In the photograph to the left, Owatonna Chief Keith Hiller and Sergeant Deanne vonWald and Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele and Chief Deputy Scott Hanson accept two new automatic external defibrillators (AED) from Owatonna Hospital President David Albrecht and Emergency Department Manager Cathy Etter. The city’s AED will be placed in a squad car replacing an older model. The older AED will remain in service with the Owatonna Fire Department.