Department News—

The Owatonna Police Department and Police Civil Service Commission recently completed a promotional process for the rank of sergeant. Six Owatonna officers competed in the process and two have been selected for promotion to sergeant to fill the positions formerly held by retired Sergeants Jeff Okerberg and Joel Welinski. The officers selected for promotion are Detective Josh Sorensen and Patrol Officer Tracy Duchene. Josh has been with the department since February 2004, serving in the Patrol Division until 2009 when he was appointed as a detective. Josh also serves the department as a firearms instructor, use of force instructor and was formerly a field training officer. Tracy has been with the department since 2000. Tracy currently serves the department as a field training officer and is a tactical officer on the South Central Drug Investigation Unit SWAT team. Congratulations to both officers!!

Traffic Stop Leads to Drug Arrest—

On September 8th, an officer stopped a vehicle on Hartle Avenue S.E. for making an improper signal when making a right turn. The officer, specially trained in narcotic interdictions, observed indicators from the driver and in the vehicle which led him to believe there were illegal narcotics in the vehicle. The driver of the vehicle consented for the vehicle to be searched and the officer located unprescribed Oxycodone, crystal methamphetamine, cocaine and drug paraphernalia in the vehicle. Officers placed Aaron J. Hardy, age 30 and Sabre J. Bock, age 27, under arrest for probable cause controlled substance crimes and transported them to the Steele County Detention Center. Hardy was searched further and found to be possessing additional crystal methamphetamine in his sock. Hardy and Bock were charged in District Court with two count of Possession of Controlled Substances. Bock faces as additional charge of Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. At the time of their arrests, Hardy and Bock were in possession of approximately $1200 of cash which has been seized and subject to forfeiture in relation to the controlled substance crimes. In addition to the illegal drugs, a stereo reported stolen from St. Paul was recovered in the vehicle. Ironically, Mr. Hardy was recently the victim of an attempted robbery in the Colonial Manner Mobile Home Park where an unknown suspect attempted to take his money and stabbed him in the abdomen. When investigators met with Hardy in the hospital, he refused to cooperate with the investigation or provide any information concerning the incident or suspect.

In the Line of Duty—

On September 10th, Owatonna officers responded to 422 N. Cedar Avenue for the complaint of a male suspect causing a disturbance; the report was that the male was acting angry, swearing and video taping other residents in an apartment complex. An Owatonna officer and sergeant responded, located the suspect and found him to be acting unreasonable; the officers suggested he be transported to the hospital to have his mental health evaluated. The suspect agreed and was being escorted by the officer when he began to fight by pulling away from the officer. The suspect then grabbed the sergeant around her neck, stating he was going to, “break her neck”. The officer and suspect began to wrestle and fell to the ground. The suspect was eventually handcuffed and put onto a Gold Cross Ambulance cot. James E. True, age 53, was arrested and charged in District Court with 5th Degree Assault and Obstructing the Legal Process. Both officers were injured during the course of the altercation and will be off their regularly scheduled duties recovering from their injuries.

Make your safety a priority by remembering the following tips:

Trust your instincts.

Get the details in writing before you sign up.

Check out companies with the Better Business Bureau.

Check your credit reports.

Always lock doors and windows.

Keep an eye out for your neighbors and ask them to do the same.