Crosswalk Safety—
This past week, a terrible crash occurred in downtown Owatonna when a pedestrian crossing in a crosswalk was struck by a vehicle and severely injured. We hope that this unfortunate crash serves as a reminder for pedestrian/vehicle crosswalk safety. When approaching a crosswalk in a vehicle or entering a crosswalk as a pedestrian, please remember the following:

Pedestrian’s responsibility:
- Pedestrians that cross the street at a traffic control signal must obey traffic control signals.
- At other crosswalk points, pedestrians shall not suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to yield.
- Pedestrians must keep in mind that if a vehicle is travelling 30 MPH, it is moving 44 feet per second. Pedestrians should allow adequate time for motorists to recognize and react to a pedestrian’s presence and intent to cross the roadway.
- If a pedestrian chooses to cross the street at any other point other than within a marked crosswalk or at an intersection that does not have a marked crosswalk, the pedestrian loses his or her right of way and SHALL yield the right of way to all vehicles upon the roadway.

Driver’s responsibility:
- The driver of a vehicle shall stop to yield the right of way to a pedestrian crossing the road within a marked crosswalk or at an intersection with no marked crosswalk.
- Drivers must remain stopped until the pedestrian has passed the lane in which the vehicle is stopped in.
- If a vehicle is stopped for a pedestrian in a marked crosswalk or at an intersection with no marked crosswalk, any vehicle coming from the rear of that stopped vehicle may not overtake or pass the stopped vehicle.

After School Safety—
Since the beginning of the school year, the department has received a couple of calls that every police officer, parent and community hopes will never happen—a child did not arrive home or to their destination after school. While the children ended up being located quickly, there were anxious moments for everyone involved. With the majority of families having two working parents, here are some tips to consider when children are “on their own” after school.
- Know where your kids are, what they are doing and who they are with.
- Make certain they check in with a parent when they reach their destination or any change of plans before the change happens.
- Teach them basic safety rules and how to get ahold of you. Consider a “kid-friendly” cell phone with parental controls and teach them how to dial 911.
- Never accept gifts or rides from people they do not know well.
- Never let anyone into the home without a parent’s permission.
- Teach them to never let anyone at the door or on the telephone know they are alone. Instruct them to not answer the door and/or say, “Mom or Dad can’t come to the door/phone right now.”

Criminal Sexual Assault—
On Monday, September 19th, Owatonna officers responded to the Owatonna Hospital to investigate a report of a sexual assault. Officers interviewed the female victim, age 22, and learned she had allegedly been assaulted in her home by an acquaintance she had met earlier in the evening. When the officers interviewed the suspect, he initially denied any recollection of what the officers were investigating. The officers placed the suspect under arrest for suspicion of criminal sexual conduct and transported him to the Steele County Detention Center. As the officers were transporting the suspect to the detention center, he began to recollect the events of the night before and admitted to consensual sexual contact with the victim. The suspect admitted he lied to the officers earlier because he was scared. The suspect, Robert S. Kreeger, age 33, was formally charged in District Court with two counts of 3rd Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct crimes.

Consider installing motion activated flood lights around your home. These are a relatively cheap security measure, but they do a fantastic job. Since they only come on when activated, they are energy efficient lighting for your outdoor areas with the added benefit of security when you’re inside. While it’s true that many burglaries happen during the day, a bright flood light is a great deterrent for those who want to be sneaky at night. It makes the bad guys visible, and draws attention to the area.