Traffic Stop Leads to Big Surprise—

On Sunday, December 4th an Owatonna officer stopped a vehicle traveling southbound on the interstate for a relatively minor violation; the vehicle was following the officer too closely and had its high beams on. As the officer met with the five occupants in the vehicle, he detected a strong odor of marijuana coming from within the vehicle. The officer was assisted by our canine officer and his canine partner, Bullet, with a search of the vehicle. The search resulted in the canine locating a leafy substance in the vehicle believed to be marijuana, but more importantly, two handguns were located in the vehicle. Three of the five occupants, all from a neighboring state, were placed under arrest in connection with the handguns located in the vehicle. When the occupants of the vehicle were interviewed, they indicated they were en route to a funeral of a friend who was murdered in another state. The Owatonna Police Department contacted the law enforcement agency investigating the homicide and verified they were actively investigating a recent unsolved homicide. In turn, information gathered from the Owatonna traffic stop was turned over to the partnering law enforcement agency that may be critical to making an arrest(s) in their unsolved murder investigation. This continues to be an on-going investigation so specific details of the incident are being withheld.

Single Car Crash Leads to DWI Arrest—

For the second time in week, Owatonna officers were called to the scene of a one-car crash involving an alleged drunk driver. On Friday, December 2nd, officers responded to the area of 21st Avenue Northwest and Park Drive for the report of a vehicle off the roadway. Our officers located the vehicle straddling a drainage culvert behind the McQuay International building. Officers met with the driver who was displaying obvious signs of intoxication. The driver was subjected to roadside field sobriety testing and was later placed under arrest for suspicion of drunk driving. He was transported to the Steele County Detention Center for further DWI testing. Gabriel J. Talamantes, age 42, was charged by citation with 4th degree DWI. When speaking with Mr. Talamantes, he told the officer he was just coming from the Big 10 restaurant where he had a “couple” of drinks. The “couple” of drinks must have been tall ones as his breath alcohol level was at .18. Needless to say, drinking and driving do not co-exist as this alleged drunk driver crashed within only a few blocks of leaving the bar.