Department to Give Ticketed Motorist the Boot—

Beginning January 1, 2012, motorists who fail to resolve parking citations could get the boot from the police department. Vehicles that have accumulated five (5) or more unresolved parking citations will be placed on a delinquent vehicle list and are in jeopardy of being booted or placed in an immobilization device. Notifications will be sent during the first week of January to violators in jeopardy of having their vehicle booted or immobilized. Since 2006, there are 2061 unresolved parking tickets that have been issued in the City of Owatonna and include 93 individuals with five or more unresolved parking citations. Any vehicle on the delinquent vehicle list and found parked upon a street or highway within the city or upon any other city-owned or controlled property may be subject to vehicle immobilization. The boot or immobilization device will prevent the vehicle from being driven away and will be removed once all outstanding parking citations have been paid. Booted vehicles will be subject to a $25 administrative fee; however, the fee amount is significantly less than a towing bill. Current Minnesota statute allows a vehicle to be towed if a law enforcement official has probable cause to believe that the owner, operator or person in personal control of a vehicle has failed to respond to five or more citations for parking offenses.

Field Training Officers in Training—

As part of our staff development plan since 2005, the department has been sending our newly appointed field training officers (FTO) to a week long Leadership Academy Course at Camp Ripley. The Leadership Academy is sponsored by the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association. Our most recent graduates, Officers Chad Fierst and Joe Swenson attended the academy in December along with 28 other Minnesota law enforcement professionals. Though not officially designated as supervisors, our FTOs act as a first-line supervisor to our newly hired officers. The Leadership Academy targets first line supervisors and helps prepares them to make the transition from patrol officer to supervisor. The training provides practical information about training, motivating and evaluating the officers they supervise and affords them the opportunity to identify their leadership style. The academy is designed to provide attendees with the skills necessary to lead high performing teams. Pictured in the gray shirt below is Officer Fierst.

Chaplain Program to Get Off the Ground—

The police department has completed writing policy and procedure for the development of a Police Chaplain Program. The next stage of the process will be connecting with local clergy members to draw interest and select a team of potentially five chaplains. The goal and purpose of the police chaplain program is to enhance police services in the community by providing spiritual care and compassion to any individual in need, including first responders following a critical incident and/or during times of crisis in a person’s life. The Police Chaplains may also be called to assist other city departments and employers.

Delivery Driver Arrested for DWI—

On December 10th, Owatonna officers were dispatched to a local business for a driving complaint. Officers were notified that an employee of the business, who is a delivery driver, had been terminated earlier in the morning because he was suspected of drinking and violating company policy; the employee was subsequently given a ride home following his dismissal by his manager. The employee returned to the business a short time later to retrieve his van and some personal property; he then left the business parking lot in his van in an erratic manner. An officer located the driver as he was pulling into his driveway. The officer observed that the driver displayed signs of intoxication had him perform roadside sobriety tests, which he failed. The driver Phillip W. Reb, age 58, was placed under arrest for suspicion of drunk driving and transported to the Steele County Detention Center for further DWI testing. Reb, whose breath alcohol content tested at .16, was charged by citation with 4th Degree DWI.