**An Off-Road Excursion to the Extreme—**

Last Thursday morning, our officers were called to Steele/Waseca Cooperative Electric for a property damage crash. Arriving officers found that a pick-up truck had been driven through the front door of the building and was sitting in the reception area of the business—officers checked for a driver, but found the vehicle empty. During a search of the building, officers located the driver in a hallway near where the vehicle was sitting and identified him as Aaron M. Nelson, age 36. During an interview with the Nelson, he admitted that he drove into the building because he felt God was telling him to do it. Also during the interview, Nelson admitted smoking methamphetamines at approximately 5:00 P.M. the day before. He also admitted to putting ½ gram of meth in an ashtray near the entrance to the building—later found by investigating officers. Nelson was also found to be possessing items stolen from Steele/Waseca employees. Nelson was transported by officers to the Owatonna Hospital and placed on a hold. A warrant has been issued for Nelson for the following offenses—1st Degree Controlled Substance Crime—1st Degree Burglary and a 5th Degree Controlled Substance Crime—all felonies.

**Winter Survival Kits—**

A recipe for safety when traveling by vehicle - take a three-pound coffee can and fill it with candle stubs and matches, and;

- One metal cup
- Red bandana and a plastic whistle (to alert rescuers to your location)
- Pencil, paper, and change for phone calls
- First aid kit including any essential medications
- Plastic flashlight with spare batteries
- Two large plastic garbage bags and safety pins (the bags are for insulation for your feet and the safety pins are to keep the bags together)
- Bottled water and snack food for energy such as candy bars or energy bars

Some other items that you should carry include: an extra set of warm, dry clothing, gloves or mittens, winter boots, blankets and/or sleeping bag, jumper cables, a basic toolbox, a shovel, a bag of sand or other grit for traction, tow cables or chain, road flares and reflectors. A completely charged cell phone is also a bonus if you run into car troubles. Whenever traveling in the winter, call ahead to your destination and convey when you intend to leave, what travel route you will take and your expected time of arrival. If you are stranded, never leave your vehicle. Your chances of survival greatly increase if you stay with your vehicle.

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**Stolen Vehicle, Suspect Arrest—**

During the early evening hours on Thursday, Owatonna officers were called to the law enforcement center to meet with a victim whose vehicle had been stolen. The 84-year old male victim reported meeting a female named Shelly at his residence and then driving her to the Dog Pound Bar. The victim realized he had forgot his debit card, so they returned back to his residence to get his card. The victim went inside the home to get his card while the female waited in the car. When the male returned outside, he found his car and the female missing; he also believed the female stole his debit card. Later in the evening, an Owatonna officer saw a car similar to the stolen car near the intersection of Bridge St. and Oak Ave. The officer checked the area and located the car parked in front of 215 Walnut. Officers checked the 215 address and identified a female by the name of Shelly who gave the officers a set of car keys that belonged to the stolen car. Shelly L. Barnes, age 39, was arrested and transported to Jail. She was later formally charged with Motor Vehicle Theft—a felony. By the way, remember the victim’s debit card? It was found in the females back pocket when she was searched and resulted in an additional theft charge.

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**Cops in the Community—**

This past week, Officer Christian Berg appeared on the Owatonna Today Show to talk about his new traffic assignment. Beginning in 2014, Ofc. Berg’s duties will focus primarily on traffic enforcement, concerns and education in the City of Owatonna. Christian will also work on the department’s Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) efforts and act as the department’s liaison with the Steele County Safe and Drug Free Coalition. To view the episode, click on the traffic cop to the side.