Winter Survival Kits for Your Vehicle—

A recipe for safety when traveling by vehicle—take a three-pound coffee can and fill it with candle stubs and matches (which can be used to melt snow for additional drinking water).

- (1) metal cup
- Red Bandana and 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
- (2) large plastic garbage bags and safety pins (bags are for insulating your feet and the pins are to keep the bags together
- Bottled water and snack food for energy

Some other items that you should carry include: an extra set of dry clothing, a snowmobile suite, gloves or mittens, winter boots, blankets and/or sleeping bag, jumper cables, a basic tool box, a shovel, a bag of sand or other grit for traction, tow cables or chain, road flares and reflectors. Whenever traveling in the winter, call ahead to your destination and convey when you intend to leave, what travel route you will be taking and your estimated time of arrival. If you are stranded, never leave your vehicle. Your chances for survival greatly increase if you stay with your vehicle.

Staffing Additions—

Two new staffing additions recently occurred with the official start dates of Community Service Officer Zack Schumaker and Police Officer Tony Heaser. Zack Schumaker is in his second week of training, having officially started on December 12th. Zack graduated from Minnesota State University-Mankato with a Bachelor’s Degree in Law Enforcement. This is Zack’s first law enforcement related job; he formerly worked for Hy-Vee in Albert Lea during high school and college. Tony Heaser’s officially became an Owatonna police officer on December 19st, beginning his first phase of field training. Tony is originally from the Winona area. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1999 and served in that branch of the military until 2006. Tony is a graduate of the Rochester Community and Technical College with a Law Enforcement Associates Degree. Tony has previously worked with several law enforcement agencies including the Dodge County Sheriff’s Office as a part-time deputy and dispatcher, the Kasson and West Concord Police Departments as a part-time police officer and with the Minnesota State Patrol as a part-time dispatcher. We welcome you both to the department and hope that you have long, rewarding careers with the city!

The City Begins Taking Aim on January 4th—

The City of Owatonna and the Owatonna Police Department will begin the first of potentially several deer management hunts on January 4th, 2012; other possible dates for the management hunt include January 13th, January 18th and January 27th. The areas included in the deer management hunt are: Kaplan’s Woods, Kaplan’s Woods Parkway, Hamm Park and the North Straight River park area. The management hunt will take place during the daylight hours and the area(s) where the hunt will take place will be marked for no admittance. It is the intention of the City of Owatonna to cull the deer population to manageable levels. Owatonna Police Department sharpshooters will be utilized to bring the deer population to a more manageable level. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will allow the city to harvest a certain number of deer. The harvested deer will be available to Owatonna citizens through a public lottery system. If you have questions about the lottery please contact the Owatonna Park & Recreation Department at 507-444-4321. Applications for the lottery drawing will be available at the Owatonna Park and Recreation Department or can be submitted online at www.ci.owatonna.mn.us. If you have any questions regarding the management hunt itself, you may contact either the Director of Parks and Recreation Jeff McKay at 507-774-7362 or Police Chief Keith Hiller at 507-774-7201.

Police Department Repurposing, Phase II—

We have entered Phase II of the repurposing project to update the city portion of the Law Enforcement Center. This past year, we reached an agreement with Steele County Sheriff’s Office to obtain the remaining office space in the second floor of the west tower to use for our evidence processing and long-term evidence storage needs. Our current evidence processing/storage room, located in the basement, is nearly at capacity and lacks proper ventilation. The new area will have more square footage, proper ventilation, increased security and a modern, high density storage system that we believe will meet the department’s long-term evidence storage needs for the foreseeable future. The repurposing will also increase the efficiencies of our evidence officer as it will be located immediately adjacent to the Detective Bureau. In addition to this project, we are also remodeling two restrooms on the second floor to bring them into ADA compliance. City crews have completed the majority of the demolition work of the old office space and are in the beginning phases of framing the area. This project is being significantly funded by city in-kind services similarly to our Detective Bureau project completed this past year.