Just the Facts

Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Results—

In the December 14th edition of Just the Facts, we reported on a state-wide mobilization effort by state, county and local law enforcement officials to increase statewide DWI patrols. As a result of the mobilization, an estimated 1,300 people have been arrested for DWIs in December, according to preliminary DWI arrest information from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. In December, county sheriff’s offices, municipal police agencies and the Minnesota State Patrol are working overtime hours during a statewide Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign in an effort to prevent drunk driving tragedies. In the last five years, 651 people were killed in drunk driving crashes, 111 in 2011 alone. Each year, nearly 30,000 people are arrested for DWI. In the last three December (2009-2011), 28 people were killed in drunk driving crashes and 7,497 were arrested for DWI. Locally during the month of December, the Owatonna Police Department has made nine DWI arrests. “A DWI is certain to ruin the holidays, but thankfully these motorists were taken off the road before they caused real and direct harm to another motorist,” says Lt. Eric Roeske of the Minnesota State Patrol. “There’s no excuse for drunk driving, there are plenty of safe alternatives.”

DWI Consequences

A DWI offense can result in loss of license for up to a year, thousands in costs and possible jail time. Repeat DWI offenders, as well as first-time offenders arrested at 0.16 and above alcohol-concentration level, must use ignition interlock in order to regain legal driving privileges, or face at least one year without a driver's license. Offenders with three or more offenses are required to use interlock for three to six years, or they will never regain driving privileges.

Bar Closing Melee Leads to Arrest—

On December 23rd, Owatonna officers were called to an alley at the back of Reggie’s Bar for the report of a disturbance or a fight. Responding officers found a large group of people gathering in the alley; as squad cars pulled up, officers reported seeing the group dispersing away from the squad cars. Employees from Reggie’s directed our officers to one specific person who was walking away from the scene. Officers directed the person to stop; however, he elected to continue to walk away from our officers. After repeated efforts, officers were able to get the person to stop walking and he walked toward our officers in an aggressive manner. He refused to identify himself, only indicating that everyone else involved in this matter should be arrested. Later investigation revealed that a bouncer inside of Reggie’s broke up a fight that occurred inside the bar that involved our suspect. As the bouncer was trying to get our suspect out of the bar, he was punched twice by the suspect in the face resulting in a bloody nose. Our suspect, Lorenzo M. Cook, age 21 was arrested and charged by citation with 5th Degree Assault and Disorderly Conduct. He was transported to the Steele County Detention Center and later released.

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
◊ 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. Whenev er 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.