Serial Check Forger Arrested—

On October 18th, Owatonna officers were called to Premier Bank for the report of a male individual attempting to pass a counterfeit check—our officers were also notified this same individual also committed the same crimes in Faribault and Northfield. Earlier in the day, Premier Bank employees received an alert that a male suspect may be coming into the bank to cash a fraudulent check out of an account from a White Bear Lake business. When the suspect entered the bank and attempted to cash a check in the amount of $3,379.41, Premier employees advised the suspect the check needed to be approved by an officer before it could be cashed. In the meantime, Premier employees were on the phone to report the crime to law enforcement. Arriving officers located the suspect seated in the bank lobby—he was placed under arrest and transported to the Steele County Detention Center. Richard A. Collins, age 49, of Minneapolis was formally charged in District Court with Check Forgery—Offering a Forged Check which is a felony.

Congratulations Adam—

We have concluded our lengthy hiring process by offering a police position to Adam Hennen. Adam is a Minnesota native, growing up in the St. Cloud and Cold Springs, MN area and is a graduate of the Rocori High School. Adam attended Ridgewater Community College where he obtained an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Law Enforcement and the Alexandria Technical College where he completed the Law Enforcement Skills Program. Adam has several years of law enforcement experience working with the Watkins, Paynesville and Madelia Police Departments; he has been with the Madelia Police Department since 2009. Adam will begin his career with the Owatonna Police Department on November 5th working with our field training unit.

Social Media Creates a Lead—

On October 20th, an Owatonna officer received a telephone call from a female victim wanting to report the fraudulent use of her Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. The victim, who lives in Faribault, reported that her card had been used fraudulently in a large transaction at the Walmart store in Owatonna. Our officer contacted Walmart’s loss prevention staff and obtained a surveillance video of the fraudulent transaction; however, he was unable to identify the suspects. The victim viewed the fraudulent transaction but was also unable to identify the suspects depicted in the video. The victim was provided a copy of a surveillance photo so that she could try to have employees at the business where the card was stolen attempt to identify the suspect, but that also proved unsuccessful. Finally, the victim posted a copy of the surveillance photo on her Facebook page and within minutes, four separate “Facebook Friends” were able to put names to the pictures. This case is on-going, but serves as a great example as to the power of social media and its potential uses by law enforcement.

Daylight Savings Reminder—

Clocks are to be set back one hour during Fall Back. This year, Fall Back occurs on Sunday, November 4th. Fall Back is also a great time to change the batteries in your smoke detector.

Department News—

This past week, Sergeant Tracy DuChene attended a training course in Arden Hills designed for sergeants who are responsible for supervising field training officers and the probationary officers in the field training program. Sergeant DuChene was recently selected as the new coordinator for our Field Training Unit, taking over the program from Sgt. Robbe Kniefel who has headed up our unit since 2008. Our current Field Training Unit includes Officers Jason Matejcek, Kyle Parr, Chad Fierst and Joe Swenson and will be augmented in the near future with an additional two officers. A special thanks goes out to Sgt. Kniefel for the years of service he dedicated to the unit!