City Council Recognition Ceremony—

On Monday evening at the Owatonna City Council meeting, the department formally presented our newly hired, promoted and awarded officers to the Owatonna City Council. Taking the oath of office as newly hired police officers were Brady Fox, Matt Oeltjenbruns, Christian Berg, Mark Chambers, Brady Prince Micaiah Becker and Tony Heaser; all seven of these officers were hired in 2011. Following the reading of the oath, the officers had a significant other pin them with their police officer badge. Taking the oath of office as newly promoted sergeants were Josh Sorensen and Tracy Duchene. These sergeants also had the honor of having a significant other pin them with their sergeant badge. The photo to the right shows Sergeant Sorensen being pinned by his wife Shannon and Sergeant Duchene being pinned by his brother, Trooper Shawn Barta. Lastly, three officers—Mike Schneider, retired Corporal John Petterson and Detective Andy Drenth, were recognized with a Class “D” commendation. A Class “D” commendation is awarded to officers for outstanding performance on a single event or for situations that demonstrate the application of a member’s job skill under difficult circumstances. Congratulations to all these officers!

Re-Purposing Update—

We are winding down our evidence room project. On Tuesday, our new pass-thru evidence lockers were installed; they will be a definite improvement in functionality and security over our previous system. The last of the trim work will soon be completed and additional storage shelving will be installed to follow. When the project is completed, we will be able to increase our efficiencies in evidence processing and also increase our long-term evidence storage needs by approximately 150%.

From Our Not So Smart Offender Files—

On Thursday, February 9th at approximately 1:50 a.m., an Owatonna officer was patrolling in his patrol district when he came across a vehicle in the 500 block of Mineral Springs Road that had severe rear end damage; he also noted a puddle of vehicle fluid behind the vehicle, a vehicle license plate lying on the ground behind the vehicle and a trail of vehicle fluids leading away from the vehicle. Being naturally curious, the officer followed the proverbial trail of bread crumbs up to the closed garage of a residence in the 800 block of 20th St. N.E. The officer looked in the garage window and observed a vehicle with severe front end damage and parts missing consistent with what was found on Mineral Springs Road. Officers made contact with the vehicle owner who indicated the operator was in the basement sleeping. When the officers spoke with the driver, they observed he had bruises and cuts on his face—they also found he had a cancelled-inimical to public safety driver’s license. The driver was placed under arrest and transported to the Steele County Detention Center. James E. Bowar, age 32, was formally charged in District Court with Driving after Cancellation-Iminical to Public Safety-a gross misdemeanor and Leaving the Scene of a Property Damage Accident.

In cooperation with the Owatonna Park & Recreation Department and the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Owatonna Police Department has scheduled the next attempt to manage the remaining eight deer in the quota established by the DNR on February 24th, 2012.