Leadership Owatonna Visits the OPD—

On Tuesday morning, the 2013-14 Leadership Owatonna class visited the Owatonna Police Department Detective Bureau as part of their Public Safety & Criminal Justice Day. The morning started off with Chief Keith Hiller updating the group on What's New in the department and a department overview. Captain Eric Rethemeier followed with a presentation and a case study focusing on the department's domestic abuse program. South Central Drug Investigation (SCDIU) Agent Andy Drenth spoke about current drug developments being seen in the SCDIU enforcement area and highlighted three recent SCDIU investigations. Gang Intelligence Officers Sean Cooper and Christian Berg spoke of gangs in general and trends being seen in Owatonna. Finally, our use of force instructors—Sergeant Josh Sorensen and Officers Laddie Bata and Matt Oeltjenbruns presented on topics surrounding the police, SWAT and the authorized used of force and the equipment we use.

As part of their presentation, three exercises took place, including—City of Owatonna Human Resources Coordinator Lynn Gorski volunteering to be tased to show the effectiveness and short term effects of a Taser device, two class members volunteering to participate in a shoot/don't shoot situations and a demonstration of a Flashbang—a non-lethal distraction device used by the SCDIU Tactical Team.

An Unstoppable Force Meeting an Unmovable Object...Not—

Without a doubt, at some point each year, we are called to the railroad bridge that crosses over Mineral Springs Road near North Grove for a driver failing to heed the height restriction of the bridge with an oversized vehicle. On Wednesday at about 9:30 AM, the inevitable occurred again when a semi driver tried driving a tractor/trailer taller than 11'-8" under the bridge marked with a clearance of 11'-8". As the picture below will attest, the bridge wins that contest every time. Luckily in this case, as in most cases with this bridge, neither the driver nor anyone else was injured in this crash. A few hours later, because the day wasn't bad enough for this particular truck, it caught fire after it was towed from the scene to Dean's Westside Towing.

A Compelling Argument Against—

On Thursday afternoon, Chief Keith Hiller, Captain Eric Rethemeier, Officer Christian Berg and members of the Steele County Safe and Drug Free Coalition attended a symposium at the Mall of America entitled, When the Smoke Clears. The group heard a presentation from Mr. Kevin Sabet, the Director of the Drug Policy Institute at the University of Florida and the only appointee to serve a democratic and republican president on the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Mr. Sabet is an outspoken opponent of marijuana legalization and provided a fact and data driven presentation focusing on the 7 Great Myths of Marijuana and a compelling argument against the legalization of medical or recreational marijuana. The presentation was also attended by many law enforcement leaders from throughout the state.