Preventing Telephone Scams—

This past week an unsuspecting citizen received a telephone call from a male individual purporting to be an attorney. The “attorney” demanded the citizen pay a substantial amount of money to cover fees for a client he is representing or he would have a police officer come to the citizen’s place of work and have him arrested. The “attorney” provided the citizen with private data, including his social security number, place of employment and email accounts which contributed to the citizen believing the claim was legitimate. At the request of the attorney, the citizen purchased pre-paid Wal-Mart cards in the amount of $700 and provided the “attorney” with the card account numbers and authorization codes. The cards were ultimately activated in Georgia by unidentified suspect(s). This is an example of the scam currently targeting unsuspecting victims. Scam artists pray on victims by utilizing techniques that require the potential victim to act quickly to avoid an undesirable outcome. Before committing to any unsolicited call asking or demanding money to avoid an undesirable event, tell the caller you need time to consider their offer or ask them to send you information to verify their allegation; if they don’t, it is probably a scam. Also, do not provide any personal data over the telephone such as social security numbers or banking account numbers. Lastly, if you think you’re being scammed over the telephone, independently verify claims or contact the police department and provide them with the details of the scam before acting.

Tips to Avoid being scammed—

1. The Golden Rule—When the offers seems to be to good to be true, it probably is.
2. Keep Personal Information Private—Never give your bank accounts, social security, or credit card numbers to anyone you don’t know or trust.
3. Avoid High Pressure Sales—Say no to any offer or deal that is only available right now.
4. Never Pay for a Prize—If you are offered a prize but are asked to pay for a “processing fee” or “taxes in advance” it is likely a scam. You shouldn't have to pay anything to receive a free prize!

Vehicle Off-Road Results In DWI Arrest—

On February 20th at 9:24 p.m., an officer on patrol came across a vehicle that had ran off the road at the intersection of Mineral Springs Rd. and St. Paul Rd.; upon leaving the roadway, the vehicle struck a stop sign, a fence and a fire hydrant. The officer met with the driver who was obviously shaken up over the crash but was not injured. However, the officer also noticed the driver was showing signs of impairment and had the driver perform road-side sobriety tests. The driver was subsequently placed under arrest for suspicion of drunk driving and transported to the Steele County Detention Center for further DWI processing. The driver, a 42-year old male, was released to a sober party and formal charges have been requested pending the blood alcohol results from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension laboratory.

Deer Management Hunt—

The department will be placing officers in Kaplan’s Woods, Hammann Park and the North Straight River Park this afternoon beginning at 2:00 p.m. until sunset in an attempt to manage the remaining eight deer in the quota set by the Minnesota DNR. Signs will be posted at the entrances to the parks to notify citizens and restrict access. A safety officer has also been assigned to patrol the hunt area.

Suspect Tasered-Arrested—

On February 13th, Owatonna officers were requested by the Winona County Sheriff’s Office to respond to 616 W. Bridge Street, apartment #102, to check for a subject wanted for a probation violation. Arriving officers located the subject at the residence along with a family member. As officers placed the subject under arrest, he resisted, indicating he was not going anywhere until he knew where his family member was going. When told where the family member was going, he still resisted and made advances toward the officers. The subject was given a warning by officers to comply with their directions or he would be tased; the subject refused. A Taser device was deployed; however, the subject was able to continue resisting despite the Taser. Additional officers were summoned to the scene and officers were required to use physical force to restrain and handcuff the subject. Shane L. Passehl, age 31, was placed under arrest for the outstanding warrant. In addition, Mr. Passehl was also formally charged with Interfering with the Legal Process—a gross misdemeanor.