Trouble in the Passenger Seat—On Saturday, February 20th at 01:18 a.m., an OPD Officer stopped a vehicle for an equipment violation at the intersection of North Street and North Cedar Avenue. Upon speaking with the driver, the officer recognized the back seat passenger as Mark Ammann, who was also known by the officer as a wanted person out of Rice County. The officer's back-up arrived and ordered the front seat passenger, Chad Smith, out of the vehicle. Upon doing so, the officer observed a sawed-off shotgun near Smith’s feet. A further search of the vehicle revealed a .40 caliber handgun under the passenger seat— with a loaded magazine. In the map pocket, behind the passenger seat, was a black portfolio that contained clear plastic tubes and baggies containing a crystallized substance. Also near Smith on the passenger front floor was a backpack that contained .410 shotgun shells, and a replica flintlock handgun. Upon arresting Ammann, a magazine containing .40 caliber ammunition was found in his shirt pocket. Once Ammann arrived to jail, officers found a small bag of a white crystallized substance on the floor in the back seat of the police car. Smith was arrested for possession of a short barreled shotgun. During his booking process, Smith dropped a bag containing 4 grams of methamphetamine out of his trousers and attempted to flush the bag down the jail cell toilet. A further, more detailed search of Smith was announced. Prior to the search, Smith turned over another hidden baggie that contained a crystallized substance. All suspected controlled substances tested presumptive positive for methamphetamine. Chad A. Smith, age 28, was charged with possession of a short-barreled shotgun and 3rd degree controlled substance—both felonies. Mark H. Ammann, age 31, was charged with a first degree controlled substance—a felony. The driver was released from the scene with a fix-it ticket.

Cops & the Community

On Friday, February 26th, Detective Oeltjenbruns and Detective Munns met with citizens of Owatonna in the Hy-Vee dining area to discuss current scams and fraud targeted against the elderly. Topics discussed varied with the main focus being on fraudulent IRS calls as well as calls from persons purporting to be grandchildren in distress who request money to bail them out of alleged legal troubles or who request payment for medical bills etc. Scammers can be very convincing and all citizens are advised to verify information before ever sending money to anyone.

A Visit to the Kiwanis Golden K Club—On Tuesday, February 23rd, Patrol Captain Eric Rethemeier was a guest speaker at the Owatonna Kiwanis Golden “K” Club. Captain Rethemeier met with the group at the Senior Center and spoke on various topics that ranged from the Owatonna Police Department’s structure and drug investigation and proposed drug sentencing changes to community policing and departmental statistical data. At the end of the program, Captain Rethemeier fielded many questions that included Internal Revenue Service scams, gun laws and personal protection.

Officer Berg Presents at Steele County Public Health Nursing—On Friday, February 26th, Police Officer Christian Berg was invited to speak to a group at the Steele County Public Health Nursing Office regarding Home Safety for Visiting Professionals. Topics in Officer Berg’s presentation covered the following:

- Prevention—Safety in a home with potential volatile/ mental health related family situations, violence, and how to deescalate situations using “Verbal Judo”.
- Steele County Trends—What is happening in our community that staff needs to be aware of as we enter homes? What drugs and crimes are currently prevalent? What is suspicious and how do we use a common sense approach?
- Reporting—What does staff need to report?

Officer Berg wrapped up his presentation with an open panel question and answer forum that included such questions as, What should be done if someone unexpectedly is in the home like a boyfriend just released from prison?, Or how can our partnership with Law Enforcement be improved upon?