Just the Facts
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Crime Scene 101—

The second floor of the old Cedarview Nursing Home was busting with activity as a group of 8th grade student criminologists descended upon the facility to investigate a burglary and homicide crime scene. As part of Owatonna Middle School teacher Nicole Rhodes’ forensics class, the Owatonna Police Department partnered to create the practical crime scene scenarios that allowed the students to investigate and process a crime scene. Detectives Matt Oeljjenbruns, Brady Vaith, Christian Berg and Evidence Technician Kim Dub, all certified physical evidence officers, provided insight and direction as the students worked their way through the mock crime scenes. The students were divided into teams and assigned different roles such as team leader, photographer, evidence collection, scene sketch, and evidence processing. This was the culmination of the students’ hard work throughout the semester learning about forensics and how to process a crime scene. Prior to this class, our officers worked with the students to teach fingerprinting skills and helped facilitate Ms. Rhodes to attend a physical evidence officer course with our staff.

What’s Your Plan—

During the holiday Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) DWI campaign, November 22 — December 31, officers, deputies and troopers arrested 2,656 offenders statewide for impaired driving—a 10% increase from the same time period in 2016. That number was buoyed locally with 9 DWI arrest between the Owatonna Police Department and the Steele County Sheriff’s Office. With big football games coming up for the next few weekends, what’s your sober game plan? To remind motorists to line up a sober ride, the Department of Public Safety is partnering with the Steele County Sheriff’s Office. With big football games coming up for the next few weekends, what’s your sober game plan? To remind motorists to line up a sober ride, the Department of Public Safety is partnering with the Steele County Sheriff’s Office.

Drug Court—

Officers from the Owatonna Police Department play an important role in the Waseca/Steele Drug Court with accountability checks. At random times throughout a participant’s journey through drug court, our officers pay visits to their homes to make certain they are complying with the conditions of the court. However, our purpose isn’t solely related to accountability, but to also serve as a symbol of encouragement. Often times the participants are well known to our officers and it serves our officers and the participant equally well knowing they are attempting to take the steps to kick their addictions. In 2017, the Owatonna Police Department completed 331 accountability checks.

Cops in the Community—

Last Saturday morning, Officer Mike Earl visited the Steele County Trail Association in Hope to speak with a group of young snowmobiling enthusiasts. The purpose of Mike’s visit was to talk with youth about snowmobiling safety and local Owatonna snowmobiling ordinances. On Thursday at the Owatonna Middle School, Community Service Officer Dave Schroeder took a break from his regular duties at the middle school to demonstrate to a group of students some guitar strummin’ skills.