Click it or Ticket—

The Owatonna Police Department is one of around 400 statewide law enforcement agencies and 10,000 agencies nationwide participating in a Click it or Ticket seat belt enforcement mobilization. The mobilization period is between the period of May 21st and June 3rd and during that time we have had extra officers out on patrol specifically targeting unbelted vehicle occupants. During this time frame, utilizing grant funding from Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Traffic Safety, Owatonna patrol officers have dedicated approximately 65 extra hours of patrol time specific to seatbelt and child safety seat enforcement and have issued more than 60 seatbelt related citations between May 21st and May 30th.

Why is voluntary seatbelt compliance so important? The Minnesota Department of Public Safety provides the following facts gathered between 2008-2010.

- Of the 932 vehicle occupants killed, only 424 (45 percent) were known to be belted.
- Of the 2,858 vehicle occupants seriously injured, only 1,568 (55 percent) were known to be belted.
- During this period, 206 motorists were killed during nighttime hours (9 p.m. – 3 a.m.), and only 55 (27 percent) of these victims were known to be belted.
- Annually, nearly 75 percent of unbelted traffic deaths occur on Greater Minnesota roads.
- Minnesotans that are least likely to buckle up and more likely to die in crashes are young drivers, particularly males and residents in Greater Minnesota. Each year, motorists ages 15-29 account for about 40 percent of all unbelted deaths and 50 percent of all unbelted serious injuries – yet this group represents only 24 percent of all licensed drivers.
- Each year, 70 percent of drinking drivers killed in crashes are not buckled up.
- Nationwide, traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 2 to 33 years old.
- Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers – 16 to 19-year-olds are more likely to die in a crash than the next two leading causes combined (homicide and suicide). Of the 88 vehicle occupant crash fatalities in that age group, only 33 (38 percent) were known to be belted.

Stab Wound Sends One to the Hospital—

Owatonna officers were called to the Owatonna Hospital emergency room on Wednesday, May 30th for the report of a male individual being treated for a stab wound. Investigating officers found a 55-year old victim had suffered a non-life threatening stab wound to his abdomen. He was subsequently transported to Rochester for further treatment. Officers were able to identify the suspect in this case as a 49-year old female; she was later interviewed and arrested by detectives. The suspect has since been released from custody as the investigation continues.

The Dangers we Face—

During the early morning hours on June 1st, Owatonna officers were at 134 West Rose Street to mediate a verbal domestic disturbance. As officers were speaking with the female half of the disturbance, they observed she was obviously intoxicated and was screaming obscenities toward the officers. To end any further disturbances from occurring, the officers were attempting to find a suitable placement for the intoxicated female. As they were doing so, the female stood up from a lawn chair and one of the officers noticed she was clenching a set of dentures in her hand. The female then turned toward the officer and attempted to push the dentures into the mouth of the officer; the dentures striking the officer on his outside and inside of his mouth. The officer tried to restrain the female when she fell to the ground and was taken into custody. Dawn M. Fuller, age 47, was placed under arrest and transported to the Steele County Detention Center. Fuller was formally charged in District Court with 4th Degree Assault of a Peace Officer—a gross misdemeanor.