Police Pursuit—

On Thursday, June 2nd, in the area of E. Rice Lake St. and Partridge Ave., an Owatonna officer observed a vehicle being operated by a subject known to have a revoked driver’s license. The officer turned around with the intent to catch up and stop the vehicle. The officer regained visual contact with the vehicle near Truman Ave. and Agnes St. and initiated a traffic stop with his emergency lights. The vehicle failed to stop and a short pursuit ensued. The suspect vehicle finally stopped on Academy St. near the water tower adjacent to the Owatonna High School. The officer made contact with the driver who was non-compliant with the officer’s directions and as a result, the officer used his Taser to gain control of the driver. John L. Smith, age 29, was arrested and transported to the Steele County Detention Center pending formal charges of Driving after Revocation, Fleeing a Police Officer in Motor Vehicle and Obstructing the Legal Process. Smith’s vehicle, a 1996 Lincoln Continental, has been seized and held for forfeiture for being used while fleeing a police officer.

May Seat Belt Mobilization—

The Owatonna Police Department is completing the May mobilization Click it or Ticket campaign which ran from May 23rd through June 3rd. Funding for this mobilization was provided by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety through a Safe and Sober grant. With the grant, the Owatonna Police Department was able to fund an additional 40-hours of patrol services which focused primarily on seat belt enforcement. From the beginning of the mobilization wave through today, Owatonna police officers have issued 43 seatbelt/child restraint citations to drivers/passengers. When the cited motorists were questioned by the officers for the reason for not wearing their seatbelt, the majority of them indicated they had just forgotten to put it on. Remember to make buckling up a priority; the most recent data released by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety reveals that in 2009, 2,529 people not using safety equipment were killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes.

South Central Drug Investigation Unit (SCDUI) Arrest—

The SCDIU is a federally funded task force primarily focused on illegal narcotics investigations occurring in Steele County, Freeborn County, Waseca County, Faribault County and the municipalities within those counties. The Owatonna Police Department takes a leadership role in this task force by supplying a commander, field agent and the administrative assistant. On Tuesday, May 31st, SCDIU agents completed a marijuana grow investigation taking place in the city of Waseca. SCDIU agents executed a search warrant at 209 8th St. N.E. in Waseca and discovered 241 marijuana plants being grown in the residence. As a result of the investigation, Gregory J. Ries, age 47, was arrested and charged in Waseca County with 5th degree controlled substance crimes.