Child Abuse Prevention—

April was first declared Child Abuse Prevention Month in 1983. Since then, April has been a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse. Children who are abused may show physical and behavioral signs. You may be a child’s only lifeline to safety. Child abuse is everyone’s business. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call child protection services in Steele County, the Owatonna Police Department or call 1-800-CHILDREN to speak with someone at Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota. Child abuse is any maltreatment of a child that results in harm or injury. Child abuse includes:

**Physical abuse** – an injury to a child that is not an accident; for example, hurting a child by hitting, burning, biting, or shaking.

**Sexual abuse** – any sexual contact with a child, including exhibitionism, photographs or films, or prostitution.

**Physical neglect or endangerment** – failure to give the child food, clothing, medical care, shelter, or supervision. A parent may endanger a child by not using a child safety seat when traveling in a vehicle.

**Emotional abuse and neglect** – an abusive parent may scare a child by threatening to leave him or her, or may be severely critical. A neglectful parent may not spend any time with the child or may never show the child any affection. A neglectful parent may not provide enough food or medical attention.

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**Traffic Stop Leads to Search Warrant**—

On March 20th, an Owatonna officer stopped a vehicle for a seatbelt violation; the stop lead to a search of the vehicle where methamphetamines were recovered. A passenger in the vehicle provided information as to where he had just purchased the methamphetamines and had seen large amounts of methamphetamines in the residence. Subsequently, a search warrant was obtained for 104 21st St. NW. During that search, a total of 18.62 grams of methamphetamines were recovered. Nicole L. Erdman, age 29, was arrested in connection with the residence search. Erdman was later formally charged with several felonies, including 1st Degree Sale of a Controlled Substance, 2nd Degree Possession of a Controlled Substance and 3rd Degree Sale of a Controlled Substance.

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**1st Degree DWI**—

On March 23rd, an Owatonna Officer was traveling on State Ave and noticed a SUV occupying both lanes of traffic. When the vehicle failed to stop at a stop sign, the Officer initiated a traffic stop. The driver indicated she had used meth in the past 2 days and requested medical assistance as she was coming down off a meth high. The Officer also discovered the suspect’s driver’s license was cancelled and she had a felony arrest warrant out of Washington County for controlled substance. OPD K-9 Kash was deployed and alerted officers to the possible presence of narcotics in the vehicle. A vehicle search was conducted and a baggie of marijuana, a baggie of a clear substance, used needles and a pipe were located in the vehicle. The clear substance tested positive for methamphetamine. The vehicle was towed from the scene and is subject to forfeiture. The suspect, Tricia Kay Severson, age 39, was cleared by medical personnel and placed under arrest. She was formally charged with 1st degree DWI, 5th Degree Possession of a Controlled Substance, and Driving After Cancellation-Inimical to Public Safety.

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