**SCDIU Activity in Owatonna—**

On March 21st, the South Central Drug Investigative Unit (SCDIU) received information from a concerned citizen of extensive drug activity at 607 Hazel Lane in Owatonna. Based on that information as well as complaints from other sources regarding excessive traffic and suspected drug activity, the SCDIU was able to obtain a search warrant for the residence. Prior to the execution of the warrant, agents from the SCDIU stopped a vehicle which had just left the Hazel Lane residence; in that vehicle, they recovered paraphernalia and marijuana and received a statement from an occupant to indicate he had just purchased marijuana at the Hazel Lane address. Upon executing the search warrant, agents from the SCDIU recovered a large amount of evidence, including, baggies used in the sale of narcotics, scales, cash, lighters, rolling papers and other items. In addition, they recovered large amounts of marijuana believed to be used to make a marijuana butter substance. Nicholas R. Richards, age 24 and a 21 year-old female were arrested from the residence. Richards was later charged with 5th Degree Sale of a Controlled Substance, Possession of a Small Amount of Marijuana and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. The female taken into custody was later released without charges. The SCDIU is a regional task force encompassing Steele, Waseca, Freeborn, and Faribault counties. Participating agencies include the Owatonna Police Department, Blooming Prairie Police Department, Steele County Sheriff’s Office, Albert Lea Police Department, Freeborn County Sheriff’s Office, Waseca Police Department, Waseca County Sheriff’s Office, Janesville Police Department, Faribault County Sheriff’s Office, Blue Earth Police Department, Wells Police Department, and Winnebago Police Department. The Owatonna Police Department contributes a commander, an agent and an administrative assistant to the SCDIU.

**Prescription Forgery Leads to Charges—**

On March 26th, the Owatonna Police Department was contacted by the Hy-Vee Pharmacy to report a prescription forgery that had just been called in. The responding officer learned that a female suspect had just called in a prescription renewal for Xanax for a person currently incarcerated at the Steele County Jail; the pharmacy employee had knowledge that Xanax was not allowed at the jail. Officers waited at Hy-Vee for the suspect; however, she did not show up. Shortly after the officers left, they received another call from Hy-Vee to report the suspect had just picked-up and paid for the prescription. Officers responded back and located the female suspect as she was leaving the parking lot. The suspect was detained and evidence related to the forgery was found in her purse; the suspect was later transported to the Steele County Jail. While at the jail and while detention staff and the officer were conducting booking procedures, the suspect removed a bottle of pills she had concealed on her and swallowed some of the contents. Shelly L. Phipps, age 31, was formally charged in District Count with 5th Degree Possession of a Controlled Substance. Xanax is Schedule IV controlled substance.

**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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