Cops in the Community—

On Wednesday evening, Officer Sean Cooper visited the Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church to speak with a group of kids about first aid topics, including, who to call when you need medical help, what is a police officer’s role in a medical response. Officer Cooper also talked about bicycle safety tips.

On Thursday afternoon, Community Service Officers (CSO) Tony Malepsy and Josh Federly paid a visit to Washington School. The CSOs were meeting with kids in the Owatonna Community Education School Age Care (SAC) program to give them squad car tours and an equipment demonstration.

Speed Week Enforcement—

Drive at safe speeds and you won’t find flashing lights in your rear-view mirror. The Owatonna Police Department, as a part of the Toward Zero Deaths Campaign, is conducting increased speed patrols this week to combat a deadly cause of traffic crashes. The special “speed week” enforcement and education effort is coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. Unsafe and illegal speed is the most commonly reported contributing factor in fatal crashes. During 2009–2011, speed was a contributing factor in two fatalities in Steele County and 254 traffic deaths statewide.

South Central Drug Investigation Unit Targets Synthetic Drugs Sales—

The South Central Drug Investigation Unit (SCDIU) has been conducting an ongoing investigation of the Jericho Tobacco store, targeting the sale of synthetic marijuana. In April of 2012, an undercover operation entered the store and purchased a substance called K9 Potpourri. The substance was sent to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (MN BCA) laboratory where it tested positive for an illegal substance(s). The agent was able to identify the person who sold the substance as the owner of the store, Omar Abdallah. In August of 2012, a similar undercover operation took place where an operative purchased three packages of herbal incense. The herbal incenses were marketed under the name of Cloud 9, Chill and K4 Train Wreck. These substances were also tested by the MN BCA and also tested positive for the presence of an illegal substance(s); these packages were also purchased from the owner of the store. On March 12, 2013, a third undercover operation took place where an operative purchased two packages of substances marketed as Mad Hatter and Scooby Snacks. Subsequent to the final purchase, an agent with the SCDIU drafted a search warrant for Jericho Tobacco and Omar Abdullah’s residence. Later on March 12th, agents from the SCDIU and detectives from the Owatonna Police Department executed search warrants at Jericho Tobacco and 327 North Grove Avenue in Owatonna. During the course of the search at Jericho Tobacco, agents seized 6 packets of Scooby Snaxs, 44 packages of Joker and 148 packages of Mad Hatter. In addition, agents also seized $26,000 in currency from the till and a safe in the business; including the marked buy funds used by the undercover operative to purchase the packages of Mad Hatter and Scooby Snacks. Notable during the execution of the warrant at Jericho Tobacco, multiple customers came to the store trying to enter and buy products. During the execution of the search warrant served at 327 North Grove, SCDIU agents seized almost 6500 individual packages of various labeled herbal incense. Of the items tested by the BCA, some were found to contain the substance methylenedioxyprovalerone (MDPV), which is a Schedule I controlled substance. SCDIU agents arrested three individuals in this case—Omar A. Abdallah, age 46, Khamis A. Abdallah, age 41 and Wael A. Abdallah, age 40. Omar Abdallah was formally charged in Steele County District Court with 4th Degree Sale of a Controlled Substance, Sale of Synthetic Cannabis—Marijuana, and Conspiracy to Sell Synthetic Cannabis—all felonies. He was also charged with misdemeanor Possession of Synthetic Cannabis. Khamis Abdullah was formally charged with Sale of Synthetic Cannabis and Conspiracy to Sell Synthetic Cannabis—all felonies. Wael Abdullah was charged by citation for possessing synthetic Cannabis. The SCDIU is a regional task force consisting Steele, Freeborn, Waseca and Faribault Counties and the cities within those counties. The Owatonna Police Department contributes the SCDIU Commander, an agent and an administrative assistant to the task force.