**South Central Drug Investigation Unit Culminates Lengthy Investigation—**

On Monday, March 12, 2012, the South Central Drug Investigation Unit (SCDIU) and the Owatonna Police Department concluded an intensive, 9-month long investigation centering on illegal drug sales in the City of Owatonna, beginning the process of arresting those suspects involved in the sales. Assisted by the SCDIU Tactical Team and deputies from the Steele County Sheriff’s Office, four search warrants were served consecutively at locations where some of these illegal transitions had taken place. During the course of executing the search warrants, three suspect targets were located and arrested on charges stemming from the sales of illegal narcotics. Since the execution of the search warrants, an additional 17 suspects involved in this investigation have been arrested. An additional nine suspects are currently wanted and are being sought by the Owatonna Police Department. At the conclusion of this case, it is anticipated that as many as thirty-two suspects may be arrested on charges including, but not limited to 1st, 2nd and 3rd Degree Controlled Substance Sales.—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, Waseca Police Department, Janesville Police Department, Waseca County Sheriff’s Office, Albert Lea Police Department, Freeborn County Sheriff’s Office, Blue Earth Police Department, Winnebago Police Department, Wells Police Department and the Faribault County Sheriff’s Office. The Owatonna Police Department is a participating agency in the SCDIU as the fiscal agent and provides the task force commander, a case agent and the administrative coordinator. The department also contributes five tactical officers to the SCDIU Tactical Team. The SCDIU tactical team is a law enforcement support unit which is specifically trained and equipped to resolve critical, high-risk situations.

**Congratulations Brady—**

This week marked the end of the lengthy, intensive field training process for Officer Brady Prince as he began his solo patrol duties on Thursday. Brady was hired back in November and at that time began the extensive sixteen week, four-phase training and evaluation period where probationary officers are observed and evaluated on a daily basis in ten areas of core competency. The field training program is a critical component of any successful police department. It ensures the department has the sufficient opportunity to directly observe and certify that a newly hired officer has the essential job-related knowledge and skills to be an effective solo patrol officer. The field training unit is coordinated by Sergeant Robbe Kniefel and staffed by Officers Jason Matejeck, Kyle Parr, Chad Fierst and Joe Swenson. If you see Brady out and about, please congratulate him upon this accomplishment.

**….Other Drug Arrest News—**

On Thursday, March 8th, two Owatonna officers observed a vehicle being driven by an operator with a revoked driver’s license. They stopped the vehicle as it pulled into a driveway of a residence in the 2200 block of 3rd Avenue N.W. As one of the officers approached the vehicle, the owner of the residence where the vehicle pulled in to notified officers that something had been thrown out of the vehicle; officer located a black case and a glass pipe lying next to the garage. Inside of the case was a clear plastic bag containing a white powder substance believed to be cocaine. Officers investigated further and received information from two other occupants in the vehicle that the driver had thrown the case and pipe out of the vehicle. Officers arrested the driver on probable cause drug possession and transported him to the Steele County Detention Center. Three other vehicle occupants, including a juvenile, were released at the scene. Jeremiah M. Roberts, age 25, was formally charged in District Court with 5th Degree Possession of a Controlled Substance and Driving after Revocation. The vehicle used in this incident, a 1996 Dodge Ram, has been seized and may be subject to forfeiture for being used in a controlled substance crime.