A New Look—

In 2005, a new look was brought to the Owatonna Police Department as we transitioned from all-white cruisers to a black and white colored cruiser. Historically, black and white cruisers dated back as far as the 1940s and were brought back to Owatonna with the intent of increasing visibility—the black and white cruiser is an immediate identifier to the citizens of police presence and a hopeful reminder to follow the law. Since 2005, we have moved from having cruiser doors painted white to having a white vinyl wrap put over the door to reduce costs. However, the by-product of reducing cost was felt in quality and longevity—the vinyl wrap was not holding up to the wear and tear of a squad car operating 24/7/365 and many of our cars began to look poorly in appearance. Early this year, we began to formulate a plan to maintain the principle of operating black and whites, yet maintaining the professional appearance we strive for in your police department. What we came up with was keeping the main body of the squad cars black and creating a new, white-colored block-style graphics and lettering package that is designed to maintain a black and white appearance. The first of the newly designed cruisers hit the street this past week and we are hopeful of having the majority of the patrol fleet transitioned over within the next month. In the coming months you will also begin to see the new style cruisers hitting the street. For many years, the marked patrol fleet at the Owatonna Police Department was predominately made up of Ford Crown Victorias. In 2011, the Ford Motor Company discontinued the Crown Victoria line, so many police agencies, including the Owatonna Police Department, needed to replace them with an alternative. The OPD commissioned a committee to examine the alternatives from Ford, Chevrolet and Chrysler and after researching and test driving all of the models being offered in a police package, selected the Ford Police Interceptor Utility. The first OPD Ford Utility will also be hitting the streets this week.

Fleeing Suspect Subdued—

During the early morning hours on March 16th, our officers were called to a residential address in the 1700 block of Hemlock Avenue for the call of a 911 hang-up call. When our officers arrived, they heard a male and female arguing within the residence. They then observed a male individual standing at the door and asked him to step outside. While speaking with the male through the door, the male individual was holding a cell phone which he promptly broke in half. The male then exited the residence and began to speak with our officers; however, he was becoming increasingly agitated. An officer then attempted to place the male in handcuffs; however, the male fled from the officers on foot. Our officers took chase and after a short foot pursuit they successfully deployed a Taser device into the suspect to subdue him. Investigation of the complaint revealed the suspect allegedly assaulted his wife by punching her in the right eye, broke a telephone while she was trying to call the police and pulled out her hair extensions; officers observed the right side of the victim’s face was extremely swollen. Patrick D. Powell, age 39 was formally charged with Distinct Court with Domestic Assault—a gross misdemeanor, Interfering with a 911 Call and Feeling a Peace Officer on Foot.

Another Mail Theft-More Arrests—

On Wednesday afternoon, our officers took a report from an individual who lives on Arglen Drive regarding newly issued checks which had been stolen out of the mail. The victim reported he had been contacted by Fuel and Food reporting to him that someone was trying to use one of his personal checks. Later in the day, Bremer Bank contacted the department to report that there was a vehicle in the drive-thru containing two males and a female who were trying to cash one of the victim’s checks. Owatonna officers and Steele County deputies responded to Bremer Bank and upon arrival engaged in a foot pursuit with the driver of the suspect vehicle; he was later apprehended behind Starbucks. The other two occupants were later apprehended at 2055 3rd Ave. NW. A search warrant executed at that residence recovered evidence related to the stolen checks as well as other mail believed stolen. Cory D. Johnson, age 25, William J. Wieseler, age 25, and Marcy K. Busho, age 27 were arrested and jailed at the Steele County Detention Center. Johnson was formally charged with Offering a Forged Check (2 counts), Conspiracy to Commit Check Forgery, Possession of a Stolen Check and Possession of a Small Amount of Marijuana. Wieseler was charged with Conspiracy to Commit Check Forgery and Mail Theft. Busho was charged with Check Forgery and Conspiracy to Commit Check Forgery. If Wieseler looks at all familiar, we reported on him in the February 1st edition of Just the Facts for Aiding and Abetting Check Forgery and Mail Theft.