Sergeant Joel Welinski and Officer David Schroeder Announce Their Retirements—

On August 31st we will be saying goodbye to Detective Sergeant Joel Welinski and Officer Dave Schroeder and their 54 years of combined experience as both have announced their retirement from the department. Sergeant Welinski began his career as an Owatonna Police Officer on August 30, 1982. Sergeant Welinski has worked in many facets in the organization and is currently serving as the detective sergeant in the Detective Bureau and the commander of the South Central Drug Investigative Unit (SCDIU). Officer Schroeder began his career with the department on September 8, 1986. Officer Schroeder has served in both the patrol and investigation divisions. He is currently serving as patrol officers and a tactical officer with the SCDIU SWAT team. Congratulations to both officers and their families for their service and commitment to law enforcement for the State of Minnesota and the citizens of Owatonna.

Congratulations—

Due to Detective Sergeant Welinski's impending retirement, we will have a vacancy in the Detective Bureau. Sergeant Tim Hassing has been selected for that position and also as the commander of the SCDIU. Tim has been an officer with the department since 1982 and has held the rank of sergeant for the last 20 years. Tim's training/transition time will begin immediately and he will fully assume his new duties on September 1st.

Jealousy Leads to Assault—

On Friday, August 6th, Owatonna officers were conducting a routine bar check at Reggie’s Brewhouse when they were informed an assault had just occurred on the dance floor and the suspect had fled from the scene. Officers located the victim, a 23-year old male, who had suffered an approximate 2-inch cut above his right eye. Witnesses indicated the suspect came up from behind the victim and "blindsided" him because he was dancing with the suspect’s ex-girlfriend. The victim later received stitches to close the wound. While officers were conducting the bar check, an Owatonna sergeant was patrolling around the outside of the bar. The sergeant observed a male party run out of Reggie’s Brewhouse followed by a bouncer. The bouncer signaled to the officer and was pointing at the male party. The sergeant caught and detained the male individual and learned he was the suspect in the assault. The suspect was placed under arrest and transported to the Steele County Detention Center. Raul Vargas, age 23, was formally charged in District Court with 3rd Degree Assault, a felony and 5th Degree Assault, a misdemeanor.

School Supply Donation—

The school supplies donated during the Night to Unite event have been turned over the Children’s Remedial Fund. This will allow the supplies to benefit any student with needs residing in Steele County. The photo to the right shows Nancy Williams and Carol Belmore from the Owatonna Public School District accepting the supplies on behalf of the fund from Captain Jeff Mundale and Parking Control Officer Pam Roberts. In addition to the supplies, $277 in cash donations were also turned over to the fund.