Animal Cruelty Investigation—

The Owatonna People’s Press reported last week of four neglected puppies which had been found in an Owatonna park and brought to the Heartland Animal Hospital. An Owatonna officer received a tip from a concerned citizen who had information of the puppies’ possible owner. The officer continued with the investigation and was able to identify the owner of the puppies. The owner, a 27-year-old male, indicated the mother of the puppies was neglecting them soon after their birth. He struggled with caring for the puppies and their health started to deteriorate. Due to financial constraints he was unable to provide veterinary care for the puppies so he devised a plan for the puppies to be found at a park and turned over to a veterinarian’s care. Three of the puppies have since died. This case has been referred to the Office of the Steele County Attorney for criminal charges relating to cruelty to animals.

Retail Theft Spree—

On Saturday, August 13th, deputies from the Steele County Sheriff’s Office responded to the Ashley Furniture Store in Medford in response to a theft that had just occurred; it was reported the suspects had left and were southbound on the interstate. An Owatonna sergeant checked retail sites in the city along I-35 and located the suspect vehicle in the Lowe’s parking lot. Officers later identified a 46-year-old female suspect who later admitted to committing thefts at various locations during the past two days. The female was accompanied by a 44-year-old male who was implicated in the thefts. Inside of the suspect’s vehicle, officers found many items of property that appeared to be stolen from various retail stores in the area. That property was seized and investigators will attempt to identify the stores where the property was stolen from. Both parties, who reside in Aplington, Iowa, were arrested for suspicion of theft and booked into the Steele County Detention Center. Formal charges will be sought at the conclusion of the investigation.

Minnbid.org—

The Owatonna Police Department utilizes the State of Minnesota on-line auction service MinnBid to sell forfeited property. In the very near future, the department will be listing several items that were seized for being used in the commission of criminal activity and forfeited back to the department. Property being put up for auction will include trucks, cars, a minivan, a scooter, a snowmobile and a motorcycle. Proceeds from the auction can be used to enhance police operations according to Minnesota statute, but cannot be used to supplant normal operations. A full listing of current auctions can be seen at Minnbid.org.

Health care fraud can be prevented by doing a few simple things. Don’t sign blank health care forms, don’t give insurance information to people for free medical equipment, and check your insurance statements and medical bills to be sure you are only charged for services received. Finally, if you fill prescriptions online, only buy from certified pharmacies.