Steele County Safety Camp—
For graduation 3rd graders, an unofficial kickoff to summer is the Annual Safety Camp. A two-day event, the kids spent a day at Lake Kohlmier and the Steele County Fairgrounds focusing on many areas of safety, including: boating, electrical, camping/hiking, internet, first aid and fire safety. The Owatonna Police Department was well represented at the event, headlined by the event coordinator, Detective Matt Oeltjenbruns. Also helping were Detective Joel Hunt, Officers Jesse Ackerson, Andrew Van Osdale, Melissa Michael, Reserve Officer Matt Borash and Explorers Liam Miller, Robin Phillips and Tom Bendorf. Besides safety topics, the kids were treated with a demonstration of one of the helicopters from the State Patrol’s fleet.

Summer Bicycling Safety—
Last Saturday, our officers were called to the intersection of Main Street and Elm Avenue for a crash involving a motor vehicle and a scooter. The officer’s investigation and witness statements revealed the adolescent scooter operator was struck by a motor vehicle when entering the intersection without stopping for the semaphore (stoplight)—fortunately, the child was not seriously injured. With our kids out of school and out and about on our streets, it’s a good reminder for kids & adults to think about bicycling rules of the road. Cyclists have all the rights and duties applicable as a motor vehicle; we’ve highlighted the most frequent bicycling violations we see below:

- Bicyclists must obeying stop signs and semaphores.
- Bicyclists must ride as close as practical to the right hand curb or edge of the roadway as possible and in the same direction as the flow of traffic.
- When riding at night, a bike shall be equipped with a headlight to the front and a reflector to the rear.
- Bicyclists shall give arm signals continuously during the last 100 feet before turning unless both arms are needed to control the bike.
- Bicycles shall not be ridden on a sidewalk within the downtown business district—the downtown business district is considered the area contained within the perimeter of Oak Ave—Mill St.—Elm Ave—Front St.

When you gotta go—
On Wednesday afternoon, our officers were called to Sterling Drug for an overdue bathroomist—a male was reported to be in the bathroom for over an hour and believed to be doing drugs. When our officers arrived, they found the male sitting in the stall, but not making the sounds one would expect—rather they heard sniffing and snorting sounds. Cautionally, they investigated further as the male was exiting the stall. As he exited and placed his hands behind his back, he dropped an open case which revealed a loaded syringe with presumptive methamphetamine and other drug related items. Jacob P. Banks, age 24, was arrested and formally charged with 5th Degree Possession of a Controlled Substance—a felony.

Cops in the Community—
On Wednesday morning, Officer Travis Ardolf and Community Service Officers Travis Johnson and Dave Schroeder paid a visit to Kid’s Corner. The officers spoke to the youngsters about safe summer activities and gave squad car tours.

On Monday, Chief Keith Hiller and Captain Eric Rethemeier paid a visit to the set of the Owatonna Today Show. The pair spoke on current happenings in the department, community policing and local law enforcement’s role in immigration. You can view the episode by clicking here.