A New Chapter—

On June 29th, we’ll say goodbye to a good friend as Officer Mike Schneider will be working his last shift with the Owatonna Police Department. Very soon, Mike will be donning the patch of the Eagan Police Department. Mike has been with us since May of 2008 when he was hired as a community service officer. In October of 2009, Mike was hired as a part-time police officer and in May of 2010, hired as a full-time police officer. Mike has been an outstanding officer for the department and was recently assigned to work as crime free multi-housing officer. Mike received a distinguished service award in 2011 for his role in apprehending two burglary suspects. Mike, we wish you the best of luck in the next chapter of your law enforcement career.

Owatonna officers recover stolen police gear, four arrested—

On June 22, an Owatonna officer took a report of theft from a vehicle. The victim, an off-duty police officer from a neighboring jurisdiction, parked his personal vehicle in the 1000 block of S. Cedar Ave on the evening of June 21st and had left his duty belt, firearm and portable radios in his vehicle. When he returned to his vehicle the following morning, he found the duty belt, weapon and radios were missing from the vehicle. Later on the 22nd, the Owatonna Police Department Detective Bureau received a tip from a concerned citizen informant who had information related to the stolen firearm. Detectives where able to secure a search warrant for 610 S. Cedar Ave and were able to recover handcuffs that had been removed from the officer’s duty belt. Detectives were able to receive consent to search 525 S. Cedar Ave were two portable radios were recovered along with additional gear from the stolen gun belt. Detectives continued with the investigation during the early morning hours of June 23rd, executed a second search warrant at 144 E. Rose Street where the off-duty officer’s handgun, magazines and ammunition were recovered. During the course of the investigation, Owatonna detectives made four arrests, including Abraham Rocha, age 23, Dominique I. Pitts, age 25, Todd K. Nin, age 25 and a 17-year-old juvenile. All the arrested subjects were charged in District Court with charges including theft and receiving stolen property. This theft is not believed to be related to the rash of theft from vehicle reports we described in last weeks edition of “Just the Facts”.

Five Owatonna Officers Receive Commendations—

On June 19th, Owatonna officers responded to Lake Kohlmier in response to an adult male who was threatening suicide. Arriving officer located the gentleman in the parking lot and when officers approached, observed he was wielding a knife in his hand. The responding officers found the gentleman in an agitated state and he was making overtures for the officers to shoot him because his life was over. Due to the threat the subject was presenting, the officers were unable to get close enough to him to use non-lethal means of ending the stand-off and were forced to negotiate with him to drop the knife. After approximately five minutes of exchange between officers and the subject, the officers were able to get the subject to throw the knife on the ground. The subject remained agitated and confrontational with the officers; however, an officer was able to take a position of advantage from behind and was able to take the subject to the ground and into custody. The subject, a 22-year-old male, was later transported to the Owatonna Hospital and placed on a protective hold. The officers involved in this case, Sergeant Tracy DuChene, Officers Brandon Fandel, Brady Fox, Matt Oeltjenbruns and Brady Price have all been awarded Class “D” Commendations for their outstanding performance in their response to this call for service. Class “D” Commendations are awarded to members of the department for outstanding performance on a single event or for situations that demonstrate the application of a member’s job skill under difficult circumstances.

Our patrol officers and detectives have been working hard trying to identify the suspect(s) involved the recent rash of vehicle break-ins and their hard work has paid off. During the early morning on Wednesday, June 20th, our patrol officers came into contact with a group of juveniles we’ve been targeting as potential suspects; the juveniles were out egging vehicles which was reported by a concerned citizen. The juveniles were apprehended by our patrol officers and later interviewed by a detective. The juveniles admitted to their involvement in recent vehicle break-ins and selling stolen property on the internet. In addition, some stolen property was recovered. The juveniles, ranging in ages between 13-17, were released to their parents and are awaiting formal charges. Although arrests have been made, we caution citizens to remain vigilant in removing valuable property and securing their vehicle during the night time hours.