Robbery Suspect Arrested—

A foiled drug sale in April that led to a robbery resulted in an arrest and robbery charges today. Yusuf O. Ali, age 20, was arrested on Thursday when information was received that Ali was allegedly involved in the robbery of four youths who were attempting to sell marijuana in Manthey Park. The information revealed that Ali allegedly pulled one of the victims out of the car and started punching him. The victims reported marijuana, a wallet, $95 and a cell phone were taken at the time of the robbery. Ali was formally charged with 1st Degree Aggravated Robbery—a felony. At the time of the robbery, the victims in this case were allegedly struck with a baseball bat, a bottle and threatened to be shot.

Property Damage Alert—

Property damage complaints (tire slashings, spray painting) have seen a concerning spike in our community of late, causing many property owners an unexpected and unwanted expense. Often times these cases happen during the dead of the night when most people are sleeping and often leave little clues as to the perpetrators. To help protect yourself and your neighbors, the Owatonna Police Department offers the following suggestions:

- Please be alert to suspicious activity and don’t hesitate to call 9-1-1 to report it. This includes strangers walking or loitering about your neighborhoods, apparent juveniles out after curfew, vehicles you don’t recognize circling your neighborhood, or sounds such as glass breaking or loud banging.
- Record descriptions of suspicious people and/or vehicle(s) and obtain license plate numbers when possible.
- Consider parking your vehicle in well-lit locations.
- Leave outdoor lights on overnight, or consider installing photosensitive lighting that operates from dusk to dawn.

Accidental 9-1-1 Calls—

Did you know that an accidental 9-1-1 call will result in a police officer response? Between January 1, 2014 and July 17, 2014, we received 250 9-1-1 hang-up calls. During the same time frame this year, we have received 748 or almost a 200% increase. We attribute the majority of the accidental 9-1-1 calls to cell phones and a phenomena commonly known as a “butt dial”. The Federal Communication Center (FCC) reports that unintentional 9-1-1 calls clog phone lines that deliver legitimate emergency calls for public safety answering points (PSAP) and put the PSAP’s ability to respond to real emergencies at risk. According to the FCC, here is what you can do to reduce the number of accidental 9-1-1 calls—

- Locking keypads using the keypad lock feature. Keypad locks, some of which can be programmed to activate automatically, prevent a phone from responding to key-strokes until you unlock the keypad using a short combination of key presses.
- Turing off the 911 auto-dial feature, if your phone has one. To determine whether your phone has this feature, and how to turn it off, check your user manual or the manufacturer’s website, or contact your service provider.