Passenger Arrested after Foot Chase—

On Wednesday morning, an Owatonna officer was called to the OHS girl’s soccer team try-outs at Brown Park after one of the players reported her cell phone stolen. Smartly, the head coach had noted a suspicious person in the area of the player’s bags and obtained a license plate number from a vehicle the suspicious person left in. Shortly thereafter, an Owatonna detective spotted the vehicle near the fairgrounds. The detective performed a traffic stop with the car and as the vehicle slowed, a male passenger opened the door and fled the vehicle through the Federated Parking lot. Officers responded to the area and spotted the fleeing suspect running on Cedardale Dr. With the assistance of a Steele County Deputy, the male was caught and taken into custody—a search of the male uncovered the stolen cell phone. Blake M. Wilmes, age 27 of Faribault, was taken into custody and jailed. Wilmes was charged by citation with Theft and Fleeing a Police Officer on Foot. In addition, Wilmes was a wanted fugitive with several outstanding warrants.

DWI Enforcement Campaign—

Long drives, scenic bike rides and evening walks. They are all part of summer in Minnesota, but if you’re an impaired driver, pedestrian or bicyclist, your summer days may abruptly end. Crashes involving alcohol continue to change Minnesotans lives forever. From 2012-2016, there were 138 people who lost their lives in drunk driving crashes during the summer months, the deadliest season. While drunk driving continues to be a leading factor in traffic fatalities, impaired bicyclists and pedestrians also play a role in lives that are changed forever with 414 alcohol-related serious injuries during the same timeframe. To help keep the roads safe, the Owatonna Police Department will be participating with law enforcement agencies statewide to focus on DWI enforcement campaign starting Aug. 17 and running through Sept. 2. The enhanced DWI enforcement campaign is a component of the state’s Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program designed to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior.

OPD Up For the Challenge—

On Thursday afternoon, a long-standing tradition continued with the annual watermelon seed spitting contest at the Steele County Fair that pits the best of the OPD against our partners at the Steele County Sheriff’s Office. This year, we were without our 2-time defending champion, Travis Johnson, but we brought along a strong contingent of competitors, including Detectives Joel Hunt, Christian Berg, Matt Oeltjenbruns and Community Service Officer Nate Heeren. Despite adverse weather conditions and strong efforts by Lee Robbins, a former winner and retired deputy and Deputy Darrin Helget, CSO Heeren kept the championship with the men and women in blue when he unleashed a mighty heave of 15’-1”.

Honoring the Fallen

Investigator Timothy Dale Cole, Sr. Crescente County (OK) Sheriff’s Office End of Watch: August 4, 2018 Investigator Timothy Dale Cole succumbed to gunshot wounds he sustained on June 16, 2007, while attempting to serve a high risk warrant in C_MASK, Oklahoma. Investigator Cole was the 12th law enforcement officer to be killed in a traffic-related accident this year and the fourth officer fatality from the state of California in 2018.

Officer Kirk A. Gries California Highway Patrol End of Watch: August 10, 2018 Officer Kirk A. Gries was struck and killed by a vehicle while conducting a traffic stop. Officer Gries was the 5th law enforcement officer to be killed in a traffic-related accident this year and the fourth officer fatality from the state of California in 2018.

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