Human Trafficking Task Force—

The Owatonna Police Department is a member of the Minnesota Human Trafficking Investigators Task Force. This past week during the events leading up to and including the Final Four in Minneapolis, Detective Christian Berg partnered with 32 other task force agencies in an undercover operation that took place in several Twin Cities communities. During the operation, suspects chatted on several social media platforms with undercover agents and investigators who posed as minors or sex buyers. Investigators arrested the suspects as they arrived at an arranged meeting place for an encounter. During the operation—

- 47 people were booked on probable cause felony solicitation of a minor or solicitation of prostitution under 16 years of age.
- 11 people were booked on probable cause sex trafficking, promoting prostitution.
- 28 victims were rescued from trafficking situations, including one minor.

Criminal Justice Day—

The Owatonna Community Leadership Academy stopped by the Owatonna Police Department on Tuesday as part of their annual Criminal Justice Day. The group was welcomed by Chief Hiller who gave them an overview of the department. Following Chief Hiller, the group heard about the Patrol Division, South Central Drug Investigation Unit and Tactical Team. The group then headed outside for a drone demonstration and a couple group members were good sports and participated in a use of force—shoot, don’t shoot scenario. The day finished off with a tour of the Rice/Steele 911 Center and a crime scene processing discussion that centered on a recent case study. In the pictures to the right, a group member is demoing SWAT Officer Matt Oeltjenbruns’ SWAT gear and another is confronted with a use of force scenario.

Wear the Badge—

The Minnesota Chief of Police Association (MCPA) recently released another video featuring Police Officer Erin Holznagel who has served nearly a dozen years with the Burnsville Police Department. In this video, Officer Holznagel talks about how teamwork shaped her as a young hockey player, continues to support her work each day in the community and why she chose to Wear the Badge. To view the video, click on the Wear the Badge logo.

Department News—

Last week and again next Wednesday, our firearms instructors will be busy with our annual firearms qualification training course. Each of our licensed officers are required annually to successfully qualify with their individual handgun, shotgun and patrol rifle. The annual qualification course is part of the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) annual use of force training mandate.

The Human Trafficking Investigators Task Force was established in 2017 with funding from the Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs as a state-wide enforcement effort to target traffickers and those exploiting children for sex. The Owatonna Police Department has been a member since June of 2018.

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