2019 Holiday DWI Mobilization—

A holiday beer with a friend. A glass of wine at a family member’s home. One shot for the road. A drink here or there can seem insignificant but one drink can affect a driver’s judgement. This holiday season, give the gift of life by choosing a sober ride every time you decide to have even one drink. To help keep families together this holiday season, Minnesota law enforcement agencies, including the Owatonna Police Department, will be focusing on weekend DWI enforcement, starting Nov. 27th through Dec. 28th.

Motorists need to plan ahead for sober rides even when traveling to friends and family’s homes for the holidays, not just when going to the bars.

- Plan for a safe ride — designate a sober driver, use a safe, alternative transportation option, or stay at the location of the celebration.
- Speak up — Offer to be a designated driver or be available to pick up a loved one anytime, anywhere. If you see an impaired person about to get behind the wheel, get them a safe ride home.
- Buckle up — the best defense against a drunk driver.
- Report drunk driving — call 911 when witnessing impaired driving behavior. Be prepared to provide location, license plate number and observed dangerous behavior.

Blackout Wednesday (the day before Thanksgiving) is traditionally associated with a night of binge drinking. Many college students are returning home for a night of celebrating with friends and with no work on Thursday, many adults get together after a short work-week. The decision to get behind the wheel after drinking is costing too many people their lives. The choice to drive drunk has contributed to 28 deaths on Minnesota roads from the day before Thanksgiving through Dec. 30 (2012-2017).

Motorized Bicyclist Arrested—

Late night on the 19th, an Owatonna officer spotted a motorized bicycle traveling under motor power on Bridge Street without any rear lighting. The officer stopped the cyclist to talk with him and learned his driving privileges were currently cancelled-inimical to public safety—a gross misdemeanor offense. The officer placed the cyclist under arrest and a subsequent search revealed he was in possession of a meth pipe and presumptive heroin. Matthew Techau, age 41 of Owatonna, has been charged with Driving after Cancellation-Inimical to Public Safety and 5th Degree Possession of a Controlled Substance. In Minnesota, a motorized bicycle is considered a motor vehicle and it’s operation requires a valid driver’s license.

In observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday, police records and administration will be closed on Thursday, November 28th & Friday, November 29th. Regular & emergency police services will continue during the holiday.