

PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE

**Owatonna Police Department
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For Release Immediately

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13 ARRESTED FOR IMPAIRED DRIVING DURING END-OF-SUMMER ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN

Owatonna, Minn. — Owatonna Police Department Officers, Steele County Sheriffs Deputies and Blooming Prairie Police Officers arrested 13 impaired motorists during a statewide, end-of-summer DWI enforcement effort, Aug. 21 – Sept. 7. The Owatonna Police Department, Steele County Sheriff's Office and the Blooming Prairie Police Department were among the nearly 400 law enforcement agencies across the state participating in the effort conducted by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS).

In addition to DWI enforcement during the campaign, the Owatonna Police Department, Steele County Sheriff's Office and the Blooming Prairie Police Department also issued 27 seat belt citations under Minnesota's new primary seat belt law. Under this law officers can stop motorists solely for seat belt violations, including unbelted passengers.

During 2006–2008, 519 motorists were killed and another 1,159 motorists were seriously injured in alcohol-related crashes statewide. During that same time period 116,515 motorists were arrested for DWI — 35,736 in 2008. In Steele County during 2006–2008, there were five impaired driving deaths, six serious injuries and 746 DWI violations issued. The local economic impact of alcohol-related fatalities was \$1,130,000.

The Owatonna Police Department, Steele County Sheriff's Department and the Blooming Prairie Police Department clocked 70 hours of extra patrol hours during this mobilization to remove impaired drivers from the road. "Drinking and driving continues to be a serious issue in our communities," says Sgt. Lon Thiele. "The Owatonna Police Officers and Steele County Sheriff's Deputies are committed to keeping Steele County motorists safe by taking impaired drivers off our roads."

The enforcement and education effort is funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and is a component of the state's *Toward Zero Deaths* traffic safety program. *TZD* is an interdisciplinary approach to address traffic issues regionally through enforcement, education, engineering and emergency trauma care.

Drunk Driving — Over the Limit. Under Arrest.

Owatonna Police Department - Exceeding Expectations!