



“AROUND THE BLOCK”



Northfield Police Department Weekly Update

July 23, 2004

Chief

Gary Smith

Captain

Tim Halverson

Sergeants

Bill Olsen - Patrol
Mark Murphy - Patrol
Roger Schroeder – CID
Ted Berg - Patrol

Officers

Mark Barlau
Jim Frie
Jeff Gigstad
Scott Johnson
Monte Nelson
Mark Dukatz
Thad Monroe
Jody Spinner
Jesse Cordova
Bill Houts
Craig Sammon
Josh Laber
Rich Bailey
Kevin Tussing
Steven Klostermeier

Evidence

Jeff Ringlien

Community Service Officer

Kris Wilson

Records

Donah Broadhead
Mischelle Watkins
Tracy Kolterman
Karen Mangold

The following information is representative of calls received by the Northfield Police Department from July 16th through July 23, 2004. It is not inclusive and is intended for informational purposes only.

Theft:

Sergeant Roger Schroeder received a complaint of fraud from another state. He is currently assisting that law enforcement agency with the investigation. The case was opened on July 22nd.

Officer Thad Monroe responded to a call of a past action burglary on July 19th at 9:47 p.m. A possible suspect has been forwarded to Investigators.

Domestic Disturbance:

Officers Bailey, Tussing, Klostermeier and Sergeant Bill Olsen responded to the area of Greenvale and Linden streets on a report of a domestic assault. An adult male was arrested for assaulting his wife. The subject also assaulted two officers during the arrest and has also been charged for that offense. The incident took place on July 18th at 8:37 p.m. Assaulting a police officer is a felony.

Training:

The Northfield Police Department hosted approximately 65-law enforcement, social services and advocacy group members from Minnesota and Iowa at the Northfield Community Resource Center on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. The training was facilitated by the National Sheriff’s Association and featured presenters from several disciplines, bringing a national perspective to the training. Northfield was the only site in Minnesota where this training will be offered in 2004.

The training helped those in attendance to identify the warning signs of abuse and hopefully will provide all of us tools to help prevent domestic violence and intervene more effectively when it does occur. Those who abuse others are the real domestic terrorists in our society and we need to continually work to improve our investigative and advocacy skills to keep people safe and to prevent the violence from spreading.

The training was provided at no cost through a federal Justice Department Block Grant. I was fortunate to meet the representatives who developed this program at the last International Association of Chiefs of Police in Philadelphia last October and was able to finalize plans for the training to take place in Northfield while at that conference.

Telephone Numbers

Emergency
911

Emergency TDD
911

Office (General)
507-645-4475

Chief Smith
507-663-9301

Capt. Halverson
507-663-9302

Patrol Admin.
507-663-9302

Investigations
507-663-9322

Records
507-645-4477

Drug Investigations
507-663-9322

Tip Line
507-663-9494

Comm. Serv. Officer
507-663-9475

Crime Prevention
507-663-9466

School Officer
507-663-9318

Evidence Tech.
507-663-9319

Maintenance
507-645-4477

Animal Calls:

Officer Kevin Tussing responded to the 300 Block of Highland Avenue on July 22nd at about 7:46 p.m. after receiving an anonymous complaint about a dog who appeared to be running at large with an injured leg. The complainant said they observed a person call the dog into a residence in that area. Officer Tussing was unable to get anyone to come to the door so he documented the incident and referred the matter to Kris Wilson, our Community Service Officer.

Security Check:

Officer Kevin Tussing located an open door at a local business on July 23rd at 2:40 a.m. A key holder was notified.

Traffic Stops Worth Noting:

A citizen complaint of an erratic driver led Officer Thad Monroe to stop a vehicle on Highway 19 heading into Northfield on July 21st at 5:10 p.m. The driver was cited for DWI and having an open container of an alcoholic beverage in her car.

An observed traffic violation resulted in Officer Kevin Tussing making a traffic stop on July 22nd at about 12:33 a.m. that resulted in the arrest and charging of a 17-year-old male with 4th Degree DWI, Minor Consumption of Alcohol and the issuance to another 19 year old female passenger for Minor Consumption of Alcohol.

Arrested:

Officer Thad Monroe and Sergeant Mark Murphy arrested an adult on a probation violation at the request of Rice County Probation in the 200 Block of Greenvale Avenue on July 20th at about 9:01 p.m.

Officer Kevin Tussing arrested an adult male for 3rd Degree DWI, Driving after Revocation and no insurance on July 19th at 9:16 p.m. in the 3000 Block of North Avenue.

Don't Race the Train:



On July 16th, Northfield Officers assisted Dakota County deputies by responding to a car-train accident on 320th Street. This photograph, taken by Community Service Officer Kris Wilson, graphically shows the damage a train can cause to a vehicle. Fortunately, this car was on a trailer being towed by another vehicle when it was struck and no one was injured. ***Please be careful and watch for the trains.***

Cooperation At Its Finest:

At about 7:30 p.m. on July 22nd, the Dispatch Center received a call from George's Vineyard on Highway 3 that a person had just left the business after having taken items from unlocked cars in the parking lot. Thanks to a "heads up" from a couple of witnesses who saw what was going on and their quick actions notifying the employees inside, a description of the vehicle and plate number was out within minutes of the event. Dispatch put out the information and within several minutes Rice County Deputy Tim Schmidtke, assisted by Deputy Jesse Thomas, stopped the vehicle in the county south of Northfield. Northfield Officer Thad Monroe's quick arrival at George's Vineyard, allowed for detailed information to be relayed to the deputies and to Northfield Officer Bill Houts. The driver and vehicle were then returned to the Northfield Public Safety Center where the individual was interviewed, by Northfield Sergeant Roger Schroeder and then booked and processed. This textbook response was by no means over, however.

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Officers Sammon and Johnson began retracing the area traveled by the suspect and found additional locations in Northfield where this individual had stolen things from unlocked vehicles parked at various businesses. Through the course of their follow up work they were able to provide Sergeant Schroeder with additional information that ultimately lead to the conclusion of a number of thefts from vehicles. Officer Kevin Tussing also assisted with security and provided coverage for the rest of the city while the other officers were engaged in the investigation.

I had just left a meeting downtown when the call initially was broadcast so I was able to observe the process and the officers while they worked. As I said earlier, this was a textbook response to a call in progress. We had alert citizens who identified a crime in progress who contacted a savvy business owner who got the information to dispatch and our officers responded quickly and effectively. Rice County Deputies had monitored the traffic and had positioned themselves to intercept the vehicle. Had they not anticipated the travel route, we may have never located the vehicle, driver or evidence. It made a big difference in the resolution of the investigation.

As a police administrator it is a joy when you can observe a process as it unfolds and effectively reaches the desired conclusion. These officers know their stuff and demonstrate it on a daily basis. They often take a lot of guff from people who don't understand their obligation to follow the law and make decisions that are generally second-guessed by individuals who seldom have the whole story.

Whether the action is writing parking tickets or effectively working with members of the community as was the case in this incident. I am proud of their actions and their professionalism.

High Risk Arrest Incident:

At about 1:00 p.m. today, Northfield Officers Mark Barlau, Jim Frie, Mark Dukatz, Jody Spinner and Officer Monte Nelson responded to a Northfield location on a report of two subjects who were known to have warrants for their arrest. Prior to the response, the officers had been working to develop intelligence information from various sources to confirm the information that there was a possibility that these subjects could be armed and would resist arrest.

I accompanied the officers to the location to assist as they approached the residence and effectively located and took both subjects into custody without incident. The event took place in a high density housing area where the potential for harm existed. I was again impressed with the officers' concern for the safety of others and their quick and decisive actions that effectively shut down any opportunity for the individuals being sought to escape or attempt to harm others. The incident was executed flawlessly.

As I was writing this newsletter, at about 7:15 p.m. on July 23rd, the dispatch center received a call from a person in a vehicle who reported observing several subjects in a vehicle who possibly had a gun.

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The dispatcher did an outstanding job of keeping the caller on the line and figuring out where the locations were even when the caller was unsure where they were. Again, I went out to assist and observe. Officers Thad Monroe, Bill Houts, and Craig Sammon responded to the call, communicating with each other, working with the dispatcher to keep abreast of the location of the vehicle, and traveling in parallel routes to anticipate a change of location of the vehicle or to prevent any possible flight of the suspect vehicle. The vehicle was located and stopped in the county outside of Northfield. The dispatchers had to balance our emergency traffic for the traffic stop while they were dealing with an intrusion alarm in Faribault and multiple calls in Rice County. I couldn't hear it but I also know they were probably dealing with phones and calls in Steele County as well.

I watched our officers perform a high-risk traffic stop and remove the occupants of the vehicle without incident. This type of encounter is one of the most dangerous calls officers face because of the potential for an armed confrontation with multiple subjects in a vehicle. Officer Scott Johnson, who was on his way to work observed the traffic stop and stopped to assist. Something he really didn't have to do but he told me he was compelled to do because it was the right thing to do. I also had an off-duty paramedic stop by to see if her help was needed.

I felt a sense of pride on my part as I watched the officers maintain control and treat the individuals with respect and caution. The matter was resolved without incident.

Ultimately, it was discovered that the guns were look-a-likes.

The situation was resolved because citizens were paying attention, relaying good information to competent dispatchers who got the information to our officers in the field that helped bring a high-risk incident to a successful conclusion.

Final Note:

I dedicated the space in this newsletter to these several specific examples because often, the contents of the newsletter paint a picture of a pretty quiet hamlet: Mayberry if you will. Fortunately, in most cases this is true. There are times, generally on a weekly basis, when our officers face dangerous situations and high-risk confrontations. They respond to calls and confront individuals because they are dedicated to the protection of the community. They do such a good job at this that most often their efforts go largely unnoticed because they complete their tasks with a minimum of fanfare and attention.

Finally, The time and financial resources dedicated to equipping and training our police officers is key to their continued success and ability to meet the growing challenges posed to them. It is an honor to be associated with such fine individuals.

Have a good week!

Gary Smith
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