



# BIRCHWOOD

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2025



## NO HOLIDAYS FOR SCAMMERS

This December the Washington County Sheriff's Office saw a spike in fraud calls, including the grandparents scam, when fraudsters prey on older citizens by posing as attorneys or bail companies to extract cash to supposedly get a grandchild or relative out of jail. In several cases, Washington County residents lost thousands — in one extreme case \$57,000. In most instances, scammers demand quick payment and send couriers to pick up the cash, often using a rideshare, and once the cash is gone, it's nearly impossible to get back. Some tips to avoid falling for any scam:

- Slow down and resist pressure to act quickly.
- Try to directly contact the family member or company cited on by the caller.
- Never offer any information, like names or financial accounts, to the caller.
- Press the caller for details.
- Create a family safe word to help verify a family member's identity.

Anyone who believes they've been a victim of this scam or others should call the Washington County Sheriff's Office. "The more people who come forward, the more information we have. There's no need to be embarrassed," said Det. Cooper Valesano. "These scammers are really good. They're preying on people's emotions."

NUMBER OF  
INCIDENTS

23

TRAFFIC  
STOPS

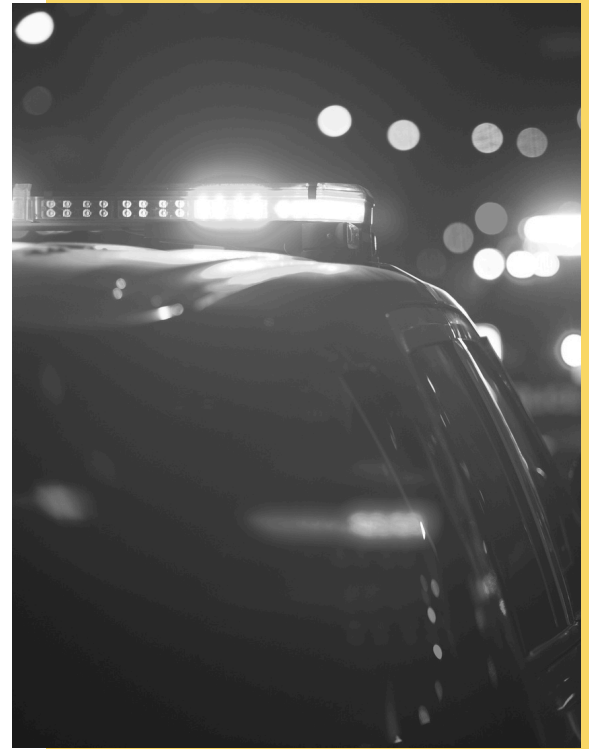
3

# WC24069271

## PUBLIC NUISANCE

4XX LAKE AVENUE

At 10:31am on Dec. 25, a deputy spoke with a citizen upset that a public works employee had flooded a hockey rink at a village park the previous night when it was 31 degrees. Upon arriving at the park, the deputy spoke with the caller, who was concerned that the relatively warm temperatures would make the ice unsafe. At the time, the deputy noted it was 28 degrees and that two adults were on the ice playing hockey with no apparent issues. The deputy noted some soft spots on the west side of the rink but that otherwise the rink looked OK. The caller wanted the employee charged with public nuisance because of possible safety issues. As it was a holiday, the deputy declined to reach out to the employee. The deputy provided a case number to the caller.



## MESSAGE FROM THE SHERIFF



At the end of each year, we pause to recognize some of the outstanding and heroic actions of our Sheriff's Office team. Unfortunately, this year's ceremony had to be postponed due to the year's first significant winter storm. Nonetheless, we wanted to let you know about these exceptional public servants.

This year's Life Saving Awards went to Sgt. Joseph Zerwas, for his actions on a young man who was struck by a vehicle and severely bleeding; Deputy Abimael Hernandez, who lifted off an ATV that flipped onto an unresponsive child and performed CPR and applied AED; Deputy Rebecca Dziki, who rushed into a burning building and removed a man from a second story apartment; Deputy Danielle DuRand, who delivered Narcan, performed CPR and applied AED and on an unresponsive victim; and Deputy Rebecca Dziki, Deputy Dylan Xiong, Telecommunicator Ryan Gilman and a citizen, who teamed up to perform CPR and provide oxygen therapy and AED shocks to a man having a cardiac event.

We're so proud of all the courageous men and women who serve our county. Well done, team!

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Dan Starry".

Sheriff Dan Starry