

From the desk of the Sheriff:

A sign that schools will soon be back in session is the conclusion of the Dodge County Fair. The fair was a tremendous success so we want to ensure our school year is as well. Every year the Sheriff's Department works very closely with school bus companies and their drivers. This effort includes a review of traffic rules and regulation, all motor vehicle laws as well as the process of reporting violators of State Statutes.

Statute 346.46 (2m) requires all traffic to stop at school crossings that are controlled by a crossing guard. 346.48 requires traffic approaching from the front or rear to stop for a school bus which is stopped and displaying red flashing lights. You are required to stop no less than 20' from the bus and remain stopped until the bus resumes motion or extinguishes the red flashing lights. (not applicable on divided highways). A very important part of each of these statutes is that once a report is filed by a crossing guard or bus driver, the citation can be written to the registered owner and the fact that the owner was not the operator at the time of the offense is not a defense to the citation. Fines range from \$150 - \$300+. Please help keep our school bus drivers and their passengers safe by adhering to these traffic laws.

Earlier this week I was asked about crime in Dodge County, which offenses are on the increase and which are most difficult to investigate and gain a conviction. My answer was sex crimes, specifically against children and crimes against the elderly. This past week our department investigated an alleged sexual assault against a 4-yr old girl. An arrest was made. The victim knew the perpetrator, who was a neighbor. Even more disturbing was the fact that the subject took advantage of this child while she was playing with his own daughter. Parents need to ensure they know the whereabouts of their children and who they play with. Require your child to ask your permission to play in another's home. These crimes are difficult to investigate but even more difficult on the victim, who can suffer the effects of such a crime for the balance of their lives.

The elderly are becoming victims of internet and telephone scams. The principle of trust when speaking to a stranger on the telephone is dated and must be reviewed by all of us. When you are asked for bank account information, social security numbers and similar private information do not provide that information unless you are 100% sure you know who you are speaking with. Spam email is also costing citizens large amounts of money. Nigerian scams, people that send you a cashier check for a large amount and ask you to cash it and send them 1/2 back are bogus frauds. The check you cashed is counterfeit, yet you will not realize it for 48 hours when your bank calls and you already have sent the requester a real cashier's check.

Those buying and selling online must be very aware of who you are dealing with. The growth in technology has enabled criminals to take advantage of us without meeting us. This makes it very difficult for law enforcement to track down leads and follow the money trail etc.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE be very cautious when dealing with people you do not know and your money. It may be the last time you see it! Thanks for listening, tnehl@co.dodge.wi.us