

From the Sheriff:

The Dodge County Sheriff's Department has officially moved as of close of business November 18, 2005. The new address is 124 West Street. The phone numbers remained the same. The move re-located the Sheriff's Dept. to the vacant courthouse, vacant since the construction of the new Justice Facility several years ago. The reviews received from our employees regarding their new facility are very positive. I wish the same could be said for our automated telephone system!

In an effort to reduce the number of calls handled by our Communications Center, we installed an electronic operator. The intent is to allow callers to reach specific divisions and employees without going through the Sheriff's Department main number. We have seen a dramatic decrease in telephone calls being answered by our E911 Center. That success has not been experienced w/o some pain. We continue to work with the county Information Technology to address the issues of our phone system many of you have shared with me. We will work out the bugs. Please be patient.

We will continue to enhance our system with changes and modifications. In the near term however, the only way to identify the issues is through your concerns about the system. I will promise a very customer friendly telephone system, a system that will allow you to speak to a PERSON if you feel it necessary. With that being said, I need your help. When you do call our main number, 386-3726, please listen to the options prior to selecting a choice. We have identified that some people may not be as patient as others and select the first choice made available, which will send you to someone that will not be able to help you. If used effectively, any caller should be able to be directed to the proper division or employee. As with emergencies, nothing has changed, dial 911.

Dodge County has experienced its first snowfalls which has generated numerous traffic crashes. Last Friday, I was assisting with a runoff accident on US 151 and was amazed that other motorists continued to operate at very high speeds. Though those motorists may have felt the conditions warranted those speeds, the site of emergency vehicles with emergency lights should tell everyone to slow down and proceed with caution. On a four-lane highway, traffic is also required to move to the left lane when passing emergency vehicles parked on the right shoulder.

The recent snowfalls should have also identified some items for your Christmas list. Tires, jumper cables, snow brush, ice scraper etc.. Yes, those designer jeans, DVD player or IPOD would be nice but your bald tires should be the priority. Motorist should also be prepared to spend a few hours in the elements should you spin out and end up in a ditch. Injury accidents and other emergency calls take priority over a minor spin-out. A blanket, flashlight and snack food could go a long way until help arrives.

Dress appropriately. Very often men and women travel during snowstorms dressed for their office jobs. Take it from someone who knows, wingtips and heels are not great foot warmers standing in the ditch in 12" of snow! Parents, if your children use your car, educate them on the procedures in case of an accident or simple runoff. Carry a copy of your insurance card and tell your children what towing company you prefer in case one is needed. If you leave your vehicle call us so we do not look for you.

Lastly, it is ILLEGAL for operators of private trucks to pull/tow you from the ditch, right-away or any property that is not private. This is for your protection. I have seen many bumpers torn off by a Good Samaritan only to be sued for the damage. Licensed tow truck operators have licenses, insurances and emergency lights for this reason. Four wheel drive truck owners who attempt this type of task risk being cited. Thanks for listening, tnehl@co.dodge.wi.us