



Hermantown Police Department
5111 Maple Grove Road, Hermantown, MN 55811
218.729.1200 // cops@hermantownmn.com

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 11/21/21 to 11/27/21, the Hermantown PD had 221 calls.
The following are selected incidents HPD responded to this week.

Chief

Jim Crace

Commanders

Mark Gunderson
Jon Esterbrooks

Sergeants

Griffin Pfeiffer - K9
Jon Pernu - K9

Detective

Jake Williams
Jeff Dwyer

Officers

Jason Salo
Lisa Volk
Tim Battaglia
Jon Enright
Erika Johnson - SRO
Quinn Mischke
Olivia Gottschald
Jonathan Stracek
Andrew Leibel

K-9 Officers

Tuuko
Jack

Records

Jessica Sorensen
Dana Ross
Samantha Knapp

Driving under the Influence

On 11/24/21, just after 3:30 p.m., a Duluth Dodge employee reported that a possibly intoxicated male was leaving the lot in a vehicle with his hazards on. He provided a license plate number and Officer Stracek observed that the registered owner lived in Duluth. He responded to the home address and observed the vehicle backing into the driveway. The driver, later identified as the 61-year-old registered owner, got out of the vehicle and Officer Stracek noted a urine mark down his pants and on the driver's seat. The man admitted to being at the dealership and was attempting to get a box of groceries from the vehicle. He kept telling Officer Stracek he was going to bring the groceries inside and kept turning toward the building. Officer Stracek advised him that he detected an odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from the man and requested that he perform field sobriety testing. The man repeatedly asked him not to "do this to me," to "give me a break," and began naming police officers that he knows. Officer Stracek advised him that name-dropping doesn't work and he needed to put the box of groceries down. The man then stated he had to go to the bathroom and when Officer Stracek said he would need to wait, the man fled on foot. Officer Stracek caught the man within 35 feet of where he ran from and placed him into handcuffs. The man then claimed he was drinking in the truck while parked in the driveway, and when Officer Stracek advised him that he had observed the man pulling into the driveway, the man again asked for a break and said he didn't need another DWI. The man was unable to perform the physical field sobriety testing but submitted to a preliminary breath test that resulted in a reading of .145% blood alcohol content. The man argued repeatedly that Officer Stracek didn't stop him on the roadway and was doing the process wrong. The man then asked to urinate and told officers it might take a while. After approximately 40 minutes, the man tipped forward off the toilet onto the ground and complained of lower stomach pains. First Responders took care of the man until an ambulance arrived. At a local hospital, a search warrant was executed for a blood draw; charges are pending the results of the blood test. The man was left in the care of hospital staff.

At 7:40 p.m. on 11/24/21, officers were dispatched to attempt to locate a white Kia that was exhibiting poor driving conduct. Two callers reported that the vehicle was all over the road and nearly causing accidents. Occupants of both vehicles indicated that the Kia had come completely into their lane of traffic toward them, causing them to drive into the ditch. Sgt. Pernu observed the vehicle on Getchell Road south of Maple Grove Road. He turned to follow the vehicle and observed it drift completely into the ditch so all four tires were over the white fog line before correcting itself. He performed a traffic stop and made contact with the 42-year-old female driver. As he made contact with her, he observed a strong odor of alcoholic beverage coming from her. When asked why she was driving in the ditch, the woman laughed and said she had a hard time telling where she was because it was so dark out. She denied drinking that night. The woman indicated that she takes prescription medications but stated she does not take anything that would affect her driving. Sgt. Pernu requested that she perform field sobriety testing and she agreed. When advised that Sgt. Pernu could smell alcohol on her breath, the woman recalled that she had three sips of a beer at a friend's house. During the field sobriety testing, Sgt. Pernu noted that the woman's pupils were constricted and abnormally small. The woman closed her eyes several times during the testing and was swaying heavily back and forth. A preliminary breath test resulted in a reading of .007% blood alcohol content. Sgt. Pernu suspected that the woman was under the influence of a controlled substance and began to place her under arrest. While placing the handcuffs on her, he noted a small pill near her feet on the ground. While the woman was being searched incident to arrest, several more pills were located. In total, 11 oxycodone hydrochloride pills were found. The woman then stated she had taken two of the pills earlier in a day and she is prescribed them. The woman was



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transported to the Hermantown Police Department, where she provided a urine sample. Charges are pending the results of the analysis.

Suspicious Activity:

Just before 11 p.m. on 11/21/21, Officer Gottschald pulled into the Kwik Trip on Haines Road. There was a Chevy Suburban backing out from a parking spot, but it quickly pulled back into a parking spot when the squad pulled into the lot. Officer Gottschald recognized the vehicle as one that frequents Kwik Trips and she had seen it at the Sugar Maple store the previous night. A short time later, as Officer Gottschald was in a nearby lot, she observed the vehicle pull out of the parking spot and leave toward the front of the Kwik Trip. As Officer Gottschald pulled out of the lot she was in, the vehicle pulled back into a parking spot. As this was unusual behavior, she made contact with the female driver. As she was speaking to the 35-year-old woman, a male walked out of the store and over to the vehicle. The passenger side window of the vehicle was smashed out and they could not explain how it happened. Both had revoked driver's license statuses and they were advised not to drive the vehicle without a valid driver. Shortly after 3 a.m. on 11/22/21, Officer Gottschald was patrolling when she observed that vehicle turning onto Miller Trunk Highway from Loberg Avenue. She conducted a traffic stop on the Suburban and made contact with the driver, the man that was earlier advised not to drive the vehicle. He said he had been trying to find a valid driver but was unable to. He was cited for driving after revocation.

On 11/22/21 at 11:10 p.m., Sgt. Pernu was on routine patrol on Miller Trunk Highway when he saw a truck pulled out of the car wash and then turn into the Pure Pleasure parking lot. After checking the car wash, he drove to Pure Pleasure and observed that the vehicle was parked and appeared to be unoccupied. He noted that the truck's tabs expired in March 2021 and that the vehicle was involved the previous day in a suspicious activity call in Clinton Township. At that time, the registered owner of the vehicle had advised the deputy that he had traded the vehicle to man; a check of the new owner confirmed that he had active warrants for DANCO violation and motor vehicle theft. Sgt. Pernu left Pure Pleasure and was nearby checking into the 31-year-old man's history and he noted that he had previous warrants for felon in possession of a firearm, threats of violence, and assault. At this time, the truck passed him at a high rate of speed. He began following the vehicle as it attempted to make a turn onto Ugstad Road, spinning out and stopping briefly before continuing southbound in the northbound lane. Sgt. Pernu believed the truck was attempting to flee and he activated his lights and sirens, noting that the brake lights would be illuminated periodically for long periods of time and the vehicle was slowly coming to a stop. The 23-year-old female driving the vehicle said that the male passenger had just gotten the truck a couple weeks ago and they were washing it at the car wash. She stated that as they left, the man saw Sgt. Pernu's squad down the highway, so he pulled into Pure Pleasure and ran into the woods to hide until he believed Sgt. Pernu had left the area. When the man returned to the vehicle, he told the woman to drive. She said that she was unaware that the man had a warrant and stated that she was not attempting to flee when Sgt. Pernu began following them. She told him that the truck's brakes were acting up and she was having a hard time stopping. Sgt. Pernu spoke to the deputy who had contact with the truck the previous day and was advised that the man had commented at that time about the brakes not working properly. With this information, it was decided that the woman would not be arrested for fleeing; she was cited for driving after revocation. The man was transported to the St. Louis County Jail for his warrants. Officers did an inventory search on the vehicle prior to it being towed. A bag of drug paraphernalia was located and collected for destruction. At the police department, Sgt. Pernu was removing used hypodermic needles from the bag when he located a baggie with white powder in it. Testing was inconclusive and the substance was entered into evidence pending further testing.