



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 01/08/23 to 01/14/23, the Hermantown PD had 167 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
Tim Battaglia
Jon Enright
Erika Johnson - SRO
Olivia Gottschald
Jonathan Stracek
Andrew Leibel
Alex Prouse
Brandon Solem

K-9 Officers

Tuuko
Jack

Records

Jessica Sorensen
Dana Ross
Samantha Knapp

Suspicious Activity:

Shortly after 10:30 p.m. on 01/14/23, Officer Leibel was conducting proactive patrol the area Industrial Park on Lightning Drive. He observed a vehicle in front of him with no lights illuminated that stopped next to a male wearing a black snowmobile suit. The vehicle's lights came on and it continued eastbound, while the male in the snowmobile suit began walking eastbound. Officer Leibel activated his emergency lights and the male walking turned and began running westbound. The vehicle continued eastbound for a short distance before stopping; a male wearing blue coveralls exited the vehicle, ran around the car, jumped into the snow-filled ditch and began running through a business lot. As the driver ran out from between two vehicles, Officer Leibel activated his Taser and ordered the 35-year-old man to stop. The man continued running for a short distance before falling. He initially stated he didn't know the other male, then repeatedly insisted that the other man was just relieving himself on the road and said they were here on vacation. After detaining the man, officers observed a large stack of opened and unopened mail in plain view in the suspect vehicle and noted that it all appeared to have been taken from the Airpark Business District in Duluth. Sgt. Pernu and assisting officers had followed the other man's footprints into the woods and through snow that was 2-3 feet deep. The man was located hiding under a small bushy tree that had bent over under the weight of snow. The 22-year-old man was shivering uncontrollably. After being evaluated by medical responders, the man told Sgt. Pernu that he just got to the area from out of state and his girlfriend had picked him up. He said a female at the airport had commented that he was cute and his girlfriend had been arguing with him all day about it. He said that there was another couple with them that his girlfriend knew and eventually, his girlfriend kicked him out of the car. He stated that he had been standing around for about a half hour when the other man, the male half of the couple his girlfriend knew, drove up. He believed that his girlfriend had told the man to come pick him up. The younger man's phone had been located in the other man's car and he explained that his girlfriend had taken his phone to look through it and said that he thinks she gave it to the older man to give back to him. The man denied any knowledge of the mail that was located in the vehicle. The younger man was cited for fleeing on foot. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges against the older man of possession of stolen mail and fleeing on foot.

Driving Under the Influence

At approximately 4:45 p.m. on 01/11/23, Officers Salo and Solem, along with Sgt. Pernu, were asked to check the welfare of a male that had fallen in the parking lot of a gas station. An additional caller relayed that the man "reeked of alcohol" and had dropped his burger on the ground. Officer Salo located the vehicle pulling out of a parking spot and beginning to drive forward. He made contact with the 63-year-old driver, who agreed that he had fallen in the parking lot. Officer Salo immediately detected a strong slur in his voice and the man admitted he had a couple drinks after work. When asked what time he got off work, he said "6 o'clock," despite it being before 5 p.m. The man denied hitting his head when he fell and agreed to perform field sobriety testing. Officer Salo did not administer the one leg stand or the walk and turn tests, as it was slippery out and the man's



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

AROUND TOWN

Chief

Jim Crace

Commanders

Mark Gunderson
Jon Esterbrooks

Sergeants

Griffin Pfeiffer - K9
Jon Pernu - K9

Detective

Jake Williams
Jeff Dwyer

Officers

Jason Salo
Tim Battaglia
Jon Enright
Erika Johnson - SRO
Olivia Gottschald
Jonathan Stracek
Andrew Leibel
Alex Prouse
Brandon Solem

K-9 Officers

Tuuko
Jack

Records

Jessica Sorensen
Dana Ross
Samantha Knapp

balance was poor. The man's preliminary breath test resulted in a reading of .204% blood alcohol content. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of 3rd degree DWI and .08 or more.

On 01/13/23 at 7:47 p.m., Officer Leibel was dispatched to attempt to locate a vehicle that was described as being "all over the road." The reporting party told dispatch that a Chevy Silverado was eastbound in the middle of the road and in oncoming lanes on Hermantown Road and had almost hit him in the roundabout at Midway and Maple Grove Roads. Officer Leibel located the vehicle on Lavaque Road and observed it turn left onto Morris Thomas Road without activating the turn signal. When Officer Leibel conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle, it slowly pulled to the shoulder, continued eastbound for a short distance, and moved partially back into the driving lane before stopping. The male driver had difficulty rolling his window down and took over a minute to locate his driver's license in his wallet. Officer Leibel observed a significant amount of chewing tobacco fibers stuck to the man's chin. Sgt. Pernu noted a whiskey bottle in the center console. The 58-year-old man insisted he had not been drinking that day. When asked where he was coming from, the man said his house, although he previously stated he was traveling to his house, which was several miles north of the traffic stop. Physical field sobriety tests were not performed for the man's safety, as he did not have a jacket on and was clearly unsteady while standing. When performing a preliminary breath test, Officer Leibel observed that it appeared the man was sucking in on the mouthpiece instead of blowing as instructed. The man blew very slightly during a second test and a weak manual sample resulted in a reading of .14% blood alcohol content. Reports have been forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of 3rd degree DWI, .08 or more, open bottle, and failure to signal.

Traffic

At approximately 10:15 p.m. on 01/08/22, Officer Stracek conducted a routine license plate inquiry on a red Kia and discovered that the registration was suspended. He performed a traffic stop and made contact with the 40-year-old female driver, who explained that she had the title at home and didn't know that the vehicle had a suspended status. The driver provided a Progressive Insurance card for the vehicle, stating that her friend is the policy holder. Officer Stracek observed that the card appeared different than other Progressive Insurance cards he had experience with. He contacted the insurance company, who advised that the policy number came back to a motorcycle policy from the west coast. In addition, the representative stated that the only policy she found under the policy holder's name had been cancelled in 2019. The driver appeared surprised when Officer Stracek advised her that she provided a fraudulent insurance card. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of driving after revocation, fraudulent insurance card, no proof of insurance, and suspended registration. The woman had six pending cases for traffic offense such as driving after revocation and insurance.

On 01/10/23 at 10:37 p.m., Officer Stracek observed a vehicle doing "donuts" in the parking lot of a Loberg Avenue business. He discovered that the vehicle had been reported stolen out of Duluth. A traffic stop was attempted, but the vehicle fled. A short distance away, Officer Stracek performed a PIT maneuver to disable the vehicle. The five passengers, ranging in age from 14 to



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

AROUND TOWN

Chief

Jim Crace

Commanders

Mark Gunderson
Jon Esterbrooks

Sergeants

Griffin Pfeiffer - K9
Jon Pernu - K9

Detective

Jake Williams
Jeff Dwyer

Officers

Jason Salo
Tim Battaglia
Jon Enright
Erika Johnson - SRO
Olivia Gottschald
Jonathan Stracek
Andrew Leibel
Alex Prouse
Brandon Solem

K-9 Officers

Tuuko
Jack

Records

Jessica Sorensen
Dana Ross
Samantha Knapp

18, denied knowing that the vehicle had been stolen. The 14-year-old driver admitted to stealing the vehicle and to fleeing from Officer Stracek. The teen was lodged at the Arrowhead Juvenile Center on charges of fleeing in a motor vehicle, possession of a stolen vehicle, tampering with a motor vehicle, careless driving, and no driver's license.

On 01/12/23, just before 11 p.m., Officer Leibel was conducting patrol on Miller Trunk Highway when he observed a vehicle traveling northbound with a broken taillight, causing the vehicle to cast a substantial amount of white light to the rear. He conducted a traffic stop as the vehicle pulled into a parking lot near Sugar Maple Drive. Officer Leibel approached the vehicle and immediately recognized the 26-year-old driver, asking the man if he was able to get his license reinstated. The man admitted he did not and said that the vehicle was owned by a friend and he would need to contact her to get proof of insurance and ownership. The woman provided photos of an active insurance policy, but it listed her as operator of any vehicle she would be driving, but not the male or the vehicle. In addition, the photo of the title she provided listed another man as registered owner. Officer Leibel contacted that man, who said he sold the vehicle to a mechanic in Duluth. He was advised to contact the DMV to report the sale. The driver was advised that the vehicle could not leave the parking lot due to his revoked driving status and lack of insurance. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of driving after revocation, no insurance, and white light to rear. The man has 16 pending driving after revocation citations dating back to March 2020 and four no proof of insurance convictions dating back to June 2015.

Theft

On 01/11/23, an Anderson Road resident reported the theft of a bass synthesizer. The woman had ordered it as a Christmas present, but it had not arrived. UPS said that it had been delivered and sent a picture of the package next to a brown door; however, the victim's door is white. The synthesizer is valued at \$159.00.

On 01/12/23, Fleet Farm reported a gas drive off for \$30.02. Loss Prevention advised that a Volkswagen Beetle with obstructed plates has done five gas drive offs for a total of \$207.03. These thefts occurred in May, September, November, December, and on this date. Employees were advised to call 911 if the vehicle returns.

On 01/14/23 at 5:15 p.m., Fleet Farm reported that a male had pushed out a cart containing BB guns, power tools, and clothing. Loss Prevention advised that they knew the identity of the suspect because he had passed a bad check a few days prior. Sgt. Pernu was able to confirm the identity of the 32-year-old suspect. The value of the items taken was \$1226.97. The following evening, the man returned to Fleet Farm and Officer Leibel spoke to him regarding the theft. Although he initially stated he had been home watching football, he later admitted to being at Fleet Farm the day before. He said he was going to write a check for the items he was shopping for, but said he forgot his checkbook at home. He then said he thought about using his card to pay, but knew it wasn't going to work. He ultimately admitted that he had intended on selling the items. Reports have been forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for felony theft.