



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 04/23/23 to 04/29/23, the Hermantown PD had 224 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

Assault

On 04/27/23 at approximately 4:20 p.m., officers were dispatched to the report of a disturbance involving weapons in the Timber Ridge Townhomes complex. Multiple officers from HPD, along with Proctor PD, the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department, Minnesota State Patrol and the Minnesota DNR responded. Due to the number of 911 callers, officers began to receive conflicting information about who the aggressor was, but they were advised that an older male had left in a green Jeep and a man with a red shirt had a rifle. The Jeep was located on Market Street and Loberg Avenue and a felony traffic stop was performed, with several squads boxing the vehicle in. Other officers continued to the townhome complex and located several people in the area that were involved in the incident. During the investigation into the incident, officer determined the following. The 75-year-old male suspect drove his Jeep to the apartment of his ex-wife. Based on statements, it appeared that the man was upset after discovering his ex-wife was in a relationship. Officers were told that a witness had seen the man sitting at a red light at Maple Grove and Haines Roads and the witness believed the man was acting strange. He said that the man sat without moving while the light turned green, yellow, and back to red. After the light turned red, the man sped through it. Once the man arrived at the complex, he stopped his Jeep in the middle of the road just down from his ex-wife's residence. The 58-year-old woman walked out to the Jeep with her granddaughter, who later told officers that she heard the man threaten to kill the woman. The woman then screamed at the child to go into the house and yelled for someone to call 911 because the man had a gun. She circled around the Jeep in an attempt to take cover from the gun he was pointing at her. The 35-year-old man in the red shirt then ran outside with a rifle and handgun and began yelling at his father to put the gun down while his mother ran into the apartment. The older man eventually left in the Jeep. During the traffic stop, the male told Officer Leibel he was having a problem with his ex-wife and he had guns. He then began reaching for the right front pocket of his lounge pants. Officer Leibel told him not to take the gun out, but he continued reaching for his pocket. As Officer Leibel yelled at him to not take the gun out, the male removed it from his pocket and pointed the gun in the officer's direction as he placed it on the hood of a squad car. Officer Leibel had to lunge for the gun as the man began picking it up again. After being advised that he almost got shot for disobeying orders to leave the gun alone, the man made several statements about how "that would be fine." The man was displaying several indicators of intoxication and smelled very strongly of alcohol. Several witnesses had also told officers they believed the man was drunk. He performed field sobriety testing, including a preliminary breath test with a result of .202% blood alcohol content. While giving a statement later, the man stated that he opened the door of his Jeep because he didn't recognize his son without a beard and thought it may have been his ex-wife's boyfriend. Despite an audio recording from his initial statement, in which he said he was going to shoot her, the man vehemently denied saying that. The man was ultimately lodged at the St. Louis County Jail on charges of attempted 2nd degree murder, 2nd degree assault, DWI, DWI - .08 or more, and possession of a pistol under the influence of alcohol.

At approximately 9 a.m. on 04/28/23, officers responded to a Midway Road residence after a female reported that her husband wouldn't let her leave with their kids and threw her against a door. The 24-year-old also advised that the man was threatening to report her for kidnapping if she left with the children. After officers arrived at the home, the woman told Officer Enright that her husband stayed up all night drinking and she was angry in the morning because he was "super drunk" and she now had to take care of their children by herself all day. She said that during their argument she told him she was leaving and taking the kids with her. She said that she went to the closet to get a bag and her husband grabbed her arm; when she pulled her arm away, she accidentally elbowed him in the face, which is when she said he grabbed her and shoved her into a door while yelling at her. The woman said they continued arguing and he punched a box with open Pepsi cans in it which scared their daughter. Officer Salo met with the 38-year-old man, who described a similar situation. The woman later explained to officers that nothing physical had ever happened before, but that she was afraid during the incident because months ago he made a comment about her attitude and how he wanted to punch her in the face. The man was cited for domestic assault – fear and lodged at the St. Louis County Jail.

Disturbance

On 04/26/23, Officer Salo responded to a threats call at Menards. A 33-year-old man reported that a Dodge Ram hit the mirror of his F150. He said that the other driver got out with a shotgun so he took off. The man provided dash cam video and Officer Salo also watched the surveillance video of the Menards parking lot. The videos showed the Ram and F150



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parked next to each other, so close that the other driver had to get in from the passenger side. The Dodge then pulled forward and clipped the Ford's mirror. The reporting party pulled alongside the Dodge and both drivers yelled at each other as they drove down the lot. Both then stopped and the driver of the Dodge got out with a pipe in his hand that he had just purchased from Menards. At that point, the reporting party believed the pipe was a shotgun, so he drove off. The Dodge drove after him, driving through the grass to catch up. Officer Salo was able to make contact with the registered owner of the Dodge by phone. The 63-year-old man admitted to being at Menards. The man said that when he ticked the Ford's mirror, the other driver freaked out on him, yelling and swearing. Officer Salo advised both parties that he would complete city accident notes.

Trespass

On 04/24/23 at 10:41 a.m., officers were dispatched to the report of a shoplifting in progress at Walmart. A suspicious male in the store selected numerous Lego sets and placed them into his cart, concealing them with a seat cushion. The man pushed the loaded cart to the front of the store before ditching it and exiting. The man got into a Subaru and began to leave the lot as the reporting party relayed the license plate information to Officer Stracek, who discovered that the vehicle had been reported stolen out of Duluth the previous day. Officer Stracek located the vehicle on Loberg Avenue and performed a felony stop. The lone occupant of the vehicle was identified and transported to the Hermantown Police Department for an interview. The 41-year-old man admitted that he went to Walmart with the intention to steal items, but he "got cold feet." He also admitted to stealing the vehicle, stating that the keys were inside it at the time he took it and a friend had been with him. Dispatch had advised that there was a loaded handgun in the vehicle at that time it was stolen. The man told officers that he had not handled the gun, is not allowed to have one, and it was given to an acquaintance. The suspect had five debit/credit cards in his wallet that belonged to five different people and he said four of them had been stolen from vehicles and he had permission to use the last card. There were many other items in the vehicle that had been stolen in other thefts, including a license plate that had been taken from a vehicle at Miller Hill Subaru. Officers also determined that the man had been trespassed from Walmart property during a shoplifting incident in November 2022. The man was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for possession of a stolen vehicle, trespassing, and driving after revocation.

Traffic

On 04/26/23 at approximately 11:30 p.m., Officer Prouse observed a tan Mercury passenger car in the parking lot of the Haines Road Kwik Trip. A routine query showed the plate to be registered to a green Ford Focus. After the vehicle turned west onto Maple Grove Road, Officer Prouse observed it to brake abruptly and cut across both lanes of traffic to drive north onto Loberg Avenue. As Officer Prouse turned onto Loberg, he observed that the vehicle had gained a large amount of distance and used his radar to check the vehicle's speed, which was 49 mph in a 30 mph zone. He activated the squad's emergency lights and siren as the vehicle turned east onto Market Street, eventually turning south onto Haines and coming to a stop in front of the bus stop. The driver of the vehicle quickly reached toward the center console area and immediately exited the vehicle as Officer Prouse got out of his squad. As Officer Prouse was concerned that the man may have reached for a weapon, he drew his handgun and held it to his chest while giving verbal commands to the driver. The man repeatedly put his hands toward his pockets and waistband, turned toward and away from Officer Prouse, and made movements that caused Officer Prouse to be concerned he may flee. After holstering his gun, Officer Prouse took hold of the man's arms to detain him in handcuffs. The man then started reaching toward Officer Prouse's duty belt, then threw his body weight forward in an apparent attempt to cause Officer Prouse to lose his grip on the man's arms. The man's upper body was then placed onto the hood of his vehicle. He continued to move his hands away during the handcuffing process. The man later stated he was borrowing the vehicle and provided the name of the registered owner. He said he didn't know anything about the plate displayed on the vehicle. The man was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail and was issued a citation for obstruction, speeding, and illegal use of a license plate. The vehicle was towed and will be held for proof of ownership.

On the morning of 04/28/23, Officer Salo was advised of a school bus stop arm violation near the intersection of Lavaque and Thompson Roads. He made contact with the owner the suspect vehicle by phone and the 65-year-old woman told him that she slowed when the bus slowed, but said that the stop arm did not come out until she was passing the bus. She said that she made eye contact with the bus driver and thought he was allowing her to pass first. Officer Salo watched the school bus video of the incident and noted that it did not appear that the woman would have had time to stop, as the arm came out as she was nearly passing the front of the bus. No citation was issued.



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On 04/29/23 at 1:39 a.m., Officer Prouse observed a vehicle stopped at the red light in the right turn lane on Sugar Maple Drive with its left turn signal activated. Once the light turned green, the vehicle turned left onto northbound Miller Trunk Highway from the right lane. Officer Prouse performed a traffic stop on the vehicle for the improper turn. The driver stated he did not have his driver's license on him, and verbally provided his name and date of birth with a year of 1979. An assisting deputy advised Officer Prouse that he believed the driver was not the person he claimed to be and instead had a date of birth with a year of 1987. Office Prouse then searched both names, and used booking photos to identify the male as the younger man that the deputy believed him to be. Officer Prouse placed the 36-year-old man under arrest and, during a search of his person, located a hypodermic needle, tie-off, broken drug pipe, and a small baggie with unknown residue. While assisting on the traffic stop, Officer Gottschald spoke with a female passenger of the vehicle, who was identified as the registered owner. Officer Gottschald observed drug paraphernalia in the immediate area of her seat. A scale and hypodermic needles were located in a black bag the woman had on her lap. Another black zippered bag inside of that bag contained hypodermic needles, naloxone, a pipe, and a plastic Ziploc bag with a white crystal-like substance. The substance was tested and for heroin and amphetamines, but came back inconclusive. The driver was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for gross misdemeanor false name and for two active warrants for assault. Another passenger, a 37-year-old man was lodged for a contempt of court warrant.

Theft

On 04/23/23, Hermantown officers took five vehicle prowls reports and six burglary reports from the area of Johnson, Portland, and Alexander Roads. On 04/24/23, officers responded to two additional burglary reports and five more vehicle prowls on Greystone Street, Oak Ridge Drive, and Sterling Pond Place. On 04/28/23, three vehicle prowls were reported at the Lakes 10 Theatre. On 04/29/23, officers were dispatched to five vehicle prowls on Arrowhead Road, Falcon Drive, and Eagle Drive. Officers collected video and photos from residents and victims and noted that the suspect vehicle appeared to be a smaller Dodge passenger car similar to a Dodge Dart. Officer Stracek reviewed traffic stop footage from an incident in February that he believed matched the suspect vehicle; body and dash cam videos confirmed that the vehicle in that stop matched the suspect vehicle in these incidents. The suspect was identified as the 33-year-old owner of the vehicle. On 04/30/23, Duluth Police took the report of a vehicle prowls where an iPad was stolen; the owner of the iPad was tracking his tablet and Duluth officers located the vehicle that appeared to contain the iPad. The vehicle was a 2013 Dodge Dart. The iPad was located in the backseat of the vehicle and the driver stated a friend put it there. A search of the vehicle turned up numerous items that had been taken in the Hermantown incidents. In addition, a baggie containing fentanyl was located. He was ultimately lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for 5th degree possession of a controlled substance. He had told officers that the three stolen firearms were given to a friend with connections to trade the guns for drugs and that they were being hidden at a residence in Duluth. He also stated that other stolen property was located at another Duluth residence. Officers later executed search warrants on the homes and located many of the stolen items. In addition, another male suspect in some of the thefts was located at one of search warrant locations. He was taken into custody and lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for 1st degree burglary, 3rd degree burglary, theft of a firearm, and felony theft. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges against the initial suspect for 1st degree burglary, 3rd degree burglary, 5th degree possession, theft of a firearm, tampering with a motor vehicle, and computer theft.

On 04/29/23 at approximately 10 p.m., officers were dispatched to a burglary at Hermantown Storage. The 52-year-old reporting party advised that there was a red Pontiac Grand Am parked next to his units, which he said were also burglarized a few days prior. The man explained to officers that he owns Hermantown Transmission and he put up a trail camera prior to leaving his shop at 9:28 p.m. He said that got multiple notifications on the camera at 9:46 p.m. so he returned to his shop. When he got there, he found the suspect vehicle parked next to three storage units with open doors, which had been closed and secured when he left. While officers were speaking with him, the man looked into the red vehicle and observed a Barbie doll that came from one of the storage units. Officers spoke to the male suspect, who claimed he just started renting a unit at Hermantown Storage and he had just finished putting items into storage there. Officers did not locate any keys for the unit in the man's possession or in his vehicle. The man denied breaking into the open units and said he noticed they were open and he was going to grab valuable stuff out of them and return it tomorrow. He said he grabbed the doll because it was sitting half out of the doors and he was going to shut it. The 41-year-old suspect was ultimately lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for burglary.