

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Two items I want to discuss this week are Vehicle Pursuits and Civil Issues. Both of these types of events are increasing in number and each equally frustrating to law enforcement.

Vehicle pursuits are gaining in popularity because of the costs associated with being apprehended for the activity you are fleeing from. What these parties need to understand is that very rarely do you get away. Another factor that should weigh on the decision making process is that the Legislature has escalated the offense of fleeing to a Felony. That's how serious we take this crime.

During the past few weeks the Dodge County Sheriff's Department has been involved in its share of high speed pursuits. All of them had successful conclusions and the drivers apprehended w/o injury to themselves or others. First and foremost, contrary to popular belief, we do not enjoy chasing people. It is too dangerous for us as well. The deputy does not know why you are fleeing, if there are children in the vehicle, if the driver is on a death wish. And what about those drunk drivers, it seems that they think they drive better at 100 mph fleeing than they did at 55 mph driving home. Yet, it was their poor driving at 55 that gave the deputy the probable cause to stop you.

Current technology, equipment, and teamwork within the law enforcement communities render the attempt to flee a senseless act that will only ensure arrest and a felony conviction for the driver. Each deputy receives four-hours of high speed pursuit driving per year. They are very knowledgeable of the way their squad reacts during high speeds, the limits of their vehicle and driving skills. The radio is faster than the chase and the spike strips will surely deflate the tires and render the vehicle inoperable. So when all is said and done, the driver is now a felony offender and must replace all four tires on the car, and pay the tow bill. Many question the need to pursue these drivers. We have a policy that acts as a guide for these situations. The policy has a priority towards public safety, as well as that for the deputy and the fleeing driver, coupled with the need for apprehension.

We wrestle each day with the decision to spend resources taking care of "civil complaints". These involve property line disputes, child custody matters, landlord tenant issues ect. We receive these calls because the callers have no other resource and we are the only option. Many of you have been frustrated because we have told you we will not respond and we will not get involved in these situations. We must stay out of the business of giving legal advice which has been done in the past. Beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>, we have changed our approach somewhat. We will now accept these calls and they will be sent to the on-duty supervisor to make a determination as to whether a deputy will be sent or will return a phone call. Our focus and philosophy will be to act as an intermediary to ensure the situation does not lead to violence or the violation of a person's rights.

The classic call is the lot line disputes or the neighbor who blows grass clippings onto another's yard. We have no idea where the lot line is either! Vehicle purchases - we can not help you get your car back after you sell it and the guy who is not paying you. These "shady" deals go against the rules and regulation of the Dept. of Transportation. Asking us to fix your illegal act is not in our best interest. If you sell a vehicle, sign the title and provide it to the new owner only after you receive payment by certified check or money order. Landlord and tenants, please refer to the free telephone hotline for your issues at 1-877-238-RENT or visit the Tenant Resource Center on the web. We are not attorneys but we will continue to do what we can. [tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us).

