



HUGO

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026



SPRING ICE SAFETY

Even as we shed our coats and set our clocks ahead for the spring time change Sunday, some intrepid Minnesotans may still try to get out on the ice. But rapidly shifting seasonal conditions make safety even more important than ever – especially on the St. Croix River.

With the Allen S. King Plant in Oak Park Heights back in operation, as well as fluctuating air temperatures, Washington County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to three separate incidents of vehicles going through the ice on the river, all in a 12-hour span one February weekend. In two of those incidents, multiple people ended up in the frigid water. Thanks to WCSO personnel and help from local fire departments, everyone was able to get out of the water with no major injuries.

Air temperature, wind, currents, and snow all affect ice strength. No ice is 100 percent safe, but here are some general ice safety tips:

- Check ice thickness with an auger, ice chisel, or drill and measure with a tape. If it's less than 4 inches thick – or if you're not sure – just stay off! The deadline to remove ice houses in the southern two-thirds of the state, including the metro area, was March 2.
- Don't go alone or without a cellphone.
- Wear a flotation suit or foam life jacket.
- Always carry ice picks in case you need to pull yourself out of freezing water.

For more details, please check the [Minnesota DNR ice safety](#) page.

NUMBER OF
INCIDENTS

273

TRAFFIC
STOPS

177

CITATIONS
ISSUED

64



WC26009083 ASSIST OTHER AGENCY

15XXX FARNHAM AVENUE N

Shortly after 1pm on Feb. 24, deputies responded to request from the Minnesota State Patrol's Capitol Security to assist in arresting a person who had left voicemails that involved specific threats with a firearm for two state legislators. Deputies arrived at the home and tried to contact the resident, without success. As deputies set up a perimeter, they saw the vehicle registered to the resident begin to back out of the driveway, so they conducted a high-risk traffic stop. The driver turned out to be the resident's husband, who complied with instructions. The husband then tried to contact the resident, with no success. Back at the home, the resident eventually came to the door and was arrested. She was taken to Washington County Jail and was charged Feb. 26 with felony threats of violence. The Hugo resident was released on \$20,000 bail with conditions that she undergo a mental health screening, have GPS monitoring, not possess dangerous weapons and not contact the representatives. She is scheduled to attend a virtual hearing on March 11, according to online court records. A conviction carries a penalty of up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

MESSAGE FROM THE SHERIFF



On Thursday, Feb. 19, I had the honor of officially swearing in 10 new deputies. This is largely ceremonial, as they all have been serving our citizens since successfully completing their field training, with hire dates from May through September 2025. But it is an incredibly important ceremony that includes fellow deputies and Sheriff's Office staff, County Board members, the County Attorney and the County Administrator. This is where we publicly acknowledge their choice to serve the citizens of Washington County, where we applaud the deep experience and dedication they bring to our team, and where we thank their families who came to support and encourage them.

Most were born and raised in this county or nearby, although others from as far as Alaska and Florida have chosen to make this their home. Many have military experience, including the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Reserves. Several have previous law enforcement experience. All will start their careers with WCSO in the Patrol Division, but we have no doubt they will find many opportunities within our agency to grow and make a difference.

Please meet the future of the Washington County Sheriff's Office (above, left to right): Deputies Cody Moore, Matthew Gasner, Joshua Lee, Justin Haugland, Mitchell Kotschevar, Sheriff Starry, Harrison Millington, Andrew Schommer, Jackson Sayers, Lauryn Brindley, and Beverly Marquette.



In service,

Dan Starry

Sheriff Dan Starry