



**** MEDIA RELEASE ****

BIG LAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT



790 Minnesota Avenue, Big Lake MN, 55309

Incident Number: 16-7752

Date/Time: 8/24/2016

Robbery Arrest

On August 19th at 10:30 pm, Big Lake Police Officers were dispatched to the 300 block of Karen Lane in regards to a reported armed robbery. The initial report indicated that a handgun was involved. On the officers arrival they interviewed all that were present, and determined the following had taken place.

The victim in this incident arrived in the parking lot of Wrights Crossing Park where he was scheduled to meet a person he knew from school identified as Tana Spitzengel (Age 21 – St. Cloud). Shortly after getting into the victims van, Spitzengel grabbed his laptop computer and fled to a vehicle which had just pulled into the parking lot. The victim gave chase, Spitzengel then pointed what the victim believed was a handgun at him. At some point a physical altercation took place involving several individuals. A male suspect then also produced what was believed to be a handgun, pointed it at the victim, and pulled the trigger multiple time. At this point it was determined to in fact be a CO2 Pistol. This male suspect fled on foot, Spitzengel fled in the vehicle. Both facsimile firearms, as well as the laptop computers were recovered by officers during the course of their investigation.

Spitzengel was located at a residence a short time later, taken into custody, and transported to the Sherburne County Jail. This investigation in ongoing with more charges likely. Spitzengel was charged by criminal complaint with; (1) Felony Theft of Property, and (2) Felony Terroristic Threats.

The use of “look alike,” or facsimile firearms continues to be of concern to law enforcement officers. Instances where crimes are being committed using these items is increasing. In their appearance, they are identical to that of actual firearms, causing the same level of fear in victims. With that, the use of a “look alike” firearm in a threatening manner could easily result in a deadly force encounter with law enforcement, or armed citizen concerned for their safety. Below are photos of both facsimile firearms recovered in this incident.

