



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

November 2011 Newsletter



From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Total Transactions	EBT Transactions	Total Sales on Wireless
2010 Total: 37,440	6,474 (17.3%)	\$869,401
2011 Totals:		
January 362	46 (12.7%)	\$ 17,346
February 493	57 (11.6%)	\$ 25,173
March 604	67 (11.1%)	\$ 20,259
April 830	73 (8.8%)	\$ 29,252
May 4,553	581 (12.7%)	\$158,440
June 4,214	787 (18.7%)	\$ 92,677
July 5,535	1321 (23.9%)	\$ 87,807
August 6,877	1742 (25.3%)	\$118,892
September 6,014	1366 (23.1%)	\$112,079
October 9,003	939 (10.4%)	\$220,357
YTD		
2011 Total 38,485	6,979 (18.1%)	\$882,282

October 2011 Facts:

Wow! The total sales for the month of October were \$220,357.00. This is the highest monthly sales for the Wireless EBT Project since it began back in 2005. The total yearly sales for 2011 have already surpassed last year's sales with two months to go. I can't tell you how much I enjoy working with all of you and very much appreciate your dedication to the Wireless EBT Project!

In October 2011, there were 184,833 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$49,216,390 in benefits were issued in October to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding October sales:

There were 116 farmers who were active in October and 99 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- Country Market (147) Sioux City
- Hoffman Produce Farm (57) Waterloo
- Allen's Grove Greenhouse (30) Donahue
- Circle W Acres (30) Belle Plaine
- Barb's Garden & Pantry (27) Long Grove
- Mast Family Farm (27) Leon
- Nostalgia Farms (27) Walcott
- Rinehart's Family Farm (27) Boone
- Scavo's Market (27) Des Moines
- Appleberry Farm (25) Marshalltown
- Iowa Orchard (25) Urbandale

Congratulations to Country Market for having the highest number of EBT transactions and for having the highest amount in EBT sales. Country Market had an awesome year! Congratulations!

New IRS Law (IMPORTANT)

DHS has received notice that the IRS has postponed the effective date to December 31, 2012 for withholding on payments made in settlement of payment cards. It is still important to respond if either Total Merchant Services (Nurit machines) or TSYS (VeriFone machines) contact you to assure that they have your correct information on record. This whole process has been very confusing for everyone! Thanks for your patience as it all unfolds!

Boxes and Call Tags from TMS

Total Merchant Services (TMS) has changed their procedure on deploying boxes and call tags when we request to seasonally shut down your machines. It will now take approximately 15 business days to receive the box and the call tag. And it is important to remember that just because DHS requests a machine to be shut down on November 1st that it does take TMS a couple of days to accomplish this. DHS has shut down over 84 machines so far and it is a very labor intensive process to shut down each machine. So if you have requested to have your machine shut down and you don't receive a box and a call tag after 15 business days, please make sure to give Tracy a call so that she can check into it and request another call tag.

Another option is this – when your TMS machine was deployed this spring, TMS included a call tag sticker with the machine. You can go ahead and box up your machine, battery intact, download cord & charger cord and use this call tag to send back your machine to TMS. **But it is very important to keep a copy of the call tag for tracking purposes.**

Farmer Survey

The 2011 Farmer Survey has been sent out! If we have an e-mail address for you, DHS sent you the link to complete the survey online this year. The online survey takes under 5 minutes to complete. Please take the time to complete the online survey by December 19th. The link for the online survey is below:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/718431/2011-Wireless-EBT-Project-Farmer-Survey>

If we don't have an e-mail address for you, we sent you a hard copy of the survey with a return envelope. Please complete the survey and return to DHS by December 19th.

The data that is collected from this survey is very important as it helps us to know how the project is doing and if we need to make any adjustments. The data is also shared with other states and non-profit organizations that want to begin a farmers market project like the Wireless EBT Project.

Thanks for taking the time to complete this survey!

Downtown Des Moines Winter Market

The Downtown Des Moines market held one of their winter markets on November 18 & 19 at the Capital Square/Nollen Plaza. Several farmers that participate in the Wireless EBT Project were vendors at this market.



Westrum Produce



Story Book Orchard



Shutt's Garden Center

Supplies

Just a reminder - if you are running low on paper for your wireless machine to please give Kim or Tracy a call. DHS supplies the paper rolls for your wireless machines. It is very important that you do not use any other kind of paper as it could do damage to your machine. You always want to make sure to have plenty of paper on hand before you head to the market.

Upcoming Events

Des Moines Downtown Winter Season Markets – Des Moines is holding their indoor/outdoor markets at Capital Square/Nollen Plaza; the same as previous years. The dates are December 16th & 17th. The Friday lunch market will be from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and on Saturday the hours will be 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

IA Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference – January 27 & 28 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny.

IA Farmers Market Association Conference - Saturday, February 11th in Des Moines. The speaker will be Mercedes Taylor-Puckett.

Reminders:

1. Remember that you cannot ring up a sale for another vendor. You could lose your Food Stamp certification and be terminated from the Wireless Project.
2. Since you are paying for the commercial transaction fees, be sure to keep track of what you are paying so you can use those expenses as a tax deduction.
3. You cannot set a minimum purchase amount. If an EBT household wishes to purchase \$.50 in onions, you do need to process the transaction. Same for any debit or credit transaction.
4. Hot foods and hot drinks (cocoa, coffee, and tea) cannot be purchased with SNAP EBT benefits.
5. If your Nurit machine quits working, you need to call TMS Tech Support at 1-888-848-6825. This is the phone number on the side of your machine. If you can't get the problem solved, please give Tracy a call.

6. If your VeriFone machine quits working, you will need to call Jason Butts at 402-602-4086 or Chris Shanahan at 402-602-4275. If you can't get the problem solved, please give Tracy a call.
7. Call Kim if you need any supplies such as paper rolls, power cords, or battery.
8. The second battery that we provide to you was purchased by DHS. If you ever need to return your wireless machine, be sure to keep one battery, carrying case and signs.
9. **Charge your batteries before market.** You should always have a charged battery, ready to go for market. If a battery is not holding a charge, contact Kim for a replacement.
10. Please make sure to keep the original box that your machine came in as it contains the Sim card, which is needed to identify your machine if you have to call TMS.

Help Desk

We are here to help you!

When you have questions about:

- **Participating in the Wireless project or reimbursement questions? Call Tracy Penick at 515-281-4935.**
- **What you can sell to EBT customers, or being authorized to accept EBT? Call USDA/FNS at 515-284-4035.**
- **Food Assistance eligibility? Call Tom Wakefield at 515-281-6820.**
- **Supplies – call Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410**