



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

November 2012 Newsletter



From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Total Transactions	EBT Transactions	Total Sales on Wireless
2011 Total: 42,748	7,286 (17.0%)	\$1,002,550
2012 Totals:		
January 471	88 (18.7%)	\$ 14,977
February 639	75 (11.7%)	\$ 14,733
March 1,300	94 (7.2%)	\$ 26,134
April 1,848	74 (4.0%)	\$ 67,561
May 6,226	637 (10.2%)	\$192,253
June 5,227	1032 (19.7%)	\$ 96,219
July 6,175	1504 (24.3%)	\$ 90,708
August 5,547	1379 (24.9%)	\$ 87,350
September 5,306	1210 (22.8%)	\$101,899
October 7,001	673 (9.6%)	\$166,145
YTD		
2012 Total 39,740	6,766 (17.0%)	\$857,979

October 2012 Facts:

Total sales for October this year were lower than October 2011 (\$166,145 compared to \$220,357). The number of EBT transactions were also lower in 2012 than in 2011 (673 compared to 939). For October 2012, there were a total of 7,001 wireless transactions compared to 9,003 in 2011.

In October 2012, there were 197,323 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$50,565,351 in benefits were issued in October to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding October sales:

There were 122 farmers who were active in October and 88 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Country Market (49) Sioux City
- ❖ Scavo's Market (38) Des Moines
- ❖ Hoffman Produce Farm (37) Waterloo
- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm (32) Ames
- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (28) Bloomfield
- ❖ Allen's Grove Greenhouse (26) Donahue
- ❖ Iowa Orchard (23) Urbandale
- ❖ Barb's Garden & Pantry (19) Long Grove

Congratulations go out to Country Market for having the highest number of EBT transactions and to Hoffman Produce Farm for having the highest amount in EBT sales. Great job to both!

Downtown Des Moines Winter Market

Kim and Tracy had the opportunity to visit the Downtown Des Moines winter market on Friday, November 16th at the Capital Square/Nollen Plaza. Several farmers that participate in the Wireless EBT Project were vendors at this winter market.



Belinda O'Brien
O'Brien's Own Granola



Rebecca Dunbar
Orale! Salsa

Statements

Beginning in June, DHS began to e-mail/mail the monthly statements from Total Merchant Services (TMS). The reason being was TMS was going to begin to charge DHS \$4.95 a month per farmer for the ability to pull the statements on Global. So it was determined that DHS would go online and pull all of the statements in the same way that farmers could access their statements. But the catch was there could only be one e-mail linked to the online statement so farmers no longer have the ability to go online and pull their own monthly statements. This process has been working well so DHS will continue to e-mail/mail you your monthly statement from TMS. Just a reminder that it is your responsibility to open the e-mail timely and pull off the monthly statement. Because the e-mail comes thru DHS security you only have the ability to open the e-mail and pull off the statement for two weeks before it is gone. Because of the time it takes DHS to send out your statements, we can only do this process once.

This does not affect any farmers that use the VeriFone wireless machines.

Farmer Survey

The 2012 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. The online survey takes under five minutes to complete. The link for the online survey is found below:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1091481/2012-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. All surveys, online and mailed, need to be completed by Friday, December 21st.

The data 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!

Paper for your wireless machine

Just a reminder that DHS supplies the paper rolls for your wireless machines. It is imperative that you use thermal paper or it could ruin your machine. Please do not use any other type of paper in your wireless machine other than the paper that DHS supplies. If you are running low on paper, please give either Tracy or Kim a call.

Upcoming Events

Des Moines Downtown Winter Season Markets – Des Moines is holding their indoor/outdoor markets at Capital Square/Nollen Plaza on December 14 & 15. The Friday lunch market will be from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and on Saturday the hours are 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

IA Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference – January 24 & 25 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny.

IA Farmers Market Association Conference – Saturday, February 9th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the First Christian Church in Des Moines.

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 402-574-7086 or Chris Shanahan at 402-574-7016. 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 515-421-3248.
- Food Assistance eligibility? Call Kari Lind at 515-281-7000.
- Supplies – call Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410.