



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

August 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
YTD		
2012 Total 21,886	3504 (16.0%)	\$502,585

July 2012 Facts:

Total sales for July this year were higher than July 2011 (\$90,708 compared to \$86,807). The number of EBT transactions were also higher in 2012 than in 2011 (1,504 compared to 1,321). For July 2012, there were a total of 6,175 wireless transactions compared to 5,535 in 2011.

In July 2012, there were 193,407 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$49,867,328 in benefits were issued in July to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding July sales:

There were 141 farmers who were active in July and 125 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Country Market (221) Sioux City
- ❖ Scavo's Market (114) Des Moines
- ❖ Iowa Orchard (54) Urbandale
- ❖ Story Book Orchard (51) Story City
- ❖ Hollow Maple Farm (40) Bennett
- ❖ Grubby's Kettle Korn (38) Oskaloosa
- ❖ Hoffman Produce Farm (38) Waterloo
- ❖ Shutt's Garden Center (35) St. Charles
- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm (30) Ames
- ❖ Hala's Honey (30) Marshalltown
- ❖ Mast Family Farm (30) Leon
- ❖ Allen's Grove Greenhouse (28) Donahue
- ❖ Barb's Garden & Pantry (27) Long Grove
- ❖ Musil Gardens (25) Shellsburg
- ❖ Westrum Produce (25) Stratford

Congratulations go out to Country Market for having the highest number of EBT transactions as well as the highest amount in EBT sales. Great job!

Visit to Downtown Des Moines Wednesday market

The opening day of the Wednesday Downtown Des Moines Market Farmers Market was on August 22nd. There were approximately 30 vendors selling fresh produce, honey, meat, bread and a lot of choices for lunch items. Several of the farmers in the Wireless EBT Project will be participating at this market which runs for the next 8 weeks. This is a great market located in the middle of downtown Des Moines, as people that work downtown can pick up fresh produce in the middle of the week or grab a quick sandwich for lunch. Participating this week were:



Jason & Amy Boyer
The Harvest Barn



Albert Mast
Mast Family Farm

Shutting down machines for the winter

DHS will be sending out a letter in September to the farmers in the Wireless EBT Project to find out if you will be shutting down your machine during the winter months. If you are finished going to farmers markets before you receive the letter, please get in contact with either Tracy or Kim so that we can get your machine shut down promptly.

Care of your wireless machine

A reminder that it is extremely important to protect your wireless machine from the elements. A huge rain storm blew through the Downtown Des Moines Farmer Market a couple of weeks ago and a couple of our farmers' machines were ruined because they got wet. The wireless machines are just like a computer and cannot handle getting wet or too cold/hot. The cost to replace a machine depends on what type of machine you have and if it is rental, purchased or free. The cost to replace a machine can run anywhere from \$99 to \$700. It is the farmer's responsibility to make sure that these machines are taken care of and protected from the elements.

Extra Banners, Table Skirts & Table Top Signs

DHS has a few extra banners, table skirts and table top signs left in our inventory. DHS plans to order some new signage for the 2013 market season. So if you are in need of a new sign, please let Tracy know what type of sign (banner, skirt or table top) that you would like.

Total Merchant Services (TMS)

Following my visit to Total Merchant Services (TMS) in June I wanted to alert you of some new procedures.

- If you have a question concerning billing, please either contact Tracy or Kim Jones or send an e-mail to support@merchantserviceshq.com Please do not call into the Call Center for assistance with your billing questions.
- When you experience an issue with your machine, please call TMS Tech Support at 1-888-848-6825 and request a Tier 2 representative. We have now flagged all of Iowa's accounts so that you should be referred to a Tier 2 representative but if not, please request one.

Iowa is a very unique project and we are trying to streamline all of our procedures to provide you with the best possible service from TMS.

The above information only pertains to farmers that have a Nurit wireless machine.

Upcoming Events

Des Moines Downtown Winter Season Markets – Des Moines is holding their indoor/outdoor markets at Capital Square/Nollen Plaza on November 16 & 17 and 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 noon. If you would like to sign up to be a vendor at the winter market please e-mail Lydia Van Der Beek at fmarket@desmoinesmetro.com

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.

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.

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 515-284-4035.
- Food Assistance eligibility? Call Tom Wakefield at 515-281-6820.
- Supplies – call Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410.