



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

September 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
YTD		
2012 Total 27,433	4883 (17.8%)	\$589,935

August 2012 Facts:

Total sales for August this year were lower than August 2011 (\$87,350 compared to \$118,892). The number of EBT transactions were also lower in 2012 than in 2011 (1,379 compared to 1,742). For August 2012, there were a total of 5,547 wireless transactions compared to 6,877 in 2011.

In August 2012, there were 195,154 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$50,236,042 in benefits were issued in August to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding August sales:

There were 138 farmers who were active in August and 116 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Country Market (216) Sioux City
- ❖ Hoffman Produce Farm (86) Waterloo
- ❖ Scavo's Market (54) Des Moines
- ❖ Story Book Orchard (50) Story City
- ❖ Stillwater Greenhouse (40) Orchard
- ❖ Barb's Garden & Pantry (39) Long Grove
- ❖ Palm Tree Pat (30) Davenport
- ❖ Rinehart's Family Farm (30) Boone
- ❖ Shutt's Garden Center (30) St. Charles
- ❖ Iowa Orchard (28) Urbandale
- ❖ Hollow Maple Farm (27) Bennett
- ❖ Farmer Ken's Produce (26) Long Grove
- ❖ Circle W Acres (25) Belle Plaine

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 Cedar Rapids market

Tracy had the opportunity to visit the Downtown Cedar Rapids market on Saturday, September 15th. This is a large market and the Wireless EBT Project has multiple farmers that attend this market. There was everything that you can think of to purchase including a lot of fall products. I was very impressed with this market!



Sandy & Brittany Barnard
Michael's Creations



Tammy Rathje
Tammy's Treasures



Brenda Pfautsch
Tatonka Farm



Sherry McClellan
Fertile Dirt Farms

Shutting down machines for the winter

Wow – this summer has flown by! It is hard to believe that the end of the farmers market season is upon us. As the fall temperatures set in, it is time to begin the process of shutting down the wireless machines that will not be used over the winter months. An e-mail/letter was sent out last week to all of the farmers that wireless machines can be shut down over the winter months. If you have a FREE machine and you didn't receive an e-mail/letter then we won't be able to shut down your machine this winter. FREE machines have to be live for 12 consecutive months.

We need to hear from you by **October 15th** to what your intentions are for your wireless machine this winter. The information that DHS needs from you is the date that you will be finished with your machine (make sure to batch out before) and the date when you will need your machine live in 2013. If you are planning on attending winter markets, year around markets or selling from your farm, please call us and let us know this. The shutting down process is very labor intensive for DHS as well as for TMS and TSYS so we need to hear from you by October 15th even if you don't plan on shutting down until a later date. Please either call or e-mail Tracy or Kim and let us know what your plans are for the winter months.

Disregard letter from ACS

Just a reminder that if you received a letter from Affiliated Computer Services (ACS) concerning filling out a W-9 form, you can disregard this letter. ACS is the company that completes the monthly farmer reimbursements for DHS each month. This letter was mailed out in error!

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.

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.

Extra Banners, Table Skirts & Table Top Signs

DHS still 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.

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.

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 Kari Lind at 515-281-7000.
- Supplies – call Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410.