



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

September 2013 Newsletter



From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Total Transactions	EBT Transactions	Total Sales on Wireless
2012 Total: 43,754	7,016 (16.0%)	\$958,564
2013 Totals:		
January 376	44 (12.0%)	\$ 9,916
February 446	58 (13.0%)	\$ 11,723
March 494	59 (12.0%)	\$ 13,967
April 1,239	97 (8.0%)	\$ 35,334
May 5,147	439 (9.0%)	\$178,006
June 6,177	772 (12.0%)	\$146,906
July 6,945	1,399 (20.0%)	\$113,505
August 6,856	1,662 (24.0%)	\$108,813
YTD		
2013 Total 27,680	4,530 (16.0%)	\$ 618,170

August 2013 Facts:

Total sales for August this year were higher than August 2012 (\$108,813 compared to \$87,350). The number of EBT transactions were also higher in 2013 than 2012 (1,662 compared to 1,379). For August 2013, there were a total of 6,856 wireless transactions compared to 5,547 in 2012.

In August 2013, there were 199,849 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$49,238,956 in benefits were issued in August to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding August sales:

There were 127 farmers who were active in August and 115 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Country Market (279) Sioux City
- ❖ Hoffman Produce Farm (106) Waterloo
- ❖ Scavo's Market (74) Des Moines
- ❖ Farmer Ken's Produce (73) Long Grove
- ❖ Hickory Hills Organic Farm (67) Moulton
- ❖ Story Book Orchard (51) Story City
- ❖ Allen's Grove Greenhouse (49) Donahue
- ❖ Heartland Farms (47) Waterloo
- ❖ Westrum Produce (45) Stratford
- ❖ Stillwater Greenhouse (40) Orchard
- ❖ Barb's Garden & Pantry (39) Long Grove
- ❖ Iowa Orchard (38) Urbandale
- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (37) Bloomfield
- ❖ Coyote Run Farm (35) Lacona
- ❖ Palm Tree Pat Garden Fresh Produce (35) Davenport
- ❖ Grubby's Kettle Korn (33) Oskaloosa
- ❖ Hollow Maple Farm (31) Bennett

Congratulations go out to Country Market for having the highest amount of EBT transactions and the highest amount in EBT sales. Great Job!

Closing down machines for the winter

Wow – this summer has flown by! It is hard to believe that the end of the farmers markets 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 has been sent out to all of the farmers in the Wireless EBT Project.

We need to hear from you by **October 18th** 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/settle before) and the date that you will need your machine live for the 2014 market season. If you are planning to attend winter markets, year around markets or selling from your farm, please call Tracy and let her know this. The shutting down process is very labor intensive for DHS, as well as for Total Merchant Services (TMS) and TSYS, so we need to hear from you by October 18th even if you don't plan on shutting down until a later date. Please either call or e-mail Tracy and let her know what your plans are for the winter months.

Signage for the Wireless EBT Project

Tracy has had the opportunity to travel to several farmers markets this season. I have to say that I have been disappointed that the new signs that DHS has purchased are not always up and visible. If I can't find the farmers that participate in the Wireless EBT Project how are Food Assistance families going to find you. Each farmer was given a choice of three new signs. Please make sure that you are taking those signs and displaying them at every market that you attend!

Boone Market

Tracy had the opportunity to visit the Boone Farmers Market on Thursday, September 5th. This is a nice market with a great location and offered some wonderful fruits and vegetables. Farmers at this market that participate in the Wireless EBT Project are Rinehart's Family Farm, Wilber's Northside Market and Tucker's Farm.



Polly Rinehart
Rinehart's Family Farm



Scott & Julie Wilber
Wilber's Northside Market



Missy Wisecup
Tucker's Farm

Important change

DHS is implementing new software for sending out encrypted e-mail messages. The change is occurring between September 16 and September 30th depending on your e-mail domain. Once implemented, if Tracy sends you an e-mail and the system determines it needs to be encrypted the e-mail will be delivered to you in the new format. The first time that you receive one of these e-mails, you will have to click on the link and set up an account. Once your account has been set up, then you will just need to log in to open up future e-mails.

Any changes to your contact information?

Just a reminder to make sure that DHS has your current contact information. If your address, phone number, e-mail address or bank account changes this needs to be reported to DHS. If you have any changes, please contact Tracy so that we have your information current and up to date.

Upcoming Events

Des Moines Downtown Winter Season Markets – Des Moines is holding their indoor/outdoor markets at Capital Square/Nollen Plaza on November 22 & 23 and December 13 & 14. 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. If you would like to sign up to be a vendor at the winter market, please e-mail Lydia Van Der Beek at lvanderbeek@downtowndesmoines.com

Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference – January 23 & 24 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny.

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 Tracy a call.

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 Tracy Penick at (515) 281-4935.