



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

August 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
YTD		
2013 Total 20,824	2,868 (14.0%)	\$ 509,357

July 2013 Facts:

Total sales for July this year were higher than July 2012 (\$113,505 compared to \$90,708). The number of EBT transactions were lower in 2013 than 2012 (1,399 compared to 1,504). For July 2013, there were a total of 6,945 wireless transactions compared to 6,175 in 2012.

In July 2013, there were 198,846 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$49,025,373 in benefits were issued in July to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding July sales:

There were 126 farmers who were active in July and 106 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Country Market (219) Sioux City
- ❖ Scavo's Market (92) Des Moines
- ❖ Story Book Orchard (60) Story City
- ❖ Westrum Produce (45) Stratford
- ❖ Barb's Garden & Pantry (40) Long Grove
- ❖ Grubby's Kettle Korn (39) Oskaloosa
- ❖ Palm Tree Pat Garden Fresh Produce (38) Davenport
- ❖ Iowa Orchard (35) Urbandale
- ❖ Hollow Maple Farm (34) Bennett
- ❖ Mast Family Farm (33) Leon
- ❖ The Harvest Barn (33) Weldon
- ❖ Penick's Sweet Corn (32) Carlisle

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

Important

Just a reminder that it is extremely important that you alert DHS when either Total Merchant Services (TMS) or TSYS advises you that you need to swap out your machine because it is no longer working. The Wireless EBT Project is a very specialized project and you have to make sure that DHS knows what is going on so we can assure that everything operates correctly. If DHS is not made aware, you could be charged incorrectly for the swap out of your machine.

Helpful Tip

One of our farmers shared a tip that I thought might be helpful to all farmers. In the past, this farmer wondered why he had very few EBT and credit/debit sales while other farmers had so many. He was only displaying table top signs at the market. When the new signs were mailed out, he began to use a table skirt and his sales immediately increased. All farmers in the project were given the choice of three of the new signs. Please make sure that you are displaying the signs so that customers can see them and know that you accept EBT, credit and debit cards!

Mason City Market

Tracy had the opportunity to hit the road to visit some farmers markets this past weekend. On Friday, August 23rd, Tracy was at the North Iowa Farmers market in Mason City. This was a nice market that had several vendors and some really great fruit! Farmers at this market that participate in the Wireless EBT Project were North Iowa Berries and More and Stillwater Greenhouse.



Jesse & Janette Huang
North Iowa Berries and More

Tracy then headed over to Waterloo and attended the Kimball Ridge market and the Downtown market on Saturday, August 24th. The Kimball Ridge is a smaller market but had just about anything you can imagine to purchase. Really great veggies! Farmers participating in the Wireless EBT Project at this market were Adolphs Produce and Bakery and Mattingly Farms Plants and Produce.



Carolyn Adolphs
Adolphs Produce and Bakery



Kristi Sienknecht & Devin Mattingly
Mattingly Farms Plants & Produce

The Downtown Market is one of the most beautiful markets that I have been to. There are several vendors selling everything from produce, beautiful plants to unique craft items. Farmers participating in the Wireless EBT Project at this market were A Family Market Place, Elaine & Lloyd Nolt, Kiefer's Produce, Litteaur's Garden Produce and Stillwater Greenhouse. I really enjoy getting out and visiting farmers markets throughout the state. It was wonderful to see everyone!



Julie Kiefer
Kiefer's Produce

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 either Tracy or Kim 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 Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410.