



# WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

## January 2014 Newsletter



### From the Editor – Tracy Penick

| Total Transactions        | EBT Transactions     | Total Sales on Wireless |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>2012 Total: 43,754</b> | <b>7,016 (16.0%)</b> | <b>\$958,564</b>        |
| <b>2013 Totals:</b>       |                      |                         |
| 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               |
| September 7,405           | 1,365 (18.0%)        | \$147,856               |
| October 9,855             | 695 ( 7.1%)          | \$266,881               |
| November 2,033            | 79 ( 3.9%)           | \$ 62,498               |
| December 2,535            | 89 (3.5%)            | \$ 78,589               |
| <b>YTD</b>                |                      |                         |
| <b>2013 Total 49,508</b>  | <b>6,758 (13.7%)</b> | <b>\$1,173,994</b>      |

2013 has come to a close and the figures are in. The total sales on the wireless machines for 2013 were \$1,173,994 which is the best year ever in the history of the Wireless EBT Project. 2013 proved once again to be a trying year for farmers as it started off very wet and muddy and ended up with another drought. But you once again persevered and made this the best year ever in sales. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your dedication to the Wireless EBT Project. Because of your hard work, Iowa's low income families are able to shop at their local farmers markets and provide fresh and healthy food for their families.

#### Year End Facts:

Total sales for 2013 were \$1,173,994 compared to \$958,564 in 2012. Total EBT sales for 2013 were \$83,146 compared to \$82,142 in 2012. The number of EBT transactions for 2013 were 6,758 compared to 7,016 in 2012.

In December 2013, there were 196,216 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$44,496,061 in benefits were issued in December to these families.

#### Here are other interesting facts regarding December sales:

There were 39 farmers who were active in December and 23 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (21) Bloomfield
- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm (13) Ames
- ❖ Grossman Meats (7) Preston
- ❖ Iowa Food Coop (6) Des Moines
- ❖ Oak Hill Acres (5) Atalissa

- ❖ Sawyer Beef (4) Princeton
- ❖ The Harvest Barn (4) Weldon

Congratulations go out to Yoder's Natural Farm for having the highest amount of EBT transactions and for having the highest amount in EBT sales. Congratulations!

## **Help Us Recruit New Farmers!**

It is that time of year where we need to begin recruiting new farmers for the Wireless EBT Project. Do you know of any farmers that would benefit by being a part of the Wireless EBT Project? If so, please let Tracy know so that she can get in contact with them.

## **Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Growers Annual Conference**

The annual conference for the Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association will be held on January 23 & 24 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. Tracy will be hosting a booth at this conference to promote the Wireless EBT Project and hopefully will gain some new farmers for the project. This is always a great conference with a lot of good workshops.

Please be sure to stop by and say hi if you are planning on attending this conference!

## **Annual Survey**

Thanks to all of you that took the time to complete the annual survey. I will provide the results in the February newsletter.

One thing that I thought worth mentioning that I noticed when putting together the 2013 annual report was a couple of you mentioned using a different form of technology as an option during the winter months or as a 2<sup>nd</sup> machine.

I just want to really encourage you to do some research to assure that whatever form of technology that you might think about using is Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) compliant. If it is not, you could be at risk and liable if information is stolen. There has been a lot of news lately about companies that have had customer information stolen from out of their systems.

Also, please keep in mind that there is always the option of renting a second machine from the two companies that provide the machines for Iowa. The wireless machines that the State of Iowa use are all PCI DSS compliant.

It is extremely important to protect yourself and your business and to remember that even though the transaction fees might be lower you could be putting yourself in jeopardy if you haven't taken the time to research the security on another form of technology!

## **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.

## 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.

## Upcoming Events

**Iowa Farmers Market Workshop** – February 8, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the First Christian Church.

## 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.