

- 1. Net Worth**
On-Line Banking
Just Got Easier With
Account Aggregation
- 2. Executive Forum**
A paperless society?
- 2. For Your Financial Health**
“Zero-Percent
Financing” Can
Cost You Plenty!
- 3. Customer Spotlight**
The Arc of
East Central Iowa
- 3. For Your Kind of Life**
Funding College—
Where do you start?
- 4. For Your Financial Health**
Roth IRA 101
Free Credit Reports

Dialog

Thought for the day

When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished by how much he'd learned in seven years.

—Mark Twain

Thanks!

Customers speak up

“I love your new Internet Banking upgrade—I must say this is the best thing that you could have done. You have made my life ten times easier and transactions show up much faster. Thank you.”

—Tom McDanel

Net Worth

On-Line Banking Just Got Easier With Account Aggregation

Now Guaranty Bank On-Line Banking customers can automatically view* updated balance and transaction data on one screen for all their personal, external online accounts. This new service provides the ultimate convenience for our customers—no more switching between sites to view your credit card bills or possibly even accounts at other banks. Over 8,000 online accounts are supported, including the leading banks, brokerages, investments, credit card companies and more.

Account aggregation enables a customer to:

- Create a hub for external account information
- View updated snapshots of all recent account activities across multiple financial institutions in one central place
- Access all external accounts with a single click, eliminating the need to remember multiple passwords.

Account Aggregation is FREE to our Guaranty Bank On-Line Banking customers. A couple clicks of the mouse will get you registered so get started with this new service today!

**This process does not enable access to the external accounts, it just allows the customer to view the accounts that they already have access to.*



Construction Update

It's hard not to notice some major construction that has been going on at our downtown and 42nd Street locations.

42nd street office

The 42nd Street office has undergone a major lobby facelift with a newly designed teller line for added customer privacy. Keep a look out for the pictures in our next issue or stop by the office for a cup of coffee—the pot is always on!

Downtown driveup

Once completed, the construction work at the downtown location will produce an updated drive-up teller system consisting of three lanes accessible from Third Avenue SE. This renovation will also yield approximately 20 new parking spots for our customers. Construction is scheduled to be complete sometime in February.



Robert D. Becker, President & CEO

Executive Forum

A message from our President

For years the consultants have predicted that we would be a checkless society. Actually, these experts in banking said the age would have been heralded decades ago. But it never occurred. In fact, paper checks were being written more and more. That is, until this year.

Nationally, electronic payments of all sorts have outpaced paper checks by 20%. It's available everywhere—from purchasing your groceries to making your regular church contributions via debit or credit cards. And why not? The electronic payment scheme is more secure in many ways than the

paper checks of the past. With debit cards (cards that deduct the payment directly from your bank account) you are assigned a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for security and credit card regulations allow you to challenge a disputed charge up to 60 days.

I sit on the executive Board of Shazam, the Iowa based ATM card network. Shazam now processes for 1,660 banks throughout 29 states with over a billion dollars of transactions a year! Growth is significant because the marketplace (you, the customers) have recognized the benefits of convenience and

security with such electronic transactions.

Guaranty Bank has an excellent selection of electronic products; a premier Internet Banking system, ATM & Debit cards, a great VISA or MasterCard that gives you awards points or cash back and for business clients—many new cash management tools. If you are unsure of these products or just want to learn more, please have one of our personal bankers sit and discuss the many ways we can help make these services available for you.

Wishing you a Happy and Healthy New Year.

For Your Financial Health

“Zero-Percent Financing” Can Cost You Plenty!

Here are some advertising pitches that might capture your attention:

“Zero- Percent Financing!”

“No Interest and No Payments Until 2006!”

“No-Interest Financing.”

Here's the catch: Hidden costs or conditions may nullify any advantages of so-called “no-interest” payment plans. You have to be careful and study the details.

For example, in many “zero-interest” offers you do not have to pay interest for a specified period, say, six months—but you must pay for the purchase in full by that date or you will be charged for interest on the entire purchase dating back to the purchase date. That detail often is included in the papers people sign, but they may not notice it.

Some “zero-interest” offers have important restrictions—they may apply only to certain brands, or only to purchases over a minimum dollar amount.

In another variation, some “zero-interest” offers actually charge you for interest each month from the date of purchase and then provide a rebate at the end of the “no-interest” period—but only if the payment has been made in full by then.

Some ads tout “no payments for six months”—but, when payments do begin, you are obligated to pay interest that accrued from the date of purchase.

The Attorney General's Office sometimes challenges certain “zero-interest” ads as misleading or deceptive. But consumers need to be careful to protect themselves.



Follow these tips to avoid being misled by “zero-percent” advertising:

- Get more information—go beyond ad headlines.
- Study the “fine print” in ads or call the store for details on restrictions, payment terms, and payment deadlines.
- Be sure to determine when you start owing and start paying interest.
- Ask the store to confirm in writing any information they tell you.
- Remember to shop the “bottom-line” price.
- Make plenty of comparisons with other offers. You may find a better ultimate price from a retailer that doesn't offer a “zero-interest” plan.
- Make sure you understand the program before you buy.

For more information, or to file a complaint about “zero-interest” offers, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, Hoover Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Phone 515-281-5926.

The Arc Of East Central Iowa

Customer Spotlight

The Arc of East Central Iowa originated in 1953 when families came together to gain services for their children who were affected by mental retardation, now more often described as cognitive and developmental disabilities.

Today, The Arc offers multiple programs and services that help enhance the lives of people with cognitive and developmental disabilities. A few such programs include: respite (short-term temporary care & supervision of the individual which can vary from a few hours to extended stays), daycare services (including a Summer Day Program), outreach and support, prevention campaigns and Voices Unlimited (created to give people with cognitive or developmental disabilities their own support network).

The Arc believes quality service, advocating for inclusion, and supporting families, improves the quality of life for hundreds of individuals who have such disabilities as mental retardation, epilepsy, autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Fragile X syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and other developmental disorders.

The Arc is governed by a board of directors and is managed by a qualified staff. The Arc works to help individuals reach higher levels of independence and enjoy full productive lives. The Arc is a partner agency of the United Way of East Central Iowa and has numerous other collaborations throughout east central Iowa.

A recent outing to the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art provided by the Arc for adults with developmental disabilities.



For Your Kind of Life

Funding College – Where do you start?

The College Planning Center (CPC), a division of Iowa Student Loan®, is staffed with highly competent individuals who have expertise in college student services. The CPC's mission is to supply FREE information, assistance, counseling and support to students and their families as they plan for college and apply for financial aid.

Once a student has applied for admission to one or more colleges, the next step is to apply for financial aid. The CPC helps families start the financial aid process by assisting with the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available from your student's high school guidance counselor, college financial aid office, the College Planning Center or online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The amount a family is expected to contribute to college costs is based upon the results of the FAFSA.

Three Most Common Types of Financial Aid

Grants and Scholarships—financial aid that does not have to be repaid. For more information or assistance with scholarship searches, go to www.collegeplanning.org.

Work Study—a program that provides a job allowing the student to earn money to pay for some of their college expenses—check with the college financial aid office.

Loans—money borrowed to cover educational expenses that must be repaid with interest. Repayment usually begins after you leave college, drop to less than half-time or graduate. Loans can be an excellent source of financial aid. Guaranty Bank has partnered with Iowa Student Loan®, a private, non-profit corporation, to disburse its student loans. To obtain these loans, respond to your college with Guaranty Bank's name and lender code (827058) by writing it on the Master Promissory Note (the form provided by your college).

For extensive information on transitioning to college and the funding process, contact the College Planning Center at www.collegeplanning.org or call 877-272-4692. Iowa Student Loans can be reached at 800-243-7552 or www.studentloan.org.



For Your Financial Health

Free Credit Reports

A recent amendment to the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires each of the three nationwide consumer reporting companies: Equifax, Experian, and Trans Union, to provide you a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months. The FCRA promotes the accuracy and privacy of information in your credit file. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, enforces the FCRA with respect to consumer reporting companies.

Free reports will be phased in during a nine-month period, with consumers in Midwest states (including Iowa) able to order their credit reports beginning March 1, 2005.

One central website, toll-free telephone number, and mailing address through which you can order your free annual report have been set-up. To order, go to www.annualcreditreport.com, call 877-322-8228, or complete and mail the Annual Credit Report Request Form (which can be printed from www.ftc.gov/credit). Do not contact the three reporting companies individually. They are only providing free annual credit reports via the options listed above.

You will need to provide your name, address, Social Security number, date of birth and possibly some additional information for security reasons—each company may ask you for different information. www.annualcreditreport.com is the only authorized source for your free annual credit report from the three nationwide consumer reporting companies and they will not send you an email or call you asking for personal information. If you get a call, email or see a pop-up ad claiming it's from www.annualcreditreport.com or the three reporting companies, do not reply or click on any link in the message. It's probably a scam. Forward any call information or email that claims to be from www.annualcreditreport.com or any of the reporting companies to the FTC's database of deceptive spam at spam@uce.gov.

For more information about free credit reports and what to do if you find incorrect or fraudulent information on your report, go to www.ftc.gov or call 1-877-382-4357.



Roth IRA 101

Born on January 1, 1998 as a result of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, the Roth IRA was named after former Senator William V. Roth, Jr.

The Roth IRA is the simplest—and potentially the most effective—sheltered account imaginable:

- It has a tax structure unlike that of any other IRA: contributions are post-tax, but growth is tax-free; once you put your money in, you never pay taxes again.
- It's more flexible: because you have already paid taxes up front, there are no minimum distribution requirements.
- Since withdrawals are not reportable income, they won't affect your adjusted gross income during retirement.
- There is no age limitation for Roth IRA contributions. Unlike traditional IRAs, you can be any age and still qualify to contribute to a Roth IRA.

The Roth IRA also has one potential downside:

- You pay taxes while working rather than when retired, when your tax rate is likely to be lower; so the Roth IRA loses one of the advantages of the traditional IRA.

As tax season rolls around, check with your tax advisor to see if the Roth IRA is right for you. If so, Guaranty Bank can get you set up!

Locations

302 3rd Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

1819 42nd Street NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

191 Jacolyn Drive NW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52405

700 25th Street
Marion, Iowa 52302

Intercity
1195 Boyson Road
Hiawatha, Iowa 52233

Wal-Mart Supercenter
3601 29th Avenue SW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

Wal-Mart Supercenter
2645 Blairs Ferry Road NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



For your kind of life.

www.guaranty-bank.com

P.O. Box 1807
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

Ph. (319) 286-6200
Fax (319) 362-7894

MEMBER FDIC

