

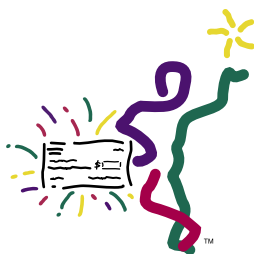
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For Your Kind of Life Check 21—Countdown to October 28th

With the deadline for banks to comply with the “Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act” right around the corner, we’re wrapping up our educational articles on the topic. For this last segment, we’ve prepared a quick Check 21 recap.

- Check 21 was born out of the 9/11 tragedy. The check clearing system virtually came to a halt with the airways shut down.



- The core of this new legislation is check truncation. This is the process by which the bank of first deposit* creates an image of the check and then electronically sends the information on for processing.

- The results will be less opportunity for interruption in the check processing system and checks will clear your account MUCH faster.

- Check 21 does not mandate the adoption of check truncation. Rather, it establishes the legal framework for the implementation of check truncation as early as when a check is first presented for payment.

- If the bank of first deposit chooses to truncate the items presented to them for payment, they are required to create an image that will electronically travel through the processing system.

- If a subsequent bank in the payment system does not have the ability to accept images, then a “substitute check” is created.

- A substitute check is a legal equivalent to the original paper check, provided it meets established criteria. These checks are similar in size to the originals with a slightly reduced image of the front and back. Below is a sample.

- When you get your first statement from Guaranty Bank after October 28, you may see a combination of check images (just like your current statements) and substitute check images.

- The Federal Reserve has asked us to advise customers to use ONLY BLUE OR BLACK INK when writing their checks. Using colored pens (red, purple, green, etc), pencil or GEL pens of ANY color will impede the process used to create a substitute check. The result could be an unreadable image and thus worthless as a legal equivalent.

Please call any of our offices if you have questions regarding your account and our implementation of Check 21.

** For example, if you write a check to MasterCard. They will deposit your payment into their bank, which is then considered the “bank of first deposit”.*



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Executive Forum

A message from our President



When we say “Guaranty Bank—For Your Kind of life”, we know that “your kind of life” may not always be smooth sailing. With Guaranty Bank’s participation in the “Get Checking™” program, we hope to help area citizens avoid a couple waves poised to capsize their financial ship.

Get Checking™ is an educational program designed to help consumers without a primary banking relationship gain access to basic financial services, namely deposit accounts (checking and savings). This includes individuals that have had problem accounts in the past or consumers who have simply never opened a deposit account. This program is offered to area citizens by local financial institutions in conjunction with Consumer Credit Counseling Services.

The Get Checking™ program offers a fresh start to consumers that have had problems in the past managing a deposit account. The program covers such topics as choosing the account that is right for you, using your checking account and managing your money and your credit rating. Once the course is successfully completed, they receive a Certificate of Completion. Participants then take this certificate to a participating financial institution and an account is opened under agreed-upon conditions.

While there are many financial literacy programs available, Get Checking™ stands out because it offers very unique and tangible results. It focuses its efforts on providing financial education around checking account issues because by creating good debit practices, consumers can build a solid foundation and take the next steps to participation, choice and financial freedom.

If you or someone you know would like more information about the local Get Checking™ program, please Consumer Credit Counseling at 398-3576



Robert D. Becker, President & CEO

Net Worth

Warning: Door-to-Door Meat Scams

Fraudulent door-to-door meat sellers have been plaguing Iowans again. Here’s the scam: A salesperson shows up at your door selling meat or seafood he says is left over from a delivery that fell through. He says you can buy the meat at extremely low prices, but the meat turns out to be very expensive and low-quality—and you aren’t able to cancel. A sure sign of a scam is a seller who tells you a local restaurant “couldn’t take the whole order,” or that a neighbor to whom the meat was to be delivered was not home. Such come-on lines usually are completely false. They just lead you to think you can get a great bargain—if you make a snap decision to buy. That’s a recipe for deception.

Such scam-artists often fail to obtain required licenses, and they often fail to give customers the required written and oral three-day cancellation notices. They often also violate the law by failing to tell you the price per pound, as required by state law.

The Attorney General’s Office has taken consumer-fraud action against several of these companies in recent months, getting refunds for customers who felt deceived.

To avoid being burned by door-to-door meat or food sellers:

Be wary of door-to-door meat and seafood sellers who stop unannounced. There are some legitimate companies that sell food door to door (especially

those that come to deliver orders placed by consumers), but you need to be very careful.

Shop for the best prices—and focus on price per pound. Don’t be swayed by price-per-serving claims. That’s a meaningless and bogus comparison.

Insist on written notification of your three-day right to cancel. Iowa law gives you three business days to cancel a purchase at your door, and get a full refund for any unused product. The law also requires the seller to tell you of this right, and to give you two written notices of the right. Don’t buy from any door-to-door seller who does not give you the proper cancellation notices.

Write down license plate numbers and descriptions. Help law enforcement officials by recording pertinent information about these scam-artists and contacting your local authorities. Some sellers may be wanted in other states or localities.

Some door-to-door food sellers are legitimate. To check whether complaints have been received against a company—or to report a door-to-door food scam—write to the Consumer Protection Division, Hoover Building, Des Moines, IA 50319. Call 515-281-5926 or toll-free at 1-888-777-4590.





For Your Financial Health Tips for Buying a Used Car

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division receives hundreds of calls and consumer complaints every year about used car purchases. Follow these tips to avoid unexpected expense and disappointment: Shop around. Do your research. Take your time.

Check out the values of several makes and models in your price range. Most public libraries have vehicle value guide books available at no charge to look up prices, such as the Kelley Blue Book or the NADA Used Car Price Guide.

Check with your bank to see whether you qualify for a loan, and how much you can get. Remember, you may get a better used-car loan rate from your financial institution than from a dealer.

When you find a car you like, check it out:

Test-drive the vehicle, and take it to your mechanic for inspection. Never buy a car without test-driving it first, and never buy a car from someone who won't let you take it to a mechanic for a pre-sale inspection.

Research the car's history. For a fee, private services like Carfax and Autocheck may be able to tell you whether the vehicle has ever been titled as salvage, flood-damaged, or rebuilt, or if it has ever had an odometer mileage discrepancy.

Check out the repair history for the make and model. The spring 2004 auto issue of Consumer Reports magazine lists repair histories for various used-car makes and models. The Internet also has a great deal of information about used cars.

Check the paperwork on the car before signing a contract to purchase. Examine the odometer and damage disclosure statements.

Offer a fair price, and focus on the total purchase price. (If you focus only on the monthly payment amount, you may end up paying more than the car is worth.)

Watch what you sign. Once you sign a contract to buy, there generally is no three-day right to cancel. Be ready to walk away if you aren't satisfied with a deal.

To check out a dealer's complaint record, call the A.G.'s Consumer Protection Div. at 515-281-5926. You can also check with the Better Business Bureau at 800-222-1600.

Iowa's Attorney General Consumer Advisories

For Your Kind of Life

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Customer Spotlight

Discovery Living Presents 2004-05 Travel & Adventure Film Series

Again this year, Discovery Living will be presenting their fund raising Travel & Adventure Film Series. Discovery Living is a non-profit organization formed in Cedar Rapids more than 25 years ago for the purpose of helping developmentally disabled adults live their lives in a non-institutional, community environment. Men and women served by the organization live in typical neighborhood settings, alone or in groups of three and four, with assistance in their daily activities. Many residents are employed in the community while others attend vocational rehabilitation training.

Discovery Living believes that all persons, regardless of their disabilities, deserve to be treated with love, respect and dignity, and to be supported in their desire to live as independently as they are able.

October 10, 2004 • Stan Walsh
Italy's Fabled Islands

November 14, 2004 • Gray Warriner
Lewis & Clark—Confluence of Time & Courage

January 16, 2005 • Monty Brown
It's Great Britain

February 27, 2005 • Mike Shiley
Amazing Thailand

March 6, 2005 • Buddy Hatton
In Search of Shangri-La

April 24, 2005 • Clint Denn
Great Parks of the West

All shows are at 2:00 p.m. and will be held at Kirkwood Community College's Ballantyne Auditorium. Individual tickets are \$6.00 each, \$30 for an individual season pass or \$55 for a family season pass.

Contact Discovery living at 378-7470 for more details or ticket information.

Thought for the day

Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand.

—Mark Twain

Ponderisms

- If money doesn't grow on trees, then why do banks have branches?
- What did "cured ham" actually have?
- How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?
- Since bread is square, then why is sandwich meat round?
- Why do you have to "put your two cents in" . . . but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"? Where's that extra penny going?

A young man applied for a job as a farmhand. When the old farmer asked for his qualifications, he replied confidently, "I can sleep when the wind blows." The state-ment puzzled the farmer, but he liked the young man nevertheless and decided to hire him.

A few nights later, the old farmer and his wife were rudely awakened by a violent storm. They quickly began to check things out to see if all was secure. They found that the shutters of the farmhouse had been securely fastened. A good supply of logs had been set next to the fireplace. The farm tools had been placed neatly in the storage shed, safe from the elements. The tractor had been moved into the shed. The barn was properly locked. Even the animals were calm. The young man slept soundly. All was well. The farmer then understood the meaning of the young man's words. Because he did his work loyally and faithfully when the skies were clear, he was prepared for the storm when it broke loose.

Now think about yourself . . . can you sleep when the wind blows?



New Products

The New Color of Money: Safer. Smarter. More Secure.

New currency designs will be issued as part of an ongoing effort to stay ahead of counterfeiting, and to protect the economy and the hard-earned money of U.S. currency users.

The first note of the new currency designs, the \$20 note, was issued October 9, 2003. The series will continue with the \$50 note, which will be issued beginning on September 28, 2004, followed later by a new \$100 note. Redesign of the \$10 and \$5 notes is under consideration, but a redesign of the \$2 and \$1 notes is not planned.

Consumers can help protect their hard-earned money by checking their cash. First incorporated in the 1990s, these features make U.S. money easy to check: *Watermark*: a faint image, similar to the portrait, which is part of the paper itself and is visible from both sides when held up to the light. *Security thread*: also visible from both sides when held up to the light, this vertical strip of plastic is embedded in the paper and identifies the denomination in tiny print. *Color-shifting ink*: the numeral in the lower right corner on the face of the note, indicating its denomination, changes color when the note is tilted. For the new currency, this color shift is more dramatic. It changes from copper to green, making it even easier for people to check their money.

The most noticeable difference is color. The new \$50 note features subtle background colors of blue and red on both sides with the colors varying by denomination.

Each denomination will feature different symbols of freedom on the face of the notes. The \$50 note will have the traditional stars and stripes of the United States flag and a small metallic silver-blue star.

With permission from The Department of the Treasury Bureau of Engraving and Printing

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

Intenticity
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
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