

# BANK connections

A Financial Newsletter for Our Valued Customers

Autumn 2010

## Business News

### Protect Your Business When Banking Online

Online banking has made it easier and more convenient to manage business finances, but it also provides an opportunity for hackers to gain access to business accounts with the goal of making unauthorized money transfers.



According to Visa Inc., 85% of data breaches occur at the small business level and 33% of small businesses lack even simple antivirus protection, according to Symantec Corporation.

“Small business owners might feel that they are flying under the radar of data thieves and hackers, but they are actually in the crosshairs,” said BBB President and CEO Jim Hegarty. “That’s why BBB partnered with leading security experts to show small business owners that implementing a strong data security strategy doesn’t have to take a lot of time or resources.”

Consider these tips adapted from Data Security-Made Simpler:

1. **Initiate a “dual control” payment process with your bank and employees.** Ensure that all payments are initiated from your bank accounts only after the authorization of two employees, one to authorize the creation of the payment file and a second responsible for authorizing the release of the file.
2. **Have dedicated workstations.** Restrict the use of certain workstations and laptops solely for online banking and payments, if possible.
3. **Use robust authentication methods and vendors.** Make sure your financial service providers allow for “multi-factor authentication” requiring more than just a user name and password to access your account.

4. **Update virus protection and security software.** Ensure that all anti-spyware, anti-malware, and security software and mechanisms are robust and up-to-date for all computer workstations and laptops used for online banking and payments.
5. **Reconcile accounts daily.** Monitor and reconcile accounts daily against expected credits and withdrawals and notify your financial institution immediately of any unexpected activity.

For more information, please visit [bbb.org](http://bbb.org) and “Start With Trust.”

### Socially Speaking...

Social media utilized properly can be a helpful tool for businesses but it can also backfire if not carefully considered how and when to use it. Consider these tips:

- Think before you Tweet. Regardless of the platform you utilize, will your content be worthy of posting or is it simply a sales pitch? Many prospects or even customers will not care what you are doing at the moment and many more will be turned off with a thinly disguised advertisement.
- As with any form of communication, develop a strategy, monitor results and make modifications.
- Listen to what is being said. Use it as an opportunity to change processes or enhance products.
- Be ready to respond when needed but don’t get caught up in responding to every single comment or post.
- Consider your policy for employees, and how they will use social media at work. While you may not be able to control what they do in their off-hours, it is important they realize their actions at work and at home can and do reflect your business.

And finally, some words of wisdom from Kathy Broniecki, President/Partner at Envoy, Omaha: “If social media is anything, it’s social – and you can’t be social if you’re talking at your audience. The point of this tool is to open up conversations with your users, customers or clients, not to provide a one-sided sounding board for all of the information you want them to know. That’s what your website is for.”

## Iowa and Nebraska Rank High in Top States for Business

Overall Rankings – 2010 - Special CNBC Report

CNBC did a special report where they scored all 50 states – using publicly available data – on 40 different measures of competitiveness. States received points based on their rankings in each metric. Then, they separated those metrics into the ten broad categories, with input from business groups including the National Association of Manufacturers. They weighted the categories based on how frequently each is cited in state economic development marketing materials.

There were ten categories ranked in the study. The top 15 ranked states are shown in the chart to the right.

Overall	State	Cost of Business	Workforce	Quality of Life	Economy	Transportation	Technology & Innovation	Education	Business Friendliness	Access to Capital	Cost of Living
1	Texas	30	16	29	1	1	4	30	19	7	8
2	Virginia	26	9	18	11	12	10	13	2	9	27
3	Colorado	25	10	2	8	36	12	29	4	15	35
4	North Carolina	15	3	32	37	10	11	26	13	10	23
5	Massachusetts	39	23	6	17	39	3	1	14	2	41
<b>6</b>	<b>Iowa</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>
7	South Dakota	4	15	11	4	27	49	21	3	40	5
8 (tie)	Minnesota	31	34	12	5	11	16	9	20	19	15
8 (tie)	Utah	7	7	5	23	32	25	48	10	39	17
10	Georgia	20	3	35	37	2	17	28	17	13	9
11	Kansas	22	13	27	7	8	31	11	18	33	5
12	North Dakota	15	23	13	3	20	47	18	10	40	17
<b>13</b>	<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5</b>
14	Wyoming	13	12	10	9	24	50	22	20	27	27
15	Washington	33	30	8	18	35	5	22	34	5	35

## Voted #1 Bank In Council Bluffs

The Daily Nonpareil in Council Bluffs conducts an annual Reader's Choice Survey every year. Readers elect their favorites in a variety of topics. Peoples National Bank was once again nominated as the #1 Bank in the area. This is the sixth straight year that the bank has received the award. Connie Smith of the 333 W. Broadway Branch, was voted one of the top tellers.



We want to thank you for your business, friendship and support. Building customer relationships and investing in the communities is a commitment we look forward to continuing for many years to come. Thank you for making us #1!

## New Commercial Loan Officer in Lincoln

Kurt Grosshans has joined the Lincoln office as Vice President - Commercial Lender. With nearly 25 years of lending experience in Lincoln, Kurt will be working to provide expanded service to the commercial market. In his history as a commercial lender, he has worked with customers of different sizes and complexities in a wide array of industries. He brings a wealth of knowledge to the Lincoln office at 3801 VerMaas Place. He can also be reached at kgrosshans@anbank.com or (402) 420-1818.



Kurt Grosshans

## Quarterly Grade Report:

As part of our service to you, and as evidence of our commitment to the safety and security of your money, we are providing you a quarterly snapshot of some of the bank rating reports that are available to help you make decisions about your money.

A bank rating will usually assign a letter grade or numerical ranking based on proprietary formulas. These formulas are usually based on capital, asset quality, management, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk. We will provide ongoing monitoring and reporting on American National Bank. Additional information is available on specific websites. You will find that some provide free information, while others charge a fee if you want to drill down for detailed reports.



**Bankrate.com = 5 Star Rating for American National Bank**  
Safe and Sound Rating (as of March 31, 2010)

**Bauerfinancial.com = 4 stars • Excellent**  
On BauerFinancial's Recommended Report (as of June 30, 2010)

**Institutional Risk Analytics (IRAbankratings.com) = A+**  
Key Safety and Soundness Indicators (as of June 30, 2010)

## Grow Your Business Survey Your Existing Customers

According to research published in the Harvard Business Review, a simple customer survey asking for customers' opinions on how your company is doing can double their loyalty to your company. Since acquiring new customers is 10 times more difficult and expensive than retaining new ones, this is a good use of marketing dollars.

Customer surveys are often overlooked for customer retention and increased customer satisfaction. When

customers are asked their feedback about their experience with their vendor, especially ways that the vendor can improve the service, customer loyalty tends to improve. Additionally, satisfied and loyal customers tend to do more repeat business and they are more open to up-sell approaches. Customer retention is a proven bottom-line boosting application; most companies just don't use this tool as often as they should.

## Consumer News

### Protecting Against Identity Theft

Identity Theft is serious business. The FTC estimates that as many as 9 million Americans have their identities stolen each year. In fact, you or someone you know may have experienced some form of identity theft.

#### How do thieves steal an identity?

Identity theft starts with the misuse of personally identifying information such as a person's name, PIN, account number, social security number, drivers license, etc. For identity thieves this information is as good as gold.



Skilled identity thieves may use a variety of methods to get information, including:

1. **Dumpster Diving** – rummaging through trash.
2. **Skimming** – stealing credit card numbers through special devices while processing your card.
3. **Phishing/Pharming** – pretending to be banks or other companies, diverting you to fraudulent websites, and sending emails, spam, or pop-up messages to get you to reveal your personal information.
4. **Changing your Address** – diverting your billing statements or bank statements to another location.
5. **Old Fashioned Stealing** – stealing purses, wallets, mail from mailboxes, etc.
6. **Bribing Employees Who Have Access** – paying an employee to give them personal information.
7. **Pretext Calling** – calling banks and other businesses pretending to be the individual that they are seeking information about.
8. **Malware** – malicious software used to steal information from your computer.

#### What to do if your identity has been compromised

1. Stop by or call the bank to receive a **Theft Affidavit Form**. This comprehensive form will help you in documenting the information that you will need to provide to several organizations.
  2. The next step is to contact the three **national consumer reporting agencies**. Ask each agency to place a "fraud alert" on your credit report, and send you a copy of your credit file. When you have completed your affidavit packet, you may want to send them a copy to help them investigate the disputed accounts.
    - **Equifax Credit Information Services, Inc.**  
(800) 525-6285 / TDD 1-800-255-0056 and ask the operator to call the Auto Disclosure Line at 1-800-685-1111 to obtain a copy of your report.)  
P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241  
www.equifax.com
    - **Experian Information Solutions, Inc.**  
(888) 397-3742 / TDD (800) 972-0322  
P.O. Box 9530, Allen, TX 75013  
www.experian.com
    - **TransUnion**  
(800) 680-7289 / TDD (877) 553-7803  
Fraud Victim Assistance Division  
P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92634-6790  
www.tuc.com
  3. Then contact the **fraud department at each creditor**, bank, or utility/service that provided the identity thief with unauthorized credit, goods or services. This would be a good time to find out if the company accepts this affidavit, and whether they require notarization or a copy of the police report.
  4. Your local **police department**. Ask the officer to take a report and give you the report number or a copy of the report.
- When you have completed the affidavit packet, you may want to give your police department a copy to help them add to their report and verify the crime.

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## Protecting Against Identity Theft

Continued from previous page

- The FTC, which maintains the Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse – the federal government’s centralized identity theft complaint database – and provides information to identity theft victims. You can call toll-free **1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338)**, visit **www.consumer.gov/idtheft**, or send mail to:

### Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse

Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580

The FTC collects complaints from identity theft victims and shares their information with law enforcement nationwide. This information also may be shared with other government agencies, consumer reporting agencies, and companies where the fraud was perpetrated to help resolve identity theft related problems.

## \$250,000 Federal Deposit Insurance Amount Now Permanent

The far-reaching financial reform law approved by Congress and signed by President Obama in July includes a variety of new protections for bank customers, including a permanent increase in the basic federal deposit insurance limit from at least \$100,000 to at least \$250,000 per depositor. Under prior law, the basic federal deposit insurance limit was set to revert back to \$100,000 on January 1, 2014.



“We strongly encourage all bank depositors who have questions about their insurance coverage to go to our Web site at [www.fdic.gov](http://www.fdic.gov) and use our Electronic Deposit

Insurance Estimator (EDIE) or call our toll-free number at 1-877-ASK-FDIC,” added Chairman Bair. “Insured deposits provide the comfort and peace of mind to depositors that their money is 100 percent safe — provided they keep their deposit balances within the insurance limits.”

Other consumer protections in the massive new law include the creation of an independent Consumer Financial Protection Bureau located within the Federal Reserve System to monitor and regulate financial services such as debit cards, credit cards and mortgages. For updates on significant changes in federal rules and industry practices, stay tuned to **FDIC Consumer News**.

## Do Not Disturb!

While most telemarketers and advertisers are reputable and prefer only to contact interested consumers for their products and services, you may be concerned about fraud and misleading offers from the rest. Consumers do have the ability to reduce the phone calls, advertising mail and even commercial emails.



The **National Do Not Call Registry** is managed by the Federal Trade Commission and gives you the ability to stop phone calls at home.

- Register your personal home or cell phone for free at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov) or call 1-888-382-1222 if you do not have an active email account. Expect about 31 days for it to take effect. Check out this site for tips on avoiding fraud or to file a complaint.
- You may still receive calls from companies you initiate

contact with, such as catalog sales, sales calls that have not yet been completed or calls placed in response to an advertisement.

- Charities and political calls are exempt.
- You cannot register a business phone or a fax number.
- Once you register, it is permanent and does not expire although you can elect to start receiving calls again by deleting your name and number from the list.

To reduce the amount of direct mail solicitations and to opt out of commercial email solicitations, visit the Direct Marketing Association’s mail and email preference site at [www.dmachoice.org](http://www.dmachoice.org) that can help you manage what you receive.

For tips on the latest scams and how to protect yourself, visit the Better Business Bureau at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org).

## How to Improve Your Credit Score

Follow these simple steps from FICO to help raise your credit score:

- Pay your bills on time
- Get current on any delinquent loans
- Keep balances low on credit cards and other revolving credit
- Don’t open new credit cards just to increase your available credit.

- Re-establish your credit if you have had problems in the past. Start with a low-limit credit card, and use it to make reasonable purchases that can be paid on time.

For more tips on improving your credit score, visit [myfico.com](http://myfico.com), click the “Education” tab, and read “Improving Your Score” under the “Managing your Credit” section. In addition, go to [www.anbank.com](http://www.anbank.com) and click on the “Financial Education” tab for additional information.