

CONSUMER ALERT!!!

TIPS AND TIDBITS TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

FINANCIAL SPEAKING . . .

Beware of these Scams

Visa and Mastercard Fraud: Con artists are calling from the “security and fraud division”, asking you to verify a purchase. When you say the purchase is indeed fraudulent, they ask you to turn to the back of your credit card and give them the seven digits printed on the signature line. Those numbers are to verify that you are in possession of the card and should only be given out when you are making a purchase. Anytime someone calls saying they are from a business, take a call back number and tell them you will call them directly to handle the situation.

Verizon “phishing”: E-mails have been received asking Verizon customers to update personal and account information (including social security number and credit card numbers). Customers are told they must update this information or they will be assessed a fee. Verizon assures its customers they do not do business that way.

Check 21. All consumers should be aware of a new law that will affect their checking account. Banks and businesses are now allowed to process check electronic transactions. These transactions can post to an account in a matter of minutes rather than days. The loss of “Float Time” means money must be in your account before you write your check or you may find yourself spending a lot of money on NSF fees.

Credit Reports. Credit reports will soon be available at no cost. The Federal Trade Commission is making sure that all consumers have access to their credit reports for free. Access is being phased geographically. Residents in the Midwest will be eligible for the free reports on March 1, 2005. Log on at www.AnnualCreditReport.com or call 1-877-382-4957. There are three credit bureaus; Equifax, Experian and Trans Union. You are allowed one free credit report per year from each credit bureau. You will not receive your credit score. CCCS will review and explain your credit report for a small fee. Please call the office for details.

If you have recently been denied credit, log on to ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/scoring.htm to learn about your rights under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. Consider purchasing from Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Northwest Indiana, Inc.’s our educational workbook “**Credit When Credit is Due**” for \$50.00.



**ALL E-SERVICE CLIENTS
DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR
\$5.00 YEARLY SERVICE FEE**

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Northwest Indiana (CCCS) is proud to announce that we are the recipients of a \$86,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This money has been awarded for Housing Counseling and Education. This grant is the third largest single agency award in the country.

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Northwest Indiana (CCCS) also received a \$5,000 award from the John Will Anderson Foundation for 2005. Our efforts to educate the public on the wise use of credit and money management will help us help our current financial initiatives. For many years the Anderson Foundation has been a supporter of CCCS and we give them thanks.

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MEMBER

