

The **ONE SOURCE** for all your credit reporting needs

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EXPERIAN ACCESS SECURITY AGREEMENT

Users of Experian credit reports need to fax or mail the new Access Security Agreement to us by March 11th. **Experian will turn off all members who have not returned the agreement.** The agreement can be found on our web page. Click on *Credit Products* and then on *Member Documents*.

MONEY SMART WEEK ILLINOIS

APRIL 18 TO 25, 2009
www.moneysmartweek.org

If you would like to participate by conducting a program, by providing a location for one or more classes or by sponsoring an ad, please call: Larry Nelson, 309-353-5527.

We are conducting Money Smart Week classes in Springfield, Bloomington, Washington and Pekin.

Our first classes will be at **Robert Morris College, 3101 Monvale Dr, Auditorium, Room 103, Springfield on Monday, April 20th.** *Credit Scores: The Silent Killer* will be at 1:00pm. *ID Theft: Prevention and Recovery* will be at 2:30pm.

Our next class will be an *ID Theft prevention* class in Toluca on **April 22nd at 9:30am at the Toluca Community Bank.**

We will have a class at the **Washington Library on Tuesday, April 21st at 6:30.** It will be on *ID Theft Prevention and Recovery.* The Tazewell States Attorney, Herget Bank and the Pekin Police Dept. will also speak.

Our next two classes will be *Credit Scores: The Silent Killer* in Bloomington on **Wed. April 22. The first is at 10:30 at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, 800 W Market St., Bloomington, IL 61701. The 2nd is at Noon at the Farm Bureau Building 402 N, Hershey Rd, Board Room,**

We will have two classes at the **Pekin Library on Thursday April 23.** *Credit Scores: The Silent Killer* will be at 4:00pm and *ID Theft Prevention and Recovery* will be at 7:00pm. This will also include the Pekin Police Dept., the Tazewell States Attorney and Herget National Bank.

CONSUMERS ARE DISPLEASED WITH FINANCE SECTOR: U OF MICHIGAN ACSI REPORT

The annual American Customer Satisfaction Index shows a deterioration in good customer service at banks as the financial crisis worsens.

Americans' satisfaction with the goods and services they buy improved in the fourth quarter of 2008, according to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The index climbed to 75.7 on the ACSI's 100-point scale, up 0.9 percent from the previous quarter. For banks and other financial services providers, however, the picture is not quite so rosy.

The ACSI is a national economic indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of products and services available to household consumers in the U.S. Every fourth quarter ACSI measures customer satisfaction with retail, finance and insurance, and e-commerce.

The latest findings show consumers are less than happy with their banks when compared to last year's results. Although finance as a whole showed a small increase of 0.7 percent over last year mainly due to gains in the health insurance industry, consumer satisfaction with banks fell 4 percent to an ACSI score of 75 out of 100. This most likely was a result of cost-cutting related to the mortgage crisis, such as branch closures, staff reductions and the confusion typical among consumers in the aftermath of M&A activity. This marks a 3.8 percent decrease, according to the study.

Wachovia, included for the last time in ACSI before becoming a part of Wells Fargo, leads the industry but still fell 4 percent to 76. Wells Fargo climbed 4 percent to 72 and Citigroup rounds out the bottom at 69.

This quarter also marks the debut of credit unions in ACSI and so far, they've made a good first impression. According to the research, credit unions outstripped banks in customer satisfaction with a score of 84. ACSI attributes this score to credit unions' smaller size relative to most banks. As such, the

researchers conclude, they follow a similar pattern of smaller companies in other industries that tend to offer better, more individualized service.

Online brokerage companies were also measured in the fourth quarter and showed disappointing results. They plummeted 6.3 percent to 74, dragging down the e-commerce sector and halting a three-year climb in that area.

Although the index showed some improvement overall in retail, the researchers remain cautious as the current recession deepens. As this occurs, consumer behavior has changed much more than in earlier economic slowdowns. Consumer spending has continued to weaken while savings have increased suggesting, says the reports, that at least for the short term there will be less revenue for sellers and more pressure on profit margins and for cost reductions.

The overall ACSI score for a given quarter factors in scores from about 200 companies in 44 industries, and from local and federal government services over the previous four quarters. (By Maria Bruno-Britz, 02-17-2009 Bank Systems & Technology)

RUSH REQUESTED MORTGAGE AND FLOOD REPORTS

We advise not to wait until the day before the closing to pull the Credit Reports or the Flood Determinations. There are extra charges for 'Rush' reports. And while they are usually completed in 2 business days, they can take up to 4 or 5 days. Errors on a credit report may take up to 30 days to correct.

Users can look up both Flood and Mortgage Reports and see when they were ordered and if the order has been completed.

After you log in, just click on 'Recent Files' for Flood requests ordered.

If you click on the 'Recent Reports' tab in the MCL Mortgage Reports program, you will see the last 100 reports you have ordered.

REVOLVING CREDIT DOWN IN DECEMBER

U.S. revolving credit, 98% of which is credit card debt, fell in December, to \$963.5 billion from \$969.9 billion the previous month, according to a Federal Reserve G.19 report on consumer credit released Friday.

Total seasonally adjusted consumer credit outstanding, which includes revolving and nonrevolving credit, decreased at an annual rate of 3.1% in December to \$2.56 trillion, the report says.

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Though consumers continue to clamp down on spending, they felt slightly less pessimistic about the economy in January, according to a Discover Financial Services report.

The Riverwoods, Ill.-based company's monthly U.S. Spending Monitor inched up 1.2 points in January to 77.8, the first increase in five months. It follows a record low of 76.6 set in December. Discover set the index at 100 when it introduced it in May 2007.

For only the second time in the monitor's history, the percentage of consumers who plan to spend less in the following month (29%) exceeds the percentage that said they plan to spend more (17%). (Feb. 17, 2009, CreditandCollectionsWorld.com and SourceMedia, Inc.)

HOUSING BILL WOULD LET JUDGES ERASE MORTGAGE DEBT

The U.S. House is expected to approve legislation Thursday (2-26-09) that would let federal judges erase mortgage debt for homeowners who enter bankruptcy.

The bill will dovetail with President Barack Obama's housing market recovery plan announced last week and includes other provisions meant to aid struggling borrowers. The legislation will almost certainly pass the House, where Democrats have a healthy majority. The plan must then be paired with a companion plan that has not yet been introduced in the Senate.

Here are some details of the House plan:

- Bankruptcy judges would be permitted to rewrite loan terms for homeowners who seek protection from their creditors in bankruptcy. For the first time, borrowers could have the courts erase some home loan balance and lower interest rates. The lending industry is trying to pare back the terms of this provision, and changes might be made before it becomes law.
- Eases terms and increases incentives under the Hope for Homeowners program conceived last year to help arrest the housing crisis but which has aided only a handful of troubled borrowers. Specifically, the legislation would lower the monthly payments of borrowers who qualify for refinancing under the program and clear some bureaucratic underbrush that has choked the program.
- The mortgage service companies that collect homeowners' monthly checks would get legal protection if they try to ease loan terms. The "safe harbor" provisions of the legislation would indemnify lenders if they modify a loan in order to preserve its long-

term viability. Currently, mortgage companies are hamstrung by contracts that force them to foreclose on delinquent borrowers.

- Washington's deposit insurance coverage would be permanently increased from \$100,000 to \$250,000 while the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp's credit line with the Treasury Department would increase from \$30 billion to \$100 billion. The FDIC would be given broad freedom to rebuild its insurance trust fund and charge new insurance fees under its own terms. (www.cnbc.com, 2/25/09)

MEASURE TO LET BANKRUPTCY JUDGES REWRITE MORTGAGES ON HOLD

A dispute among House Democrats stalled legislation Thursday to let bankruptcy judges reduce the principal and interest rate on mortgages for debt-strapped homeowners. The measure, backed by President Barack Obama, is the most controversial part of a broader housing package that had been expected to pass the House this week. It hit a snag after a group of moderates expressed concerns in a closed-door meeting of House Democrats about how the bill would affect homeowners who are still struggling to make their mortgage payments. The banking industry has lobbied hard against the measure, mounting a successful multimillion-dollar effort last year to kill it. This year, mortgage industry players who are scrambling to narrow the scope of the measure to reduce its potential cost for banks have won some key concessions. (2-27-09, www.creditandcollectionnews.com)

LEGISLATION TO CRACK DOWN ON DEBT COLLECTORS

Legislation that allows the Attorney General to pursue legal action against overzealous debt collectors was passed by the Senate this morning. SB 328 will give the Attorney General authority to pursue legal action against debt collectors who use unlawful practices such as threatening arrest, using obscene language, or attempting to collect interest or fees in excess of the actual debt. "This short, simple, and significant bill is to assure that collectors are operating honestly, fairly, and without intimidation and that they face consequences when they violate the law," said Senator Suzanne Bonamici during her floor speech. Bonamici, chair of the Senate Consumer Protection Committee, also shared stories from testimony heard in committee, including from people who were threatened

with physical harm, subject to obscene language, and called repeatedly in the middle of the night. (2-27-09, www.creditandcollectionnews.com)

JANUARY RETAIL SALES INCREASE SLIGHTLY

Estimated retail sales for January fell 11% to \$306.2 billion from \$343.9 billion the previous year, the U.S. Census Bureau announced today.

Retail sales for January increased 1.1% from \$302.9 billion in December 2008, according to the Census Bureau's Advance Monthly Retail and Food Services Survey, which is conducted to provide an early estimate of monthly sales for U.S. retail and food service firms. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to approximately 5,000 companies.

Discover Financial Services reported monthly U.S. Spending Monitor inched up 1.2 points in January to 77.8, the first increase in five months. It follows a record low of 76.6 set in December. Discover set the index at 100 when it introduced it in May 2007. (© 2009 CreditandCollectionsWorld.com)

SPEAKERS

We have presentations for service clubs, churches, employers, high schools and colleges. The presentations range from 15 minutes to one hour. the topics we can cover are: ID Theft, Credit Scoring and Credit Reports.

If you would like us to speak to your employees, service club, church or school, please call us.

KCB INFO SERVICES HOURS

Monday - Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm

KCB Information Services offers: Consumer credit reports, Business Credit reports, Employment Credit reports, Residential Mortgage Credit Reports, Merged Credit Reports, Criminal background checks, Tenant Screening Reports, Flood Zone Determination, Flood Life of Loan Certification, Identity Authentication and KCB Checking History Reports.

KCB Information Services has served businesses since 1928 and serves Central Illinois for Experian and Equifax.

He can compress the most words into the smallest ideas of any man I ever met.

Abraham Lincoln

You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time.

Abraham Lincoln